Affordable Connectivity Pilot Programs –
Frequently Asked Questions

Affordable Connectivity Program Overview

1. What is the Affordable Connectivity Program?

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program that provides a discount on monthly broadband bills for qualifying low-income households. Eligible households can receive:

- Up to $30/month discount for broadband service and associated equipment rentals;
- Up to $75/month discount for households on Tribal lands; and

A one-time discount of up to $100 for a laptop, desktop, or tablet purchased through a participating provider. Participating consumers must pay a co-pay of more than $10 but less than $50.

2. Who is eligible to enroll in the Affordable Connectivity Program?

A household is eligible if:

Household income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or

- If a member of the household meets at least *one* of the criteria below:
- Participates in SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Housing Assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), WIC, or Lifeline;
- Participates in one of these Tribal specific programs and lives on qualifying Tribal lands: Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal TANF, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, or Head Start (income based);
- Participates in Free or Reduced-Price School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program, including the USDA Community Eligibility Provision;
- Received a Pell Grant during the current award year;
- Receives Veterans Pension or Survivors Benefit; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income program.

ACP Pilot Programs Overview

The FCC has created two pilot programs – the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program and the ACP Navigator Pilot Program – that are designed to increase awareness of and facilitate enrollment in the Affordable Connectivity Program and to provide consumers assistance with ACP applications.

3. What is the purpose of the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program?

The FCC established the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program to increase awareness of the ACP specifically among recipients of federal housing assistance and to facilitate enrollment in the program by providing targeted assistance with completion of the ACP application. Selected participants can request access to the National Verifier to provide in-person assistance to help consumers complete and submit their ACP application.

Qualifying federal housing assistance programs include Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program (Section 8 Vouchers); Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA)/Section 202/Section 811; Public Housing; and Affordable Housing Programs for American Indians, Alaska Natives, or Native Hawaiians.

4. What is the purpose of the ACP Navigator Pilot Program?

The Commission established the ACP Navigator Pilot to grant trusted, neutral third-party entities such as schools, school districts, or other local, state, or Tribal governmental entities access to the National Verifier for purposes of assisting consumers with applying for the Affordable Connectivity Program.

5. What types of activities are within the scope of the Pilot Programs?

For the ACP Navigator Pilot Program, applicants may propose projects to provide direct ACP application assistance to eligible households in completing the ACP application. For the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program, applicants may propose projects that include creating new promotional materials, providing direct ACP application assistance, and/or providing site-based outreach for recipients of federal housing assistance.

Eligibility

6. Which entities are eligible to apply for the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program?

Entities eligible to apply for the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program include Federal agencies; state, local, and Tribal housing agencies (including housing authorities). For purposes of the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program, Federal agencies and state, local, and Tribal housing agencies (including housing authorities) may partner with tenant associations, or non-profits and community-based organizations that provide ACP-related or other support for federal housing assistance recipients. Federal agencies and state, local, and Tribal housing agencies must disclose any such partnerships on their application for the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program.

7. Which entities are eligible to apply for the ACP Navigator Pilot Program?

Public and government entities, such as public schools and public school districts, and local, state, or Tribal government entities are eligible to apply for participation in the ACP Navigator Pilot Program. Examples of such eligible entities include, but are not limited to, state and local institutions of higher learning, state veterans affairs offices, state and community libraries, and Tribal schools and libraries.

Non-profit organizations are not eligible to apply for the ACP Navigator Pilot Program. However, eligible government entities selected to participate in the ACP Navigator Pilot Program may enter into partnerships with neutral non-profit organizations provided that the participating government entity indicates in its ACP Navigator Pilot Program application that it is partnering with one or more specific non-profit organization(s) and identifies any such partner organization(s).

8. How many entities may participate in the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program?

Initially, up to 20 participants may be selected to participate in the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program.

9. How many entities may participate in the ACP Navigator Pilot Program?
Up to 20 participants may be selected to participate in the ACP Navigator Pilot Program.

Application Process

10. When does the application window for the Pilot Programs open?
The application window opens on November 21, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). Applications will be accepted through an online portal.

11. What is the deadline for submitting an application?
The application window closes on January 9, 2023 at 9:00 p.m. EST.

12. What is the application process?
Eligible entities seeking to participate in one or both Pilot Programs must submit an application through the online portal. There will be one application for both Pilot Programs and applicants will be required to indicate to which program(s) they are applying.

