



Broadband Consumer Update: FCC Launches Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP); Connecticut Office of State Broadband (“OSB”) Provides Input to the FCC on the Implementation of the Program.

On December 31, 2021, the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) launched the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), a successor program to the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB), which was a temporary program initiated to make the Internet access affordable to just under 9 million households across the country during the pandemic. ACP eligible households may now apply to receive up to a \$30 per month discount off the price of their Internet service and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers with a contribution between \$10-\$50 toward the purchase. To be eligible for the ACP, a member of the household must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Has an income that is at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (Click [here](#) for Connecticut federal poverty guidelines through 3/2022);
- Participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline;
- Participates in Tribal specific programs, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal TANF, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations;
- Is approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision in the 2019-2020, 2020-2021, or 2021-2022 school year;
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income program.

At the end of 2021, the FCC sought input on its final program rules that will be issued in January and will guide the transition of households from the EBB to the ACP, as well as enroll new participants in the program. The OSB joined stakeholders across the country to file comments to assist the FCC with the implementation of the new program. The OSB’s [comments](#) advocated for a streamlined transition between programs, during which consumers would receive sufficient notice of and education about any changes to their current EBB plans. Additionally, the OSB urged the FCC to create an enrollment process with minimal barriers to ensure maximum participation, and that the FCC should establish minimum standards for both services and equipment offered through the program. Additionally, the OSB encouraged the FCC to

develop a tailored complaint process and consumer protection regulations that will provide necessary safeguards for ACP participants.

If your household currently participates in the EBB and would like more information on the changes to the program, please contact your current service provider. If your household is interested in participating in the ACP or would like more information, please go to:

ACPBenefit.org or