Low-income broadband plans

The flyers in this package describe programs that offer low-income households more affordable access to the internet.

A companion brochure, *Getting up to speed: Broadband internet for low-income households*, explains the benefits of broadband internet access: *http://www.consumer-action.org/modules/articles/getting_up_to_speed*.

Consumer Action

www.consumer-action.org

Consumer advice and referral hotline

Our national hotline offers consumer advice and referrals in English, Spanish and Chinese:

https://complaints.consumer-action.org/forms/english-form or 415-777-9635.

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

USAC
Affordable
Connectivity Program

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program that, beginning in 2022, discounts monthly internet service for eligible households. The ACP replaces the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB), which was established in early 2021 to help households get and stay connected during the pandemic, and ended on Dec. 31, 2021.

Cost: The program provides a benefit of up to $30 per month (up to $75 for residents of Tribal lands), paid directly by the program to the service provider, resulting in a lower bill for you. Eligible households also can receive a one-time discount of up to $100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer or tablet from participating providers if they contribute more than $10 but less than $50 toward the purchase price. Only one monthly service discount and one device discount is allowed per household.

Equipment: The cost, if any, of equipment, such as a modem and/or router, depends on the service provider and plan. Likewise, the cost of a computer or tablet purchased through the program depends on the device and the seller.

Eligibility: To qualify for the program (https://acpbenefit.org/do-i-qualify/): 1) Your household must have an income that is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, *or* 2) You or a member of your household (such as your spouse, or your child or dependent) must receive benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit, or certain Tribal programs, *or* 3) You received a federal Pell Grant in the current award year, *or* 4) You were approved for benefits under the free and reduced cost school lunch (NSLP) or breakfast program, including through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of the NSLP, in the 2019-2020, 2020-2021 or 2021-2022 school year, *or* 5) Your household already receives a Lifeline benefit (see next page).

How to apply: If you received the EBB, you were most likely transitioned to the ACP on March 1, 2022. However, if you qualified for the EBB based on lost income during the pandemic, or by meeting the eligibility criteria for a service provider's COVID-19 relief/assistance program, you need to requalify for the ACP. (Households on qualifying Tribal lands do not need to take any action to continue receiving an internet benefit.)

If the transition from the EBB to the ACP will cause your out-of-pocket costs to increase (as a result of the reduced monthly benefit amount, from $50 to $30), contact your provider to choose to keep your current service plan or switch to a less expensive plan, if one is offered.

If you currently receive a Lifeline benefit (see next page), you automatically qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program, and you can receive both benefits at the same time, but you need to contact a participating provider to enroll in the ACP. You can apply your ACP benefit and your Lifeline benefit to the same or separate services. If you do not participate in Lifeline but receive service through a company's low-cost (low-income) broadband program, you may not need to apply again for the ACP benefit. Talk to your provider for more information.

Otherwise, there are three ways to apply for the ACP: online (https://www.checklifeline.org/lifeline/?id=nv_flow&ebbp=true), by mail, or through a participating internet service provider. Learn more at the ACP "How to Apply" page (https://acpbenefit.org/how-to-apply/).

Once you're approved, tell your current internet service provider that you want the discount. Or, if you don't already have a service provider, or if your provider doesn't participate in the program, find a provider using the online search tool (https://acpbenefit.org/companies-near-me/).

To learn more about the Affordable Connectivity Program, visit the program homepage (https://acpbenefit.org/) or the FAQ page (https://www.fcc.gov/affordable-connectivity-program-consumer-faq), or call 877-384-2575.

Federal Lifeline

Lifeline (http://www.lifelinesupport.org) is the FCC's long-running program to help make communications services more affordable for low-income households. The program has for years provided a discount on basic residential (home) phone service, eventually adding wireless phone service as an option. In 2016, the program expanded to provide a discount on broadband internet. The discount for voice-only service was scheduled to end on Dec. 1, 2021, but that phase-out has been paused for one year.

Cost: The federal Lifeline program supports a discount of up to $9.25 per month (up to $34.25 for residents of Tribal lands) on broadband home internet service or eligible bundled phone/internet service for eligible low-income households in every state. The final cost to you depends on which carrier, service type and plan you choose. If you have more than one option, compare plan features and costs—they could differ significantly. (Some states offer their own Lifeline program, which could provide additional discounts. California residents can learn about their state's program in Consumer Action's *Connect to California LifeLine and Save!*: https://www.consumer-action.org/modules/articles/connect_to_california_lifeline_and_save.)

Equipment: The cost, if any, of equipment, such as a modem and/or router, depends on the service provider and plan. (For example, some carriers include a free mobile phone with activation or contract renewal of a Lifeline wireless phone service plan.)

