Announcing FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit Program

In December 2020, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, which contained a significant amount of COVID relief funding in addition to the FY2021 annual appropriations.

The law created a new program that subsidizes broadband internet access as well as devices for certain households. This program is administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and is called the “Emergency Broadband Benefit Program.” This program could be extremely useful to individuals served by Aging and Disability programs. Beginning May 12, 2021, eligible households will be able to enroll in the Program to receive a monthly discount of the cost of broadband service from an approved provider.

Under the law, the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program is open to households that participate in an existing low-income or pandemic relief program offered by a broadband provider; Lifeline subscribers, including those that are on Medicaid or accept SNAP benefits; households with kids receiving free and reduced-price lunch or school breakfast; Pell grant recipients; and those who have lost jobs and seen their income reduced in the last year.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program will provide eligible households with discounts of up to $50 a month for broadband service, and up to $75 a month if the household is on Tribal lands. It also will provide a one-time discount of up to $100 on a computer or tablet for eligible households. Eligible households can enroll through an approved provider or by visiting https://getemergencybroadband.org.

The Commission will be providing a variety of materials for partners to use in their efforts to increase awareness about the program. For more information about the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, please visit: https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit.

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