Prospective applicants will first need to register for an account with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) at https://forms.universalservice.org/acppilotprograms/register before logging into the application portal at https://forms.universalservice.org/portal/login.

13. What information is required in Pilot Program applications?
Please refer to the October 11, 2022 Public Notice for a detailed description of the required application information. Required application information may vary depending on the Pilot Program to which the applicant is applying, and whether the applicant is seeking grant funding from the FCC for their Pilot Program activities.

Applicants will have to provide the following types of information:
- Applicant entity information and information for any qualifying partner organizations
- Contact information of the individual submitting the application and any qualifying partner organization
- Information on the proposed Pilot activities and projected outcomes and milestones
- Description of the geographic areas, constituencies, and estimated number of individuals to be served
- Information on the applicant's role in the community it serves and prior outreach experience with low-income populations (or federal housing assistance recipients for the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program).
- Description of potential benefit of the proposed project to entities seeking to help federal housing assistance recipients or other low-income individuals, or generate best practices or lessons learned for others with similar needs.
- Information on how the applicant intends to track, evaluate and measure the success of their Pilot activities.
- Whether the applicant intends to seek grant funding for Pilot activities and if so, how much.

14. Where can I find application resources or assistance?

For programmatic questions about the Pilot Programs application, please email ACPPilots@fcc.gov. For technical questions about the Pilot Programs application portal, please contact ACProgram@usac.org.

Application instructions and a webinar walkthrough will be available at www.fcc.gov/acp-pilots.

15. What other steps do Pilot applicants seeking Pilot Program Outreach Grants funding need to take?

If an eligible entity intends to seek grant funding from the FCC to carry out their proposed Pilot activities, the applicant must first obtain an FCC Registration Number (FRN) and be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM) and Grants.gov. Entities seeking grant funding for Pilot activities will need to provide the relevant FRN(s) and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) obtained through SAM.gov in their Pilot application.

Please see the below questions for more information on steps Pilot applicants seeking Pilot Program Outreach Grants funding need to take:

- **How do you obtain an FCC Registration Number (FRN)?**
- **How do you register with the System for Award Management (SAM)?**
- **How do you register with Grants.gov?**

Funding

16. Will funding be available for Pilot Program participants?

The FCC has allocated up to $5 million in grant funding for entities participating in the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program, and up to $5 million in grant funding for entities participating in the ACP Navigator Pilot Programs. (Note: Federal agencies are not eligible to request grant funding for Pilot activities.) This funding is intended to be used for outreach (including application assistance) in connection with Pilot activities.

Pilot Program applicants are not required to apply for funding from the Commission in order to carry out their Pilot Program activities.

17. Do pilot participants need to submit a separate application to request grant funding?

The FCC will use the information on the Pilot Program application to make grant funding decisions. In addition to the Pilot Program application, Pilot Program applicants seeking grant funding for Pilot Program activities must submit required standard grant forms and budget information via Grants.gov. Pilot Program applicants seeking grant-funding for ACP outreach for non-Pilot activities will need to complete a separate grants application.

18. Will requesting grant funding impact my chance of being selected for the Pilot Program?

An applicant's request for grant funding for Pilot activities will not impact its chances of being selected for the Pilot Program.

19. How may Pilot Program applicants request Pilot Program Outreach Grant funding?

Please see

- **What are the application requirements for the FY 2023 Pilot Program Outreach Grants?**
- **Where can an applicant access application forms and instructions?**

20. When may Pilot Program applicants apply for Pilot Program Outreach Grants?
Please see **When are applications due for the FY 2023 Pilot Program Outreach Grants?**

Application Evaluation and Post Selection

21. Will the FCC prioritize certain applications?
The FCC will prioritize Pilot Program applications that (1) will target a large geographic area and/or large number of people in the target audiences for ACP outreach; (2) incorporate effective tracking and performance measurements to provide valuable information to the Commission; and (3) encourage participation by those in the applicant's target community(ies) that have a low participation in the ACP will be prioritized.

22. What can applicants expect after applying?
- The FCC will review Pilot Program applications and any requests for grant funding for Pilot Program activities.
- The FCC will notify the selected Pilot Program participants of their selection, the performance period, and the reporting requirements.
- Selected Pilot Program participants seeking grant funding will be notified of their grant award and must comply with the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and terms and conditions of the grant award.
- Selected Pilot Program participants must ensure that they, and their partners, maintain neutrality with respect to ACP service providers when conducting Pilot Program activities

23. What happens after Pilot participants have been selected?
Selected participants may begin their Pilot Program activities at the start of the performance period.

