



## How to increase participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

The goal of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is to reduce internet access barriers by providing eligible households with up to \$30 per month to help cover internet bills. However, many rural communities are leaving federal funds on the table, and these lost funds can be significant. For example, if 3,000 people in a community qualify for the ACP, but are not taking advantage of it, **that community is missing out on over \$1M per year.**

Studies and anecdotal evidence from local leaders show that eligible community members often do not sign up for the ACP because they are unsure if they qualify, or the process of signing up is too difficult or daunting to complete. Local leaders have a unique role to play in bridging the participation gap and helping community members access the ACP program. Outlined below is a step-by-step toolkit for community leaders to help increase participation in the program.

### STEP #1: CONVENE LOCAL LEADERS

Because many people don't even know what the ACP is, **the first step is to make sure community leaders understand the opportunity.** The group of leaders who should be convened may be different for every community, but likely include elected officials, representatives of the schools, libraries, churches, nonprofits, social service organizations, financial institutions, chambers of commerce, and any other civic-minded groups. This meeting should educate stakeholders about current ACP use, the landscape going forward, and how to increase ACP enrollment.

### STEP #2: IDENTIFY KEY ROLES

There are two roles, typically filled by some of the community leaders mentioned above, that every community needs to successfully increase enrollment:

- **Educators:** Every community should have at least one ACP application expert who helps community members print and fill out an application or walks them through the process online. *Example: A dedicated person at the library.*
- **Communicators:** Communities need people and groups to raise awareness of the ACP program via trusted local platforms such as social media and radio stations. *Example: The senior center makes weekly posts in the local Facebook group with the link to apply for the program and a few simple steps on how to sign up.*

In some communities, one person or institution may fill both of these roles; in others, there may be a dedicated department.



### STEP #3: MAKE A PLAN TO RAISE AWARENESS OF ACP

Community leaders should begin by focusing on the most vulnerable populations and populations least likely to be aware of the ACP program: **seniors, students, veterans, teachers, and social service workers**. Ensuring that they understand and can educate their networks about ACP and how to sign up is crucial for success.

#### Other ideas to raise awareness:

- Ask a group of popular local businesses to display hard copies of the ACP application beside their cash registers. This can be especially useful in areas with a frequently visited general store or feed supply.
- Make sure government agency employees understand how to fill out and talk about ACP applications.
- Design and complete a “train-the-trainers” event with libraries, community colleges, or high schools so that participants can help community members sign up.
- Email the FCC directly at [ACPinfo@fcc.gov](mailto:ACPinfo@fcc.gov) and request pamphlets or flyers with ACP information for distribution.
- Encourage community members who receive internet service through the ACP to write letters to the editor and offer to help others sign up. When community members are vocal about benefiting from government subsidy programs, it helps reduce stigma.
- Send flyers home with every child in the K-12 education system in the county.

### STEP #4: FOLLOW UP AND ADJUST AS NECESSARY

**Track** your community’s participation level using [official data](#) or a more [interactive tool like this one](#) built by Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation (Rural LISC). **Get feedback** on your awareness and enrollment plan from the consumer outreach team at the FCC by emailing [ACPinfo@fcc.gov](mailto:ACPinfo@fcc.gov).



## APPENDIX A - THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM (ACP)

The affordable connectivity program offers eligible households up to \$30/month for broadband service or up to \$75/month on Tribal lands (and \$100 as a one-time discount for a device).

### WHAT IS IT?

The program pays up to \$30/month of the internet bill for eligible households, and a one-time discount of up to \$100 towards a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer. Households on Tribal lands can receive up to \$75/month for internet. [Some providers](#) have partnered with the ACP Program to provide a low-cost option that the ACP subsidy fully covers.

The Affordable Connectivity Program is limited to one monthly service discount and one device discount per household.<sup>1</sup>

**Please note:** *If you participated in the Emergency Broadband Program, you were automatically enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program and do not need to reapply.*

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

**Households with income at or below 200% of the national poverty line.**

Households where any member falls into one of these categories:

- You participate in certain assistance programs such as SNAP, Medicaid, SSI, Federal Public Housing Assistance, WIC, Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefits, or [Lifeline](#).
- You participate in one of several Tribal programs.
- You received a federal Pell Grant in the current award year.
- You received benefits through a school lunch or breakfast program.

### HOW TO APPLY

1. Submit an application online at [ACPBenefit.org](#) or [through the mail](#).
2. Contact a broadband provider directly. Use [this online tool](#) to find a participating provider near you if you do not have one.
3. Call **(877) 384-2575** if you have any problems completing your application.

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<sup>1</sup>A household is a group of people who live together and share money, while those who live together and do not share money are each their own separate household. Households qualify for ACP if any member meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income program.