

CASE STUDY

COMPANY

Seattle Downtown Emergency Services Center

INDUSTRY

Non-Profit

SERVICES

Viasat high-speed business internet



Seattle homeless center gains security, stability with Viasat Business broadband

System overhaul affordably improves nonprofit's operations and efficiency

Seattle's Downtown Emergency Services Center (DESC) is nationally respected for providing housing and healthcare to chronically homeless people. But while it's skilled at providing its clients with stability, the organization's internet was often decidedly unsteady.

In fact, DESC had a history of network struggles, including outages at some of its most remote locations. During times when those sites couldn't contact centralized servers, they were unable to complete the intake process for homeless men and women in crisis.

Viasat Business broadband is helping make those issues a thing of the past. Viasat recently deployed satellite internet as a back-up service at several of DESC's sites. Now, when the primary internet fails, the Viasat service seamlessly steps in, keeping the center's critical mission stay on track.

"Viasat has provided DESC with stability so that no single outage can really stop them from processing and intaking clients," said a spokesperson for RDM Technologies, which introduced the solution and helped coordinate the deployment of the added services.

And it comes at a much more affordable cost than other options.

“We were able to put them in a budget-friendly redundant network environment,” the spokesperson said. “Every dollar they save on things like this, they are able to spend on supporting clients.”

Internet everywhere

Even in urban areas like Seattle, there are businesses unserved by terrestrial services such as cable or fiber. Because Viasat is a satellite-based service, it’s available almost anywhere, versus terrestrial infrastructure that has a limited footprint.

Viasat’s expanding business broadband services have caught the attention of IT departments around the country, many of which have struggled to find reliable internet. That includes primary connectivity as well as reliable backup for when terrestrial-based services go down or get congested.

“We helped them get a reliable and fast backup connection quickly,” said Viasat’s Eric Stark. “Our connectivity allows them to streamline their administrative work to focus on their clients.”

RDM Technologies helps businesses and nonprofits research, deploy, and manage cloud technology solutions. RDM initially consulted with DESC on data security. The engagement grew to RDM assisting the DESC technology team in the design and transitioning of their entire computing environment to a private cloud provider.

Part of the RDM design was to improve the network by bringing in a redundancy service to the facilities. DESC’s many locations are served by a variety of internet service providers.

“Sometimes it is cable broadband, sometimes only DSL service,” the RDM Technologies spokesperson said. “At some locations there is no cost justification or budget to entice a fiber provider to build facilities to provide service. There are several locations where we just couldn’t get a traditional, land-based provider in there, and in several of those locations, Viasat is the perfect solution for a backup connection.”

Working with DESC had some unexpected rewards for RDM.

“DESC has a very unique approach to helping homeless people in Seattle, and their success in providing resources for the most vulnerable homeless people is amazing. However, their budgets are very, very tight.



A tent city in Seattle that houses many of the city’s homeless. For one shelter assisting this population, Viasat service has helped ensure their critical internet connection never goes down.

“It’s going to be pretty amazing, when we can cover most of the globe with service like this that can go just about anywhere.”

Eric Stark — Viasat

“After we experienced the passion for the DESC mission and the difficulties they were overcoming with limited budgets, it became a project we knew we had to get right. It just had to work. It was a comfort knowing we had deployed similar solutions in other environments. The entire staff has been very pleased with the migration and stability.”

Stark noted that the DESC solution is a familiar story with Viasat.

“We’re able to bring connectivity in many places that don’t have it, and that includes everything from urban areas like Seattle to businesses of all types across the U.S., Mexico and soon Brazil,” he said. When Viasat’s next generation of satellites — ViaSat-3 — begins launching in 2020, Stark said even more tough-to-serve locations can get vastly improved service.

“It’s going to be pretty amazing, when we can cover most of the globe with service like this that can go just about anywhere,” Stark said.

The Unlimited 35 Viasat Business plan, with download speeds up to 35 megabits per second (Mbps), will be added as a back-up service at additional DESC sites in the future.



Broadband internet
services for business

www.viasatbusiness.com