Eligibility: You qualify for federal Lifeline if your household income is 135% or less of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (https://www.lifelinesupport.org/do-i-qualify/#income) for your household size and state, or if you or someone in your household receives SNAP (food stamps), Medicaid, or benefits under one of the other qualifying federal assistance programs (https://www.lifelinesupport.org/do-i-qualify/#programs). Residents of Tribal lands can qualify in the same ways, or through participation in a qualifying Tribal assistance program. You must show proof of income or program participation when you apply. You are allowed only one Lifeline discount per household.

How to apply: You can apply for federal Lifeline online, using the Lifeline National Verifier application system to create an account and see if you qualify (https://www.checklifeline.org/lifeline). You also can apply by mail, by printing and completing an application (English: https://www.lifelinesupport.org/wp-content/uploads/lifeline/documents/LI_Application_NVstates.pdf / Spanish: https://www.lifelinesupport.org/wp-content/uploads/lifeline/documents/LI-SP_Application_NVstates.pdf) and mailing it with your proof of eligibility to: USAC, Lifeline Support Center, P.O. Box 7081, London, KY 40742.

If you have questions about your application or would like an application mailed to you, contact Lifeline at 800-234-9473 or LifelineSupport@usac.org. You can find a service provider that participates in Lifeline by using the online search tool (https://data.usac.org/publicreports/CompaniesNearMe/Download/Report). The USAC Help page (https://www.lifelinesupport.org/help/) offers more information.

While the Lifeline discount can be applied toward an eligible home broadband internet service, there are other options for discounted broadband (presented in the pages above and below); choosing one of these and applying your Lifeline discount to a mobile voice/data service may be a better choice for households that need both home internet and wireless phone service.   Rev. 3/22

Access from AT&T

Access from AT&T is AT&T's internet adoption program for low-income households. It provides low-cost internet service for $5 or $10 a month, depending on speed, or you can apply your Affordable Connectivity (ACP) program discount to a special plan that provides faster speeds and no data caps.

Cost: Speeds of between 768 Kbps and 10 Mbps are available; qualifying households receive the fastest available tier. Service providing 5 Mbps or more will cost $10 a month, and service providing 3 Mbps or less will cost $5 a month. Service will include a monthly data allowance of either 150GB (DSL) or 1TB, as well as access to the national AT&T Wi-Fi hotspot network. If you exceed your monthly data plan allowance, you will automatically be charged $10 for each additional 50GB of data you use, even if less than the full 50 gigabytes is used. Participants do not have to pay for installation, activation or the modem or gateway, and no deposit is required.

If you're approved for the Affordable Connectivity Program (https://www.att.com/help/affordable-connectivity-program/internet/), you can apply your discount of up to $30 ($75 for qualifying residents of Tribal lands) to a special Access from AT&T plan that provides up to 100 Mbps speed, with no cap on data usage, for $30—resulting in high-speed internet service with no monthly charge (taxes and fees may be extra).

Equipment: Access from AT&T service includes a Wi-Fi–capable modem or gateway that broadcasts a Wi-Fi (wireless) signal inside your home, allowing you to extend the reach of your wireline internet service. You can access this Wi-Fi signal on a variety of devices that are Wi-Fi compatible, including laptops, tablets and smartphones. AT&T will send you a self-installation kit with step-by-step instructions so that you can complete the installation process yourself. However, if you need help after attempting self-installation, you may request a technician (at no charge) to assist with installation.

Eligibility: Access from AT&T (https://www.att.com/internet/access/) is available to households:
- With at least one resident who participates in the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), or that have an income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. (California households also qualify if a resident receives Supplemental Security Income [SSI].)
- With an address in AT&T's 21-state service area (http://www.att.com/Common/merger/files/pdf/att-us-service-area-map-21-state.pdf), where it offers wireline home internet service and at least one of the five speed tiers offered under the program.
- Without outstanding debt for AT&T fixed internet service within the last six months or outstanding debt incurred under the Access from AT&T program.

How to apply: Visit https://www.att.com/internet/access/ or call 855-220-5211 (English and Spanish). In addition to providing identification and address information, you will need to submit proof of eligibility.

Internet Essentials from Comcast

INTERNET ESSENTIALS from Comcast

Internet Essentials is Comcast's high-speed internet adoption program for low-income households. It provides low-cost internet service for $9.95 a month, with in-home Wi-Fi included, as well as access to the Xfinity Wi-Fi hotspot network outside the home. It also includes the option to purchase an internet-ready computer for $149.99 plus tax, and offers access to free digital skills training available online and in person.

Cost: For $9.95 a month plus tax, Internet Essentials subscribers get up to 50 Mbps downstream, which is enough to power multiple devices simultaneously, and 10 Mbps upstream. All customers receive an in-home Wi-Fi router and access to the Xfinity Wi-Fi hotspot network outside the home, allowing them to connect any internet-enabled device, such as tablets or smartphones, which could help save money on monthly wireless bills. There is no credit check, no term contract, no equipment or activation fee, and all customers are eligible for a free professional installation.

