

PUBLIC NOTICE

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WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU REMINDER OF FEBRUARY 8, 2024 ENROLLMENT FREEZE FOR THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

WC Docket No. 21-450

In this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) reminds providers, eligible households, and all other Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) stakeholders of the upcoming enrollment freeze beginning Thursday, February 8, 2024. To receive the ACP benefit, eligible households must be enrolled in the program by February 7, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. ET.¹ The ACP is the largest and most successful broadband affordability program in our nation's history and helps more than 23 million low-income households, across rural, suburban, and urban America obtain the internet service they need to access health care, work, educational opportunities, and more. Even with news of the program's projected end in around April 2024, the ACP has remained popular as more households continued to enroll in the program each month.

The ACP funding appropriated by Congress is finite and, without additional appropriated funding, April 2024 is currently projected to be the last month for which the ACP can fully reimburse providers for the benefits passed through to enrolled households.² To manage the end of the ACP, the Bureau announced the need to stop new enrollments on February 8, 2024 to ensure an orderly transition and to preserve the remaining ACP funding.³ Concurrent with the last day of ACP enrollments, the Bureau and USAC will also stop reviewing new provider applications and election notices on February 7, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. ET.⁴

Eligible low-income households that wish to enroll in the ACP must have a qualified application and enroll in the program with their preferred provider by February 7, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. ET.⁵ At the start of the enrollment freeze, both the paper and electronic ACP applications will be removed and no longer accessible.⁶ All ACP households enrolled at the time of the enrollment freeze will be able to remain enrolled and participate pursuant to program rules through the final month of ACP service.⁷

¹ *Affordable Connectivity Program*, Order, DA 24-23, at 8, para. 21 (WCB Jan. 11, 2024) (*ACP Wind-Down Order*).

² The Bureau will confirm the end of the last fully funded month approximately 60 days in advance. *See ACP Wind-Down Order* at 4, para. 8. Based on current projections, we anticipate the last fully funded month to be April 2024 and anticipate this announcement will occur in late February 2024. *Id.* However, this date is an estimate and subject to change. *Id.*

³ *ACP Wind-Down Order* at 8, para. 21.

⁴ *Id.* at 13, para. 32.

⁵ *See id.*

⁶ *Id.* at 8, para. 22.

⁷ *See id.* at 8-9, paras. 21-22.

Households that are de-enrolled from the program, such as for failure to use their ACP-supported service as required under the Commission's rules, will not be able to re-apply or re-enroll in the ACP during the enrollment freeze.⁸

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), the ACP administrator, have taken a number of steps to ensure that consumers are aware of the ACP enrollment freeze and projected end of the ACP. The FCC and USAC have updated consumer-facing webpages such as fcc.gov/ACP and AffordableConnectivity.gov and the consumer application portal at GetInternet.gov to include prominently displayed information regarding the enrollment freeze and other important information about ACP wind-down. USAC has also updated its consumer communications concerning the application and enrollment processes to include information about the enrollment freeze and deadline for enrolling. The FCC and USAC have also hosted webinars and office hours for providers and outreach partners about the ACP wind-down. At the Bureau's direction, beginning in early February and continuing through April, USAC is issuing written notices to all enrolled households about the ACP wind-down. These consumer notices complement the required provider written notices to ACP participants⁹ and will include information about the program's expected end date and direct consumers to consult AffordableConnectivity.gov and their service providers to learn more about how the end of the ACP will impact their broadband service and bill.

The *ACP Wind-Down Order* requires participating broadband providers to notify ACP households with at least three written notices about the wind-down of the program.¹⁰ Providers were required to send the first of these notices by January 25, 2024.¹¹ The additional required consumer notices will provide more specificity and must advise ACP households of program termination and the potential impact on their broadband service and bills, including the date of the last bill on which the full ACP benefit will be applied and 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.¹² The consumer notices must also remind ACP households of their right to change their service or opt out of continuing their service at the end of the ACP.¹³ The Bureau, in coordination with USAC, will be reviewing provider compliance with the notice requirements to ensure that households are being given ample notice about the end of the ACP and impact on their bill. Service providers are highly encouraged to attend USAC webinars and office hours regarding ACP wind-down to learn more about and get answers to any questions they may have concerning compliance with ACP wind-down requirements.¹⁴

For further information about the Public Notice, contact Negheen Sanjar, Attorney Advisor, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau at (202) 418-7390 or by email at Negheen.Sanjar@fcc.gov.

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⁸ See e.g. 47 CFR § 54.1809

⁹ *Id.* at 5-6, para. 12.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ To learn more about USAC webinars and office hours and to access previous recorded sessions, visit <https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/affordable-connectivity-program-learn/>.