

INTERNET ASSISTANCE

Back in December 2020, Congress approved the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) Program as part of the final stimulus package under President Donald Trump. **This program would give Americans with low incomes or those who lost income during the pandemic the ability to sign up for \$50-per-month internet subsidies** that would be administered by the Federal Communications Commission and come out of a \$3.2 billion fund set up by the Treasury. On Thursday, the FCC finally revealed when and how eligible Americans will be able to sign up for those subsidies.

According to a press release, eligible households will be able to sign up for internet subsidies starting on **Wednesday, May 12th to receive a monthly discount off the cost of broadband service from an approved provider**. The families can enroll directly through their providers or on <https://getemergencybroadband.org>.

Related: FCC moves forward with plan to allow Internet fast lane

As the website explains, there are [a number of ways to qualify for the subsidies](#), from those who qualify for Lifeline benefits through participation in SNAP, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, Federal Public Housing Assistance, or Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit, those who participate in select Tribal programs, those that experienced a substantial loss of income since February 29, 2020, and those who received a federal Pell Grant.

If you find out that your household qualifies for the internet subsidies, here's what you could receive:

- Up to a \$50/month discount on your broadband service and associated equipment rentals
- Up to a \$75/month discount if your household is on qualifying Tribal lands
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer (with a co-payment of more than \$10 but less than \$50)

Be sure to [check out the website](#) if you want to know how you can apply for the program. You will have to submit an application and be approved, which could take some time depending on how you apply.

Your household qualifies for the Emergency Broadband Benefit if it has an income at or below 135% of the [federal poverty guidelines](#) OR any member of the household:

- Qualifies for Lifeline benefits through participation in SNAP, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, Federal Public Housing Assistance, or Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit;
- Participates in one of several **Tribal specific programs**: Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal Head Start (only households meeting the relevant income qualifying standard), Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations;
- Experienced a substantial loss of income since February 29, 2020 with a total household income in 2020 at or below \$99,000 for single filers and \$198,000 for joint filers;
- Received a federal Pell Grant in the current award year;
- Received approval for benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision, in the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school year; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income or COVID-19 program, and that provider received FCC approval for its eligibility verification process.

Only one monthly service discount and one device discount is allowed per [household](#). Program rules acknowledge there may be more than one eligible household residing at the same address.

Qualify Through Your Child or Dependent

Any member of your household can make your household eligible. For example, if [your child or dependent](#) participates in the Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch Program, your household qualifies for the Emergency Broadband Benefit.

If You Already Receive Lifeline Benefits

- Lifeline is a program to help make communications services more affordable for low-income consumers. If you currently receive Lifeline benefits, you automatically qualify for the Emergency Broadband Benefit, and you can receive both benefits at the same time. You can apply your Emergency Broadband Benefit and your Lifeline benefit to the same or separate services. Talk to your broadband provider to learn how to start receiving EBB Program discounts.
- If Your Broadband Provider Already Has Its Own Low-Income or COVID-19 Relief Program
- If your broadband provider already has its own low-income or COVID-19 relief program, you may be able to qualify through this program as well. Talk to your broadband provider for more information.
- If You Use SNAP, Medicaid, or Other Programs
- You can receive the Emergency Broadband Benefit if you (or someone in your household) participates in one of these federal assistance programs:
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps
 - Medicaid
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
 - Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch Program

Tribal Specific Programs:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance,
- Tribal Head Start (only households meeting the relevant income qualifying standard),
- Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program, including at US Department of Agriculture Community Eligibility Provision schools
- Received a Federal Pell Grant in the current award year

You may need to show a card, letter, or official document as [proof that you participate](#) in one of these programs when you apply for the Emergency Broadband Benefit.

If Your Household Income Is a Certain Amount

You can get the Emergency Broadband Benefit if your income is 135% or less than the [federal poverty guidelines](#). The guideline is based on your household size and state.

You will have to show [proof of income](#), like pay stubs or a tax return, when you apply for the EBB Program.

If You Experienced a Substantial Loss of Income

If you experienced a substantial loss of income since February 29, 2020 because you lost your job or were furloughed, you may qualify for the EBB Program. To qualify in this way, your total household income in 2020 must be at or below \$99,000 (for single tax filers) and \$198,000 (for joint tax filers). You will have to show [proof](#) of your total income, like a tax return or official documentation containing income information, as well as proof of the loss of income, like a termination letter or furlough notice, when you apply for the EBB Program.