



## Help Girl Scouts Get Internet at Home and a Connected Device with the FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit Program

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (COVID relief law) that Congress passed in December 2020 funded the Emergency Broadband Benefit program through the Federal Communications Commission at \$3.2 billion nationally. The program will provide a temporary discount of up to \$50 per month towards broadband service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on Tribal lands. Only one benefit is provided to each household. Eligible households can also receive a \$100 one-time discount to purchase Internet-connected devices such as a laptop, desktop, or tablet computer.

Service Units and Troop Leaders may wish to connect with families without broadband connections to share this information. The entire family will benefit at home by connecting to virtual healthcare services, virtual classrooms, jobs, and ***Girl Scouts at Home and GSACPC's Virtual Girl Scouts.***

The FCC opened the application portal on **Wednesday, May 12, 2021**. Eligible households enrolling in the program may receive discounted broadband service from an approved provider. Consumers may enroll with an approved provider by visiting <https://getemergencybroadband.org>.

The program will end once the program funds are exhausted, or six months after the Department of Health and Human Services declares an end to the pandemic, whichever comes first. The program is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). They also administer the Lifeline program. USAC hosts the application portal and the [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://GetEmergencyBroadband.org) consumer website.

### Internet-Connected Device

The Emergency Broadband Benefit is a temporary program to help households struggling to pay for broadband during the pandemic a one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop, or tablet computer purchased through a participating provider if the household contributes more than \$10 but less than \$50 for the purchase. The connected device needs to be provided by the same provider supplying the broadband. The service provider will seek reimbursement from the program. The Emergency Broadband Benefit is not a coupon to be used in third-party stores. The benefit is not a direct-to-consumer benefit. It is limited to one device and one discount per eligible household. The device discount can only be used once for eligible households, even if the household changes providers.

### Eligibility

A household is eligible if any of the criteria below applies to any member (child or adult):

- Received a Pell Grant in the current award year
- Is approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced school lunch program or school breakfast program in the 2019-2020 school year
- Experienced a substantial loss of income due to a job loss or furlough since 2/29/2020, and the total household income in 2020 is below \$99,000 for single filers or \$198,000 for joint filers.



- Meets the eligibility criteria for participating providers existing low-income or COVID -19 program
- If they qualify or are currently receiving the Lifeline\* program
  - Household income is less than 135% of the Federal poverty guidelines
  - 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
  - Tribal programs (and you live on qualifying Tribal lands)

### [How to Apply/Show you Qualify](#)

#### What is the definition of a Household for the purposes of the program?

A household is a group of people who live together and share money (even if you are not related to each other). If you live together or you do not share money, you are two or more households. A household can qualify because of eligible dependent children that meet the eligibility criteria. You may have to answer questions about your household when you apply for the EBBP. A household worksheet will be available to assist in determining household eligibility.

Eligible households within multi-unit dwellings such as apartment buildings, nursing homes, and group homes can also take advantage of the benefit. Households within multi-unit dwellings, where the landlord or the property manager is the internet account holder, may be able to apply the benefit to that broadband service if they otherwise qualify. Suppose the household has a bill or other liability for their broadband access through someone else, such as the property owner. In that case, the household could switch temporarily to using EBB support to pay for broadband service instead of relying on that third party's support. The device discount can only be used once for eligible households, even if the household changes providers.

#### How to Enroll in the Program

Option 1: Contact a participating broadband provider directly to learn about their application process.

Option 2: Go to [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://www.getemergencybroadband.org) to apply online and to find participating providers near you.

Option 3: Send a mail-in application, along with proof of eligibility to: Emergency Broadband, Support Center, P.O. Box 7081, London, KY 40742.

If you are helping eligible households enroll, it is important to remember that assistance with online or paper applications must be provided in person. The individual applying for the benefit must either sign the paper application or make other attestations in the online portal for the application process.

#### Enrolling with a Provider

The service provider may be able to assist the consumer applying through the national verifier service provider portal. The consumer needs to be in a store or other location with the employee

of the broadband provider helping them enroll through the [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://www.getemergencybroadband.org) portal or using the mail-in portal. The employee cannot take the information over the phone. The service provider assists the consumer (in person) with applying through the National Verifier Service provider portal, or the service provider helps the consumer apply using their FCC-approved alternate verification process.

[Find an EBB Provider through this link.](#)

#### Emergency Broadband Benefit Application Process

Click the **Apply Now** button at the [www.GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://www.getemergencybroadband.org) site.

The application will ask for the consumer's full legal name and birth date. Then they will enter their residential address where they will receive service. They cannot use a P.O. Box. They may also use a location description.

The next question will ask if they plan to qualify through a child or dependent (or a benefit qualifying person). A child or dependent may be the person in the household who qualifies them for this benefit.

The consumer will be asked to verify their identity. They can choose from a Social Security number, driver's license number, Tribal ID, military ID, taxpayer identification, passport, state ID, or some other kind of government ID. Consumers may be required to upload copies of the documents they are using to verify their identity. Entering a Social Security number will allow for the fastest processing time.