Selected participants will have one-year to conduct their Pilot Program activities.

Selected Pilot participants requesting access to the National Verifier in connection with their Pilot Program activities must submit an Access Request form to USAC and register each user in the Representative Accountability Database (RAD) to gain access.

USAC, the ACP administrator, will offer a training session and office hour to support Pilot participants with the RAD registration process and on using the National Verifier. Selected entities are responsible for ensuring that their employees and/or representatives who conduct activities in connection with either Pilot Program comply with ACP rules and with any terms and conditions associated with accessing the National Verifier.

Pilot participants must ensure that they maintain neutrality with respect to providers by not favoring a particular provider or group of providers or restricting event participation to particular providers if multiple ACP providers serve the location.

Additional Questions

24. I have additional questions not answered by these FAQs or the Public Notices. Who do I contact for assistance?

For further information regarding the Your Home, Your Internet and ACP Navigator Pilot Programs, please send an email to ACPPilots@fcc.gov.

For further information regarding Pilot Program Outreach Grants, please send an email to ACPGrants@fcc.gov.

Federal Communications Commission
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and Wireline Competition Bureau
Updated Release Date: 11/23/2022

FC ACP | Affordable Connectivity Program

Affordable Connectivity Outreach Grant Program –
Pilot Program Outreach Grants
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the different grant programs associated with the Pilot Program Outreach Grants?
The Pilot Program Outreach Grants Program is comprised of two complementary grant programs:
- Your Home, Your Internet Pilot Program (YHYI) Outreach Grants
- ACP Navigator Pilot Program (NPP) Outreach Grants

The Pilot Program Outreach Grants Program NOFO will solely focus on YHYI and ACP NPP. A separate NOFO was released on November 10, 2022 for applicants seeking grant funds for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Outreach Grant Program.

2. What is the purpose of the Pilot Program Outreach Grants?
The goal of the Pilot Program Outreach Grants is to facilitate the promotion of the ACP to increase awareness of and participation among eligible households by providing assistance with the completion and submission of the ACP application. While the YHYI and ACP NPP both have this goal, YHYI will focus on providing funding for outreach activities (including application assistance) for federal housing assistance recipients.

3. What are the objectives that support the Pilot Program Outreach Grants goal?
To support the Pilot Program Outreach Grants goal, the FCC has identified four objectives:
- Expand and support diverse and impactful outreach efforts nationwide;
- Strengthen outreach partners nationwide by empowering them to mobilize people and organizations to help raise awareness about the ACP;
- Learn how the assistance of a navigator helps eligible households overcome enrollment barriers; and
- Increase ACP enrollment as a result of ACP Outreach Grant Program funded activities.

4. What evaluation factors has the FCC prioritized for the application review process?
For FY 2023, the FCC will prioritize Pilot Program Outreach Grants applications that:
- Target a broad geographic area and/or large number of people in the target audiences for ACP outreach;
- Incorporate effective tracking and performance measurements to provide valuable information, especially relating to enrollment barriers and under-enrolled communities, to the Commission;
- Encourage participation by those in the applicant's target community(ies) that have a low participation in the ACP, including participation by those in FPHA programs;
- Target unserved low-income households or individuals (i.e., households or individuals that are not currently on a low-income broadband plan or that do not have broadband service); and
- Whether an applicant proposes a cost-share or cost match. Note: This information will be used as a tie breaker during the funding determination process.

In addition to the priorities listed above, the FCC will consider geographic distribution of proposed outreach activities in determining funding awards.

5. How much funding is available for the FY 2023 Pilot Program Outreach Grants?
The FCC will make up to $10 million of competitive funding available under this FY 2023 Pilot Program Outreach Grants NOFO. There is up to $5 million available to fund YHYI applications and up to $5 million available to fund ACP NPP applications.

6. What is the minimum and maximum amount of funding an applicant can request?
There is no minimum (floor) amount an applicant may apply for, nor is there a maximum (ceiling) amount an applicant may apply for.

7. Will there be cost sharing or matching requirements?
There will be no cost sharing or matching requirements as part of the FY 2023 Pilot Program Outreach Grants. However, applicants that propose a cost match or cost share may have a priority consideration, in the event of a tie, when making funding allocation determinations. Cost share or cost match may be cash or in-kind contribution. If an applicant elects cost sharing or matching, the applicant must comply with 2 CFR § 200.306.

