

## Affordable Connectivity Program Wind-Down

How this impacts our state and you

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## Affordable Connectivity Program(ACP)

- The Affordable Connectivity Program started on Dec. 31, 2021, replacing the Emergency Broadband Benefit.
- Federal Benefit Program that gave qualified individuals \$30 off their monthly internet plan.
- Qualifications: participant of several government programs or being at 200% of the federal poverty level.





## ACP in SC

- More than 423,280 individuals in SC rely on the Affordable Connectivity Program for affordable internet service.
- The program funds are set to run out at the end of April if Congress doesn't enact a new funding.
- At this time, no funding has been approved.

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## Wind-Down

- In January 2024, the Federal Communications Commission released a wind-down statement for ACP.
- According to the wind-down, if Congress does not refund the program, funds will run out in April.
- February 7<sup>th</sup> 2024 was the last day to apply for ACP.
- If enrolled by February 7<sup>th</sup>, enrollees have the benefit until the end of April.
- Enrolled participants should have received notices from your internet service provider (ISP) explaining what this means about your bill.

## ISP Notices

- The notices must indicate that the ACP is ending and include
  - The date of the last bill on which the full ACP benefit will be applied.
  - The amount that the household will be billed for the service once the full ACP benefit is no longer available or that the household will be subject to the provider's undiscounted rates and general terms and conditions after the end of the ACP.
  - Remind ACP households of their right to change their service or opt out of continuing their service at the end of the ACP.

## Contacting your ISP

- On May 1, 2024, your internet bill will increase by at least \$30.
- If you are fine with this increase, do nothing.
- If you wish to talk to your provider about different plan options, contact your provider as soon as possible to discuss.
- Ask your provider about any low-cost options.
- If you cannot afford the plan after losing the discount, you must call and cancel your plan with your provider.

## Consumer Protections

- May transfer ACP benefits to other providers during the wind-down period.
- ISPs cannot terminate service for 90 days after the payment due date. When a household enters a delinquent status, the provider may switch the household to a lower-cost plan. However, the provider must provide advance notice to the household.
- ISPs cannot charge early termination fees to eligible households who purchased and applied the ACP benefit to their service plans. This includes service contracts that continue to apply after the end of the ACP. Suppose a household entered into a service plan with an extended service contract, applied their ACP benefit to such a service plan, and decided to terminate the service contract early. In that case, the provider cannot charge the household an early termination fee for terminating that service contract early, even after the household
   stops receiving the ACP benefit. Pametto connect www.palmettocareconnections.org

## Lifeline Discount

- Another FCC benefit program
- \$9.25 discount on phone, internet or bundled plan.
- Qualifications

Medicaid	SNAP
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Federal Public Housing Assistance
Veterans Pension & Survivors Benefit	135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines

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## What is 135 % of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines

The table below reflects 135% of the 2024 Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Household Size	48 Contiguous States, D.C., and Territories	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$20,331	\$25,394	\$23,369
2	\$27,594	\$34,479	\$31,725
3	\$34,857	\$43,565	\$40,082
4	\$42,120	\$52,650	\$48,438
5	\$49,383	\$61,736	\$56,795
6	\$56,646	\$70,821	\$65,151
7	\$63,909	\$79,907	\$73,508
8	\$71,172	\$88,992	\$81,864
For each additional person, add:	7,263	\$9,086	\$8,357

You may have to show proof of income, like a tax return or three consecutive pays stubs, when you apply for Lifeline.

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## Other Internet Options and Resources

### MiFi devices

### PCs for People

 Offers high-speed 4G LTE internet service solutions starting at \$15 per month. Service plans are prepaid with no credit checks or hidden fees. Customers can purchase their hotspot device or modem by phone or online and receive the device and activate it within 5-10 business days. Must meet certain qualifications (200% Federal Poverty Level)

#### • Assistance with finding an Internet Service Provider (ISP)

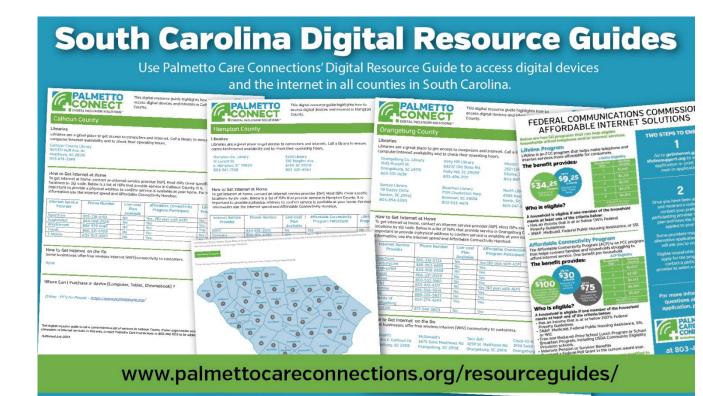
 $_{\odot}$  Broadband Maps

## PCC's Resource Guides

### PCC Resource Guides

- Free Wi-Fi locations- Libraries and businesses
- ISP info including low-cost plans
- Where to purchase a digital device

https://www.palmettocareconnection s.org/resourceguides/



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## ACP Week of Action 4/22-4/26

- Congress is in recess and will be home meeting with constituents. When they return
  voting will take place on the Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act.
- What exactly needs to happen for ACP funding to be extended?
  - 1. The U.S. House of Representatives must vote on and pass *H.R.6929 Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act of 2024* by simple majority.
  - 2. The U.S. Senate must vote on and pass S.3565 Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act of 2024 by a simple majority.
  - 3. Then, a conference committee made of House and Senate members works out any differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill.
  - 4. The bill is sent to the President for their signature.

## What can I do?

#ExtendACP hashtag for social media post

Sites where you can find more information on how to help.

- www.dontdisconnectus.org
- www.digitalinclusion.org/affordable-connectivity-program-transition/
- Email Congress to Fund ACP | Don't Disconnect US Day 2 (good.do)

## Questions/ Contact Information

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