

May 16, 2022

# What You Need to Know about the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program

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- For immediate help, call Freestone at (866) 702-3278 or +1 (770) 805-6292.

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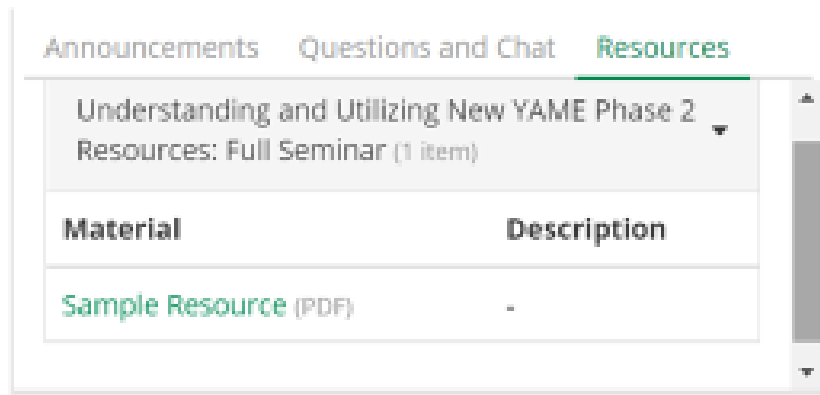
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**Affordable Connectivity Program**  
Helping Households Connect

# Affordable Connectivity Program

What is the benefit?

Who is eligible?

How can households apply?



# Affordable Connectivity Program

## Helping Households Connect

## What is the Benefit?

The Affordable Connectivity Program is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Program that provides a discount on monthly broadband bills for qualifying low-income households. Eligible households can receive:

- Up to \$30/month discount for broadband service and associated equipment rentals;
- Up to \$75/month discount for households on Tribal lands, and;
- A one-time discount for \$100 for a laptop, desktop, or tablet purchased through a participating provider.





# Affordable Connectivity Program

## Helping Households Connect



### A Household is Eligible if:

Household income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or

If a member of the household meets at least *one* of the criteria below:

- 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;
- Participates in the National School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program (including the Community Eligibility Provision);
- Received a Pell Grant in the current award year; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income program.



# Affordable Connectivity Program

## Helping Households Connect

## Two Steps to Enroll

1. Go to [AffordableConnectivity.gov](https://AffordableConnectivity.gov) to apply, or print out a mail-in application; and
2. Contact your preferred participating provider to select a plan and have the discount applied to your bill.

Some providers may have an alternative application that they will ask you to complete.

Eligible households must **both apply for the program and contact a participating provider to select a service plan.**







## Affordable Connectivity Program Helping Households Connect

# How Does the ACP Protect Consumers?

The rules protect Affordable Connectivity Program recipients by:

- Empowering consumers to choose the service plan that best meets their needs (including a plan they may already be on);
- Ensuring consumers have access to supported broadband services regardless of their credit status;
- Prohibiting providers from excluding consumers with past due balances or prior debt from enrolling in the program;
- Preventing consumers from being forced into more expensive or lower quality plans in order to receive the ACP benefit;
- Ensuring that consumers are not liable for early termination fees;
- Reducing the potential for bill shock or other financial harms;
- Allowing ACP recipients to switch providers or broadband service offerings; and
- Providing a dedicated FCC process for [ACP complaints](#).



# Affordable Connectivity Program

## Helping Households Connect

## Provider Participation

- *Eligibility.* A broadband provider must have provided broadband Internet access service to end-users prior to submitting the required application or election notice.
  - End-user service requires the provider to offer retail broadband service and must maintain a direct relationship with the customer, must be responsible for dealing with customer complaints, must handle customer billing, and must provide quality of service guarantees to the end-user. (FCC 22-2, para. 12).
  - A broadband provider can be an ETC or a non-ETC, like many cable providers, wireless Internet service providers, or non-traditional broadband providers like community-owned networks, electric cooperatives, or municipal governments.



# Provider Participation Approvals

- To participate, a broadband provider must be designated as an ETC or seek approval from the Wireline Competition Bureau. All broadband providers must file elections to USAC to participate in the ACP.
- Non-ETC providers can seek two types of approvals
  - Automatic – where the non-ETC provider demonstrates it has an established program as of April 1, 2020, that is widely available and offers Internet service offerings to eligible households and maintains verification processes that are sufficient to avoid fraud, waste, and abuse. (FCC 22-2, para. 31; 47 U.S.C. § 1752(d)(2)(B)).
  - Expedited – where the non-ETC provider without an established program demonstrates it provided qualifying broadband service to eligible households. (FCC 22-2, para. 36; 47 U.S.C. § 1752(d)(2)(B)).



# Affordable Connectivity Program

## Helping Households Connect

## Provider USAC Elections

- All providers must “elect” to participate in the ACP and gain access to the necessary USAC databases being used to administer the ACP. (FCC 22-2, para. 15).
- Existing ETCs can file elections without seeking Bureau approval to participate in the ACP. Non-ETCs will need to first apply and then obtain Bureau approval prior to filing their election with USAC.
- The elections collect information that includes:
  - Where the provider participates;
  - Whether the provider intends to distribute connected devices and supporting documentation; and,
  - Other administrative information necessary for USAC to establish participating providers in the ACP.
- More information regarding the election process is available on the USAC webpage at: <https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/participate-in-acp/>.



# Affordable Connectivity Program

Helping Households Connect

## Resources

**FCC's ACP Consumer Hub:** [www.fcc.gov/ACP](http://www.fcc.gov/ACP)

**ACP Support Center:** (877) 384-2575

**Toolkit:** [www.fcc.gov/acp-toolkit](http://www.fcc.gov/acp-toolkit)

**To apply:** [www.AffordableConnectivity.gov](http://www.AffordableConnectivity.gov)

**Contact:** [ACPinfo@fcc.gov](mailto:ACPinfo@fcc.gov)

**For Providers:** [www.fcc.gov/affordable-connectivity-program](http://www.fcc.gov/affordable-connectivity-program)



# Gibson Electric and Gibson Connect



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# Gibson Electric and Gibson Connect Facts

- Gibson Electric currently has 39,000 electric meters
- Gibson Connect has 11,876 internet customers
- 211 ACP subscribers
- 85 customers on the Lifeline Program



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# Gibson Connect Hurdles

- Subscriber Transfers
- Disconnects/Lower Packages of Past Due Accounts
- Marketing
- Low Participation Rates
- Uploading Documents for Verification
- Competing with Large Companies such as Spectrum, AT&T and Verizon



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