



# Save the Affordable Connectivity Program

A resource for advocates fighting for technology that works for all of us

Adapted from the Center's [Snapshot: ACP](#)

## Why does broadband access matter? What is the Affordable Connectivity Program?

Today, access to high quality, affordable internet is essential to attaining good-paying jobs, quality health care, education opportunities, and so many more critical goods and services. Despite broadband internet's importance to everyday life, [more than 24 million people lack access](#) to quality broadband in the United States — especially people who live in rural areas, tribal lands, communities of color, and low-income neighborhoods.

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) provided low-income households up to \$30/month toward broadband service (and up to \$75/month for low-income households living on Tribal lands). Because of the ACP, 20 million families no longer needed to choose between internet access and other household essentials like groceries, rent, and utilities.

## STATE-OF-PLAY



### Building on Past Successes

The Lifeline program was created in 1985 to defray the cost of communication for low-income households. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 created the Universal Service Fund (USF) to manage Lifeline. In 2020, Congress created the temporary Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB), \$50/month voucher for broadband. Less than a year later, the EBB became the permanent \$14.2 billion ACP.



### Present Challenges

Unfortunately, in June 2024, the ACP's funding expired, meaning the subsidy is unavailable. Despite overwhelming support, proven efficacy, and bipartisan efforts, securing funding remains elusive because of a lack of consensus around the source.



### Possibilities for the Future

The future of ACP today is tied directly to the future of the USF, which needs reform. In July 2024 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit found USF to be unconstitutional. The Supreme Court will hear the case in 2025.

[FCC: State-by-state Impacts of USF](#)

## POTENTIAL FUNDING SOLUTIONS

### Funding Extension

Last year, the bipartisan [ACP Extension Act](#) provided an additional \$7 billion to revive ACP until more permanent funding is established.

### Spectrum Auction

As proposed by Sen. Maria Cantwell, D. Wash., Congress can reauthorize [spectrum authority](#) and allow the FCC to borrow from the Treasury to temporarily fund ACP.

### USF Reform

The current home of Lifeline needs to be the future home of ACP, given the overlapping missions. Reforming USF could provide long-term funding for ACP.



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