



Protect Internet Access: Extend the Affordable Connectivity Program Today

By Summer Strand, Chairperson of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

High-speed internet is vital for all of us to live, work, and connect with one another. In recent years, we have come a long way toward improving internet access and affordability in Wisconsin. However, we are poised to take a major step backwards unless Congress acts to extend the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

In 2021, President Biden signed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which established the ACP and made internet service more affordable by providing a discount of up to \$30 per month for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. The ACP helps low-income households, including families with children who receive free and reduced school lunch and people who receive veteran pension and survivor benefits, afford internet access in their homes.

Last year, my colleagues and I traveled the state during the Internet for All Wisconsin Listening Tour. During each stop, as participants shared their experiences and ideas for a more connected Wisconsin, many also highlighted the importance of the ACP because it helped make internet service more affordable for families in our state.

As of January 2024, over 22 million households in the U.S. are enrolled and receiving the ACP monthly benefit, including more than 420,000 Wisconsin households. This means that more families can connect to work and school, meet with a healthcare provider, and access other important information and services online. Research shows that broadband benefit programs for low-income households increase their earnings and employment rates. Broadband access also corresponds to improved health outcomes. These positive impacts help boost our economy, which benefits us all.

The ACP is an effective resource for millions of families, but without action from Congress, it will end as early as this April.

In January, a bipartisan group of Congressional lawmakers introduced a bill to continue funding the ACP, but many hurdles must be cleared before the bill can be signed into law. Gov. Tony Evers has urged Congress to extend the ACP, along with internet service providers, stakeholders, and other state leaders. Make your voice heard by contacting your U.S. senators and representative at [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) and asking them to extend the ACP.

The ACP will be available to households until funds run out. Households currently enrolled in the ACP will continue receiving the discount until the program ends.

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin's Broadband Office remains focused on its mission to make high-speed internet service accessible and affordable for all Wisconsinites. Please contact the PSC Internet & Phone Helpline at (608)267-3595 to access assistance from our dedicated staff.

Access to broadband infrastructure alone is not enough to bridge the digital divide. We must ensure internet service is also affordable so everyone can participate in our economy and society. The path to internet affordability starts by extending the ACP.

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