The online application will allow them to create an account where they can track their application. The application will ask the consumer which program they participate in that qualifies them for the Emergency Broadband Benefit. After the consumer submits the information, they will see a confirmation screen to double-check the information they entered for errors. The consumer will be asked to click a button that allows the Federal Communications Commission to verify the information for eligibility. They will compare the data entered against their electronic databases to verify their name, address, and eligibility.

If the FCC can confirm their eligibility with their existing online databases, the consumer will get the next step to contact a broadband provider near them. It provides them with contact information for companies near them and tells them how long their eligibility is valid. It will encourage them to sign up soon since this is a limited-time program. If they are a tribal member, it will allow them to confirm the information which qualifies them for the enhanced tribal benefit.

If they cannot verify consumers through the online system, they may correct errors right in the application portal. For some errors, they will need to upload documentation. Suppose another consumer is receiving the Emergency Broadband Benefit at the same address. In that case, the consumer may confirm they are an independent economic household, which addresses the one per household rule.

Once the consumer corrects any errors and has uploaded documents, they will be asked to initial and sign the program certification.

#### Paper Applications



If the consumer does not have access to the online portal, they can apply with a paper application at [USAC.org](https://www.usac.org) or [GetEmergencyBroadband.org](https://www.getemergencybroadband.org) when the program launches on May 12, 2021. They should use BLACK ink and write in capital letters on the application. They strongly urge consumers to include an email address on their paper application if they have one. Consumers should complete a one-per-household worksheet with their application and paper copies of their verification information with the application. If the FCC has to request additional documentation from the consumer, it will delay the application.

### Consumer Protections

Participating providers must give households notice about the last date or billing cycle that the full benefit will apply to their bill. Or the provider must provide households with notice about the date or billing cycle that a partial benefit will apply to their bill. Providers must give information to consumers about the cost of broadband service after the program ends. Households will need to opt-in or request to continue broadband services with their provider. If they do not opt-in or select a new service plan with the provider, their broadband service will end once the program ends. Even if they had broadband service with the same provider before enrolling in the Emergency Broadband Benefit, they would need to opt-in to continue broadband services after the program ends.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit program is open to all broadband providers, not just those currently offering Lifeline services. Fixed broadband services are provided to your home or a single location. These include cable, fiber optic, DSL, satellite, and fixed wireless services. Mobile broadband services are device-based and available throughout the service provider's cellular coverage area, similar to cell phone services. Not all providers plan to offer connected devices through the program.

### Questions and Answers

*If the consumer lives in the District of Columbia or Puerto Rico, can they apply too?* Yes! Anyone in all 50 states, all U.S. Territories, and the District of Columbia may apply.

*How do you measure a substantial loss of income?* Showing loss of income due to job loss or furlough is only half of the requirement. You must also show that your annual household income is now below \$99,000 for single filers or \$198,000 for joint filers. If your household income is below these thresholds, but you did not lose a job or were furloughed, then you will not qualify if this is the only eligibility criteria you will use.

If you did not lose a job or were not furloughed but are under \$99,000 or \$198,000, then you are not eligible.

Do unemployment benefits count as income? If the unemployment benefit income did not put the individual or household over the \$99k single filer or \$198k joint filers.

*Will the consumer need to go through this process each month?* No. Households do not need to prove their eligibility monthly.

*Can the support center help people apply over the phone?* Yes, if the consumer has a disability or other challenges and needs help.

*What languages are available for phone assistance?* In English and Spanish. The portal can be translated into different languages using translation tools and processes.



*Can Lifeline and EBB benefits be combined?* Yes, on a bundled package with voice support. Lifeline discount needs to be applied first and then the EBB discount.

*Can an existing customer apply the discount to their services if they already have internet service?* Yes. Providers cannot limit EBB discounts to new customers.

#### More Questions?

[Link to YouTube recording](#) of a detailed overview presentation in American Sign Language Interpretation and closed captioning.

#### Emergency Broadband Outreach Toolkit

<https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-broadband-benefit-outreach-toolkit>

#### Emergency Broadband Helpline

They can help walk applicants through the process if they have a disability or other impediment to making the application independently. 833-511-0311

\* Lifeline is a federal program that lowers the monthly cost of phone and internet. Eligible customers will get up to \$9.25 (up to \$34.25 on Tribal lands) toward their bill. How do you qualify for Lifeline? Household income is less than 135% of the Federal poverty guidelines, or a member of the household participates in one of these 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, Tribal programs (and you live on qualifying Tribal lands). Current Lifeline participants are automatically eligible. Current Lifeline participants will need to select an eligible provider to receive the benefit. Lifeline and EBB can be combined, and the service provider must apply for the Lifeline benefit first and then the EBB. Lifeline and EBB can also be kept separate, and a consumer can receive both benefits from different providers.

Current Lifeline participants cannot be auto-enrolled by their current broadband benefit provider. They need to provide affirmative consent before they can be enrolled. Eligible households can receive the Lifeline and Emergency Broadband Benefit at the same time. Both Lifeline and EBB can be applied for the same service. Lifeline and EBB can be used on separate services such as a mobile phone provided through the Lifeline Service and the Emergency Broadband Benefit through a different provider.