The Internet Essentials Plus program, available to customers who qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program and Internet Essentials, offers up to 100 Mbps for $24.95—covered by the ACP benefit of up to $30 (taxes and fees may be extra).

Equipment: The welcome kit includes a modem (with built-in Wi-Fi) and setup instructions. Internet Essentials customers have the option to purchase an internet-ready computer for $149.99 plus tax.

Eligibility: Households with verified participation in any one of a dozen public assistance programs may apply for Internet Essentials. Qualifying programs include Medicaid, HUD/Section 8, National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Head Start, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Pell Grant, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Veterans Administration (VA) pension, and Tribal assistance programs (TTANF, FDPIR, etc.) (https://www.internetessentials.com/get-help#application&Documentsneeded). In addition, applicants must:

- Not have outstanding debt to Comcast that is less than one year old. (Households who owe money to Comcast may still qualify if approved by 6/30/22.)
- Live in an area where Comcast internet service is available.
- Have not subscribed to Comcast internet within the last 90 days. (This requirement is being waived for Xfinity Internet customers who enroll in, and are approved for, the Affordable Connectivity Program, apply to Internet Essentials, and are approved by 6/30/22.)

Regardless of participation in the Internet Essentials program, households are eligible to attend free Comcast digital skills programs in person (operated by Comcast training partners) or take advantage of free online tutorials (https://www.internetessentials.com/Learning).

How to apply: For more information, or to see if you are eligible for Comcast Internet Essentials, visit www.internetessentials.com or call 855-846-8376 (English and Spanish). Call center agents have access to translators to help callers speaking a variety of languages, and program materials are available in 12 languages beyond English and Spanish, such as Somali, Chinese, Korean and Russian.

Spectrum Internet Assist

Spectrum▶

Spectrum Internet Assist is Charter Communications's low-cost high-speed internet program for qualifying households. It provides 30 Mbps with no data caps, modem included, for $17.99 per month plus taxes and fees, wherever the service is available.

Cost: For $17.99 per month (plus taxes and fees), Spectrum Internet Assist subscribers get 30 Mbps downstream, which is enough to power multiple devices simultaneously, and 4 Mbps upstream. An internet modem is included in that cost. For an additional $5 per month, subscribers can receive a Wi-Fi router so that multiple users throughout the home can use the service. (This cost is avoidable if you purchase and set up your own Wi-Fi router.) No contract is required.

Spectrum participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program (https://www.spectrum.com/cp/broadband-get-qualified), and current Spectrum Internet customers who have applied for and been approved for the ACP discount can apply their benefit to an existing plan.

Equipment: An internet modem will be provided when you sign up for service. A Wi-Fi router costs an additional $5 per month, but this monthly charge can be avoided if you purchase and set up your own router.

Eligibility: To participate, households must:

- Have at least one child who receives free or reduced cost lunch through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) of the NSLP, and/or a senior (65 and over) who receives SSI.

- Not have subscribed to a Charter broadband plan in the 30 days prior to enrollment. (Current Spectrum customers who have already applied for the Affordable Connectivity Program through the National Verifier may call 844-815-8926 to apply their benefit to their Spectrum internet service plan at any time during the duration of the program.)

- Not have any unreturned equipment or outstanding bills for any Charter services.

How to apply: Visit the Spectrum Internet Assist website (https://www.spectrum.com/internet/spectrum-internet-assist) for more information. Visit the Spectrum coverage map (https://broadbandnow.com/Charter-Communications) to find out where Charter Communications operates. Visit the online application page (https://www.spectrum.net/support/forms/spectrum_internet_assist) to apply. Call 844-525-1574 (English and Spanish) for more information or to subscribe; entering your ZIP code in response to the phone prompt will tell you if the service is available in your area.

Internet First

internetfirst

Internet First is an affordable internet service program from RCN, Grande and Wave (Astound), for families and students in low-income households. The program offers up to 50 Mbps speed to qualifying low-income households in the companies' service area for $9.95 per month.

Cost: Qualifying households can get up to 50 Mbps speed for $9.95 per month, plus taxes. There are no contracts, no credit check, and no installation or activation fees. (Check if the company is offering its 60-days-free promotion for new customers at the time you apply.) If you wish to continue receiving the Internet First offer after the first year, you must reapply annually. The same program eligibility rules will apply. The monthly rate is subject to increase for each subsequent one-year period, by no more than $10 per month.

Equipment: Includes a standard modem with Wi-Fi router and in-person installation at no additional charge. Whole Home WiFi is available at an additional charge.