8. When are applications due for the FY 2023 Pilot Program Outreach Grants?
Complete applications must be received no later than 9 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on January 9, 2023. Late applications will not be accepted.

9. What are the application requirements for the FY 2023 Pilot Program Outreach Grants?
Eligible applicants must submit a complete application to the FCC for funding consideration before the application submission deadline, which consists of program-specific and standard forms:
- Program-Specific Form:
    – Pilot Programs Application in USAC Application Portal
    – Detailed Budget Worksheet and Narrative
- Standard Forms and Information:
    – Form SF-424 – Application for Federal Assistance
    – Form SF-424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
    – Standard Form LLL – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)
    – Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

Applicants must complete the Pilot Programs Application in USAC Portal prior to completing the required Standard Forms as the Pilot Application Number that is generated at the end of the Pilot Programs Application USAC Portal is needed for the Standard Forms.

10. Where can an applicant access application forms and instructions?
To access standard forms and instructions, go to https://www.grants.gov under Assistance Listing (CFDA) Number: 32.011 - Affordable Connectivity Outreach Grant Program. The Pilot Programs application can be accessed through the USAC Application Portal. To access the application, prospective applicants will first need to register for an account with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) at https://forms.universalservice.org/acppilotprograms/register before logging into the application portal at https://forms.universalservice.org/portal/login.

11. How do you obtain an FCC Registration Number (FRN)?

Eligible entities that intend to seek grant funding, like all other entities doing business with the Commission, must register for an FRN in the Commission Registration System (CORES). An FRN is a 10-digit number that is assigned to a business or individual registering with the FCC. This unique FRN is used to identify the registrant's business dealings with the FCC.

To register with CORES, please use the following link: https://apps.fcc.gov/cores/userLogin.do. The first step to setting up an account in CORES is creating a username and account in the FCC User Registration System using the following link: https://apps2.fcc.gov/fccUserReg/pages/login.htm. Before the account is activated, the user will receive an automated email titled "FCC Account Request Verification" and must verify its account email address as prompted. Once the user is logged in to CORES, the user should select the "Register New FRN" or "Associate Username to FRN" option as applicable from the menu options that appear and provide the information as prompted by CORES. Users will need to provide their taxpayer identification number (TIN) to register. The TIN is a nine-digit number that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires of all individuals, businesses, and other employers to identify their tax accounts with the IRS. Once the user provides the information required in CORES and clicks "Submit," CORES will generate a new FRN or associate the user's existing FRN with its account.

12. How do you register with the System for Award Management (SAM)?
To register with the System for Award Management, go to https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration and provide the requested information.

It is strongly recommended that unregistered potential grant applicants start the registration process immediately because it may take up to 10 business days for the registration to become active and an additional 24 hours before the registration information is available in other government systems.

13. How do you register with Grants.gov?
Pilot applicants can find information concerning Grants.gov registration at https://www.Grants.gov/web/grants/register.html. To register with Grants.gov, the party must already have a Unique Entity Identifier from SAM.gov.

Applicants needing technical assistance with Grants.gov can call the customer support hotline 24 hours per day, 7 days per week (except federal holidays) at (800) 518-4726 or email support@grants.gov.

14. When will funding determination and announcement be made?
The FCC anticipates processing and announcing Pilot Program Outreach Grant awards no later than March 2023. Selected grantees can anticipate receiving a Notice of Award through the GrantSolutions system no later than March 31, 2023.

15. How will grant applications be reviewed?
To ensure compliance with the applicable federal statutes and regulations as well as appropriately determine the impact of proposed projects against the Pilot Program Outreach Grants' goal, objectives, and priorities, submitted applications will undergo the following review processes.
- **Eligibility** (Compliance) review to determine if the applicant is eligible and submitted a complete application package;

- **Merit** review to determine the quality of proposed projects against program objectives, activities, and costs/budget using pre-determined criteria and federal reviewer scores
- **Risk Review** to determine fiscal stability of an applicant using many factors including, the quality of the management systems, history of grant performance, and audit reports and findings.

16. Who is eligible to apply for YHYI Outreach Grants and ACP NPP Outreach Grants?
- <u>YHYI Outreach Grant Eligibility</u>: Entities eligible to apply for YHYI Outreach Grants include state, local, and Tribal housing agencies (including housing authorities). Tenant associations and non-profit and community-based entities that have a partnership with a federal, state, local, or Tribal housing agency participating in the Your Home, Your Internet Pilot may also apply for YHYI funding.
- <u>ACP NPP Outreach Grant Eligibility</u>: Entities eligible to apply for NPP Outreach Grants include public and government entities, such as public schools and public school districts, and local, state, or Tribal government entities. Examples of such eligible entities include, but are not limited to, state and local institutions of higher learning, state veterans' affairs offices, state and community libraries, and Tribal schools and libraries.

