

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR STATES

How to Increase Access to the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP)

The FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP) is a \$3.2B broadband subsidy program to help households struggling to pay for internet service during the pandemic. Eligible recipients of the Emergency Broadband Benefit include students participating in the National Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program (FRPL). This is one of the student populations most likely to lack broadband access when schools were closed due to COVID-19. This subsidy only works if families opt-in to participate; there are important steps states can take to increase awareness, participation and enrollment of students and their households in the EBBP.



FAST FACTS ABOUT THE EBBP

- The enrollment process begins April 26; funding is first come, first serve.
- Eligible households can receive a monthly discount from participating internet service providers (ISPs). The discount is up to \$50 per month off the standard rate for Internet service and associated equipment. On Tribal lands, the monthly discount is up to \$75 per month.
- All households with students in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)¹ schools are automatically eligible for the benefit.
- Previously purchased school-provided hotspots are not eligible for EBBP reimbursement. However, households can buy LTE hotspots with unlimited data, if they choose.



HOW CAN STATES ENSURE UNCONNECTED FAMILIES CAN ACCESS THE EBBP?

States and school districts can support families by building awareness of the program. States may wish to focus communications efforts on:

1. Unconnected households who do not currently have broadband access; and
2. Connected households who may not be aware that they are eligible for the EBBP subsidy or need additional support enrolling in the program.

¹ CEP schools must have an Identified Student Percentage of at least 40%. This means that at least 40% of students are categorically eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch based on their participation in public assistance programs like SNAP, TANF, FDPIR, Medicaid, or if they are a homeless, migrant or foster care youth.

States should consider the following steps for getting eligible families enrolled:

- **Step 1** | Identify the CEP schools that are likely to include households who are eligible for the EBBP, using the USDA's [list of CEP schools](#).
- **Step 2** | Communicate to all school districts with CEP schools to ensure families know they are eligible for the program.
- **Step 3** | Encourage all ISPs to provide residential broadband in the state to participate in the program. Review all information about the EBBP service provider offerings (as published by the FCC).
- **Step 4** | If relevant, create an [RFI](#) so that states and students (and their households) understand the K-12 telecom service offerings. A transparent list of providers and potential pricing agreements is key to streamlining the process.
- **Step 5** | Partner with community-based organizations² to ensure that qualifying households across a diverse range of communities are aware of the program. Make families aware that they may opt in to continue service when the EBBP ends, without fearing hidden price changes, once the program comes to an end. ISPs may opt to provide continuity of service for the same price and are not permitted to substantially increase pricing for these program participants once the EBBP short-run terms of service are complete.
- **Step 6** | Develop outreach materials that school districts can use to get the word out to families. Include a list of ISPs that are participating in the program, an explanation of how families can enroll, and Frequently Asked Questions).

It is important to note that the FCC is producing outreach materials in a variety of languages including Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, and Traditional Chinese. Braille, large print, alternative electronic formats, and audio recordings may also be provided upon request. States should include FCC content, including communicating information in languages suited for their demographic, and distribute the information to school districts.

- **Step 7** | Communicate a variety of additional funding programs and sources to districts and households: EducationSuperHighway's [summary of federal funding available for K-12 home connectivity](#) [here](#), including \$7.2 billion added to E-rate for home connectivity purchases, \$122 billion for K-12 schools, and \$10 billion to states for broadband capital projects through the American Rescue Plan.



HELPFUL LINKS & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [FCC Report and Order](#) (released Feb 26)
- [FCC's Fact Sheet of the Order](#) (what is the benefit, who is eligible, how to sign up)
- [FCC's EBB page](#) (helpful to share to providers + consumers with questions)
- [USAC's Program Overview of the EBB](#)
- [Benton Institute's Summary of the EBB Order](#)
- [National Digital Inclusion Alliance's Outreach Guidance and EBB resources](#)
- [ExcelinEd's recommendations: How States Can Leverage EBBP Funds](#)

² For example, the NDIA is an organization that has released guidance on potential ways to ensure outreach guidance by states and districts.