Eligibility: Households with verified participation in any one of more than a dozen public assistance programs may apply for Internet First. Qualifying programs include Medicaid, HUD/Section 8, Unemployment, National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Head Start, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Tribal TANF, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Pell Grant, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and Veterans Administration (VA) pension. In addition, applicants must:

- Live in an area where RCN, Grande or Wave (Astound) service is available (currently areas of California, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Texas, Washington State, and Washington, D.C.).
- Have not subscribed to RCN, Grande or Wave (Astound) services within the 60 days immediately prior to applying for the Internet First program.

How to apply: You can apply online at https://www.internetfirst.com, or you can download a copy of the Internet First application (https://www.internetfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2020/04/InternetFirst_ApplicationForm_1.5.pdf) and mail it to: Internet First, Quality Assurance Department, East Mountain Corporate Center, 100 Baltimore Drive, Wilkes Barre, PA 18702.

Applicants will have to upload or mail in proof of identification and proof of eligibility (verification of participation in any of the qualifying public assistance programs). Visit https://www.internetfirst.com/apply/apply-via-mail/ and click on the "Qualifying Photo IDs" and "Qualifying Assistance Documentation" links for more information about what types of proof are accepted. If you have questions, call 833-730-0644.

everyoneon

EveryoneOn is a national nonprofit that creates social and economic opportunity by connecting everyone to the internet. EveryoneOn collaborates with diverse internet service providers and device providers to feature their low-cost solutions on its digital platform: www.everyoneon.org. Options include large programs as well as those from some smaller providers.

Connect2Compete (C2C) is EveryoneOn's flagship program for K-12 students, providing affordable internet to eligible students and families. C2C is offered in partnership with leading cable companies, including Cox Communications and Mediacom. Below is a summary of the offers provided by Cox and Mediacom.

Cost: Eligible households receive internet access for as low as $9.95 per month (plus taxes), Wi-Fi modem included. There is no deposit required, no contract to sign and no installation fees.

Equipment: A modem will be provided at no charge by the cable company providing your service.

Eligibility: To participate in the *Cox Connect2Compete* program, households must:
- Have at least one student in grades K-12.
- Have at least one person in the household participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), SNAP, TANF or public housing.
- Not have subscribed to Cox internet service in the last 90 days, and not have outstanding Cox bills or unreturned equipment.

To participate in the *Mediacom Connect2Compete* program, households must:
- Have at least one child participating in the National School Lunch Program.
- Not have subscribed to Mediacom internet service in the last 90 days, and not have outstanding Mediacom bills or unreturned equipment.

Low-cost internet programs offered by other internet service providers partnering with EveryoneOn may charge different prices, deliver higher or lower internet speeds, include or not include needed equipment, and have different eligibility requirements.

How to apply: Visit the EveryoneOn.org website (https://everyoneon.org/find-offers), where you can enter your ZIP code to find local plans and enroll online (Spanish speakers can click on a link to be taken to a translated site). To learn more about the Cox Connect2Compete program, visit the Cox website (https://www.cox.com/aboutus/connect2compete.html). To learn more about the Mediacom Connect2Compete program, visit the Mediacom website (http://www.mediacomc2c.com/). Mediacom also participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program, offering Connect2Compete+, a program offering a download speed of up to 50 Mbps, to which you can apply your ACP benefit. Learn more at the Mediacom ACP webpage (https://mediacomcable.com/acp/).

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PCs for People

PCs for People (https://www.pcsforpeople.org/) is a nonprofit that started out with the goal of bridging the digital divide by providing the necessary tools to put a functional computer into the hands of low-income individuals and get them online. Eventually, PCs for People began offering low-cost, unlimited internet through partner service providers at 4G LTE speeds (up to 50 Mbps download/10 Mbps upload).

Cost: Internet subscriptions start at $15 per month and can be purchased in one-, three-, six- and 12-month increments. Because all plans are prepaid, there is no credit check. New customers, regardless of plan length, are required to purchase a wireless LTE modem through the program, which costs $80.

PCs for People participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program. Clients that meet PCs for People's existing eligibility requirements will qualify to have their monthly internet bill covered. Learn more or apply for the ACP at https://www.pcsforpeople.org/low-cost-internet/acp/.

Equipment: The modem required with initial sign-up costs $80.

Eligibility: To receive services from PCs for People, a household must be below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or be currently enrolled in a qualifying income-based government assistance program (https://www.pcsforpeople.org/eligibility/).

How to apply: Visit the PCs for People website (https://www.pcsforpeople.org/wisp/) to view options, or call 216-352-5594 for assistance. You can order by phone, but PCs for People must first receive your proof of eligibility via an online upload when placing your order, an email to internet@pcsforpeople.org, or faxed to 651-666-1045.