17. Who is <u>ineligible</u> to apply for Pilot Program Outreach Grants awards?
In addition to any restrictions in 2 CFR Part 200, as implemented by 2 CFR § 6000.1, broadband providers and their subsidiaries, affiliates, representatives, contractors, and agents are not eligible to participate in the Pilot Program Outreach Grants or receive grant awards, either as grantees, pass-through entities, or subrecipients. Additional ineligible entities include broadband industry groups and trade associations that represent broadband providers; entities that are debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in federal assistance programs or activities; and entities that are ineligible by statute (such as 501(c)(4) non-profit organizations that engage in lobbying activities or organizations that are indebted to the United States and have judgment liens filed against them).[1]
For municipal broadband providers, the exclusion of broadband providers and their affiliates, subsidiaries, or representatives from eligibility does not extend to separate arms of the municipality that do not maintain, manage, or operate the municipal broadband network.

18. What is the period of performance for the FY 2023 Pilot Program Outreach Grants?
For Pilot Program Outreach Grants, grant recipients must expend awarded funding against their approved projects and supporting milestones within 12 months (1 year).
- Projected Period of Performance Start Date(s): March 2023
- Projected Period of Performance End Date(s): March 2024

19. Will extensions to a grantee's period of performance be allowed?
Extensions to the period of performance may be allowed on a case-by-case basis with prior written approval from the FCC. For additional information on period of performance extensions, please refer to Section X – Post Award Reporting Requirements of the Pilot Program Outreach Grants NOFO for more information.

20. What are the funding restrictions and prohibitions placed on ACP Outreach Grant Program?
The following are restrictions and prohibitions that apply to grant and sub-grant recipients:

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[1] *See Second Report and Order*, at paras. 41-42 (2022).

- Service provider neutrality of grant-funded outreach activities
- Transfer of funds within ACP Outreach Grant sub-programs
- Prohibition of supplanting other outreach funding
- Prohibition of service provider in-kind contributions for funded outreach
- Prohibition of profit, and fees or charges to eligible households
- Prohibition of commissions or compensation linked to ACP applications or enrollment
- Prohibition of remote enrollment assistance
- Prohibition of lobbying

21. What are allowable costs?
Costs funded through the Pilot Program Outreach Grants must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the award.

A list of allowable cost categories is included in Section VII – Funding Restrictions, Prohibitions, and Allowable Cost Categories (Table 4) in the NOFO. The list is not comprehensive but is meant to demonstrate types of outreach activities that are deemed effective in reaching ACP-eligible households.

22. What are unallowable costs?
Unallowable costs are those that are deemed not necessary, reasonable, nor allocable to the award based on the Goals and Objectives of the Pilot Program Outreach Grants. Further, Federal Cost Principles prohibit certain activities when using grant funds because they are a form of Federal financial assistance.

A list of unallowable cost categories is included in Section VII – Funding Restrictions, Prohibitions, and Allowable Cost Categories (Table 5) of the NOFO. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

23. Are there reporting requirements post award for the Pilot Program Outreach Grants?
Grant recipients must submit performance progress reports (PPR) and federal financial reports (FFR) electronically on a quarterly basis. Please refer to Section X. Post Award Reporting Requirements in the NOFO for specifics on PPRs and FFRs.

24. Why will the FCC monitor all grant awards both financially and programmatically?
The FCC will periodically monitor recipients to ensure that administrative processes, policies and procedures, budgets, and other related award criteria are meeting federal government-wide regulations. Aside from reviewing quarterly financial and programmatic reports, the FCC may also conduct enhanced monitoring through desk reviews, onsite monitoring visits, or both. Enhanced monitoring will identify areas where the recipient may need technical assistance, corrective actions, or other support.

25. Is there an easy way to find all Internet Service Providers in an area?
The Companies Near Me Tool can be used to access a list of ACP provider(s) serving an area.

26. What resources will be available to grant recipients when conducting ACP outreach?
An ACP Consumer Outreach Toolkit is available with resources grant recipients can use and tailor to their communities and outreach activities. Additional ACP outreach resources will be published here at www.fcc.gov/acp-grants.