



DATE: August 5, 2022

SUBJECT: The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) under Section 60502 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP)

TO: State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) into law, which established the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The ACP provides eligible households a discount of up to \$30 per month off their internet bills (or \$75 per month for households living on Tribal lands), as well as a one-time \$100 discount off an eligible connected device.

All households with a child who was approved to receive free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the School Breakfast Program (SBP) within the last 12 months, including children who attend schools participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), are eligible for ACP benefits. Households are also independently eligible if (1) their income is at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (\$55,500 for a family of four); or (2) a member of the household participates in certain other Federal benefit programs—including, among others, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Medicaid, and Federal Public Housing Assistance.¹

To lower the cost of internet further, the Biden-Harris Administration has secured commitment from internet service providers across the country to offer high-speed plans that are fully covered by the ACP. As a result, millions of working families can now get high-speed internet without paying a dime.

In May, the Administration launched [GetInternet.gov](https://www.getinternet.gov)—a one-stop shop where Americans can check their eligibility, find fully covered plans, and sign up. About 13 million households have enrolled, but tens of millions more have not yet claimed their ACP benefit. We need your help to ensure all eligible families in your State sign up to save on their internet bills.

USDA encourages State Directors to help spread awareness of ACP benefits and increase enrollment in their States by taking the following steps:

¹ Households also gain ACP eligibility if one member of the household participates in one of these programs: Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit, Federal Pell Grant (received in the current award year), Lifeline, and certain Tribal assistance programs—including Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Head Start (only households meeting the income qualifying standard), Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF), and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. Households that are eligible for a broadband provider's existing low-income internet program also qualify.

- Directly contact eligible or likely-eligible households: State agencies that administer programs through which households automatically gain ACP eligibility—such as NSLP and SBP—may be well-positioned to let eligible households know about ACP. Text messages and mail campaigns sent directly to eligible (or likely eligible) populations have the highest response rates and are recommended. Where possible, please reach out to these eligible or likely-eligible households directly.
- Use every tool to tell families about [GetInternet.gov](https://www.getinternet.gov)—the one-stop shop to check eligibility, enroll, and learn which providers offer fully covered plans. ([GetInternet.gov](https://www.getinternet.gov) is mobile-accessible and available in Spanish at [AccedeAInternet.gov](https://www.accedeainternet.gov). Households can also call 877-384-2575 to learn how to apply.) For example, Albemarle County, Virginia, includes a “P.S.” about [GetInternet.gov](https://www.getinternet.gov) in every client communication by county social service workers.
- Mobilize your schools: Local schools are some of our most trusted partners when it comes to getting families connected. The Federal Government will conduct a Back-To-School campaign with information about ACP, and we encourage State agencies to work with school districts and school food authorities in their States, too. For example, New York City sent backpack flyers home via 1,700 principals to reach about one million children who attend schools participating in CEP.
- Enter data-matching agreements that streamline the enrollment process: The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) (in collaboration with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)) operates the ACP-eligibility verification portal. State agencies can enter data-matching agreements with USAC that enable automatic confirmation of eligibility by matching the household’s information with existing State government data. This process dramatically simplifies ACP enrollment for households, while maintaining the security of data. To enter a data-matching agreement for NSLP and SBP data (or other relevant datasets), please reach out to the FCC point-person, Lead Program Analyst Leigh Lee, at Leigh.Lee@usac.org or (202) 421-5118. Any data matching agreement for NSLP and SBP data must comply with FNS confidentiality and disclosure requirements.

State agencies should reference the [ACP Consumer Outreach Toolkit](#) for resources in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language (ASL), and visit the [ACP Frequently Asked Questions webpage](#) for more information. Households may apply for the ACP via [GetInternet.gov](https://www.getinternet.gov) or can call 877-384-2575.

NSLP and SBP households applying directly through the ACP website may need to show documentation proving their current participation in the NSLP and SBP if their eligibility cannot be confirmed with other personal identifying information. This may include presenting the household’s school meals approval letter or other current official documentation.

Please note that Federal law requires that a parent or guardian provide written consent before a school or school district may disclose information from the school meals application.

Therefore, in order for a child's school to disclose the household's free and reduced price eligibility determination directly to the FCC and the USAC to verify eligibility for the ACP, the school or school district must obtain consent from the household. Schools should visit the ACP website for a sample of the household consent form: [Sample ACP Consent Form](#).

The ACP provides for discounted broadband service and/or a device, rather than a direct cash benefit. Therefore, this benefit is not considered income for purposes of determining eligibility for free and reduced price school meals.

State agencies may not use Child Nutrition State Administrative Expense (SAE) funds to cover costs incurred to promote the ACP, but FNS encourages State agencies to use non SAE funds, if available, to support awareness activities, including sharing information about the ACP.

FNS appreciates the exceptional efforts of State agencies and local Program operators working to meet the needs of participants during this challenging time. Please contact your Regional Office with any questions.

Sincerely,

Tina Namian
Director
School Meals Policy Division
Food and Nutrition Service