ACP Wind Down
Communications Toolkit:
Pre-K-12 Partners
April/May 2024

Introduction

This toolkit provides a variety of turnkey ways for you to reach out to partners, constituents, neighbors and friends and be an ambassador for PHLConnectED and low-cost internet resources.

Whether you use the information provided in this toolkit or customize your own, the success of PHLConnectED to help keep student households online relies on many trusted voices throughout Philadelphia spreading the word. Thank you for your support!

PHLConnectED and the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

Background

PHLConnectED launched in 2020 to provide free internet access to Philadelphia pre-K-12 households in need. The program connected families to Comcast Internet Essentials (IE) and distributed T-Mobile hotspots to students at a 1:1 ratio.

In July of 2023, PHLConnectED discontinued assigning IE voucher codes and transitioned student households to the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which provided up to $30 subsidy for eligible households. All pre-k-12 student households were supported with enrollment of ACP. For households where the ACP application posed a barrier, PHLConnectED continued to distribute a T-Mobile hotspot at a 1:1 student ratio.

ACP is set to expire by the end of May 2024 unless Congress refunds the program. Without this federal subsidy, many Philadelphia pre-K-12 households may not be able to afford internet access.

PHLConnectED raises awareness of the end of ACP and how pre-K-12 households can get help.

As the ACP winds down, the City is raising awareness about the end of the ACP benefit and how pre-K-12 households can continue to get support to access free or low-cost internet through PHLConnectED.

PHLConnectED will continue to help families get one-on-one support with a PHLConnectED Digital Navigator for:

- A review of the free or low-cost internet options including PHLConnectED T-Mobile hotspots for eligible pre-K-12 households.
- Support with accessing and using technology.
- Access to other digital skills classes and resources available across Philadelphia.

For help getting affordable internet access or determining if you are eligible for a PHLConnectED T-Mobile Hotspot, dial 2-1-1 and set up an appointment with one of the City's Digital Navigators. The hotline operates 24/7 and is available in 150 languages. Press 8 for language services.

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EMAIL BLAST: PARTNER TO ORGANIZATION/CONSTITUENTS

General

[Subject Line:] The ACP is ending – don't lose your access to internet!

Dear [Name],

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is set to expire by the end of May 2024 unless Congress refunds the program. Without this federal subsidy, many Philadelphia pre-K-12 households may not be able to afford internet access.

The City's PHLConnectED program will continue to help pre-K-12 households get one-on-one support with a PHLConnectED Digital Navigator for:
- A review of the free or low-cost internet options including PHLConnectED T-Mobile hotspots for eligible pre-K-12 households.
- Support with accessing and using technology.
- Access other digital skills classes and resources available across Philadelphia.

The City's blog post covers next steps and options for households enrolled in the ACP benefit. For help getting affordable internet access or determining if you are eligible for PHLConnectED T-Mobile Hotspot, dial 2-1-1 and set up an appointment with one of the City's Digital Navigators. The hotline operates 24/7 and is available in 150 languages. Press 8 for language services.

Sincerely,

[Name]

SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING

Key Social Media Information

Official Hashtag:

#DigitalEquityPHL #PHLConnectED

Accounts to Tag in Posts:

City of Philadelphia: @PhiladelphiaGov (Twitter) / @PHLInnovation

Blog post: https://www.phila.gov/2024-04-24-the-acp-is-winding-down-what-do-you-need-to-know/

Hotline: 2-1-1 (*when written 211; 2-1-1 for call scripts*)

Sample Social Messages

Post 1: Dial 2-1-1

- Have you heard? The Affordable Connectivity Program is ending, and your internet or phone bill may increase! If you're enrolled in the ACP, set up a free appointment with a Digital Navigator by dialing 2-1-1. They will help you find the most affordable internet option for your budget! Learn more about the ACP Wind Down: https://bit.ly/3QhWP6O

- Did you know you can dial 2-1-1 and be connected to the City's Digital Navigators? They will set up an appointment to work one-on-one with someone to help you:
  - o Find an affordable internet plan
  - o Understand your internet and phone bills
  - o Connect to a low-cost plan that fits your budget

Post 2: Compare & Connect (for use only until May 17, 2024)

- Need help to lower your internet bill? compareandconnect.org helps you find low-cost plans near you.
  - o Find affordable internet plans near you.

- Get an instant call-back to help you enroll.
- Connect to low-cost plans that suit your budget.

- How do I lower my internet bill? Visit compareandconnect.org
    - Find affordable internet plans near you.
    - Get an instant call-back to help you enroll.
    - Connect to low-cost plans that suit your budget.

Post 3: Connect with a Digital Navigator to apply for ACP

- The City's Digital Navigators are here to help Philadelphians get online. Residents can contact a Digital Navigator and receive 1:1 assistance in exploring low-cost internet options. Dial 2-1-1 to make an appointment! Learn more: https://www.phila.gov/services/education-learning/get-help-with-technology/get-help-from-a-digital-navigator/

- Want help lowering your monthly internet bill? You can schedule a 1:1 appointment with one of the City's Digital Navigators by dialing 2-1-1. For language services, press 8. Learn more about Digital Navigators! https://www.phila.gov/services/education-learning/get-help-with-technology/get-help-from-a-digital-navigator/

Post 4: ACP subsidy is ending May 2024

- The ACP benefit is ending this month. Families enrolled in the ACP should act NOW and call a Digital Navigator to maintain low-cost internet service. Dial 2-1-1 to stay connected!

- The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is winding down, and there's a lot of information out there! We've compiled everything you need to know into one convenient place. Learn more about what to expect and how to stay connected: https://bit.ly/3QhWP6O

- The City of Philadelphia has Digital Navigators available to help you navigate your internet bill and access affordable options. Learn more about what's going on now that ACP is coming to an end. We want to make sure you stay connected! https://bit.ly/3QhWP6O

Post 5: T-Mobile Hot Spots (use only if Philadelphia pre-K-12 families is your main audience)

- The City's PHLConnectED program has T-Mobile Hotspots to support pre-K-12 families internet needs! See if you qualify for a free T-Mobile hotspot by dialing 2-1-1 and setting up an appointment with a Digital Navigator.

- Unfortunately, the ACP benefit is ending, and a lot of Philadelphians may lose access to free internet at the end of this month. If your pre-K-12 student doesn't have home internet, you may be eligible for a PHLConnectED T-Mobile Hotspots! Learn more by dialing 2-1-1.

The ACP is winding down, what do you need to know?

Link to blog: https://www.phila.gov/2024-04-24-the-acp-is-winding-down-what-do-you-need-to-know/

What is the ACP?

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) was a federal benefit program designed to support low-income households accessing affordable internet services.

Eligible households in Philadelphia were able to get:

- Up to a $30 per month discount on broadband service.
- A one-time discount of up to $100 on a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers. The household must contribute between $10 and $50 toward the price of the device.

What is happening to the ACP?

Unfortunately, the ACP funds are set to run out by the end by May 2024 and right now there is no additional funding from Congress to support connectivity for low-income users.

What does this mean for me, someone who uses the ACP benefit for affordable internet?

1. **Discounted Service Will End:** Enrolled households will continue to receive the full ACP benefit through the end of April 2024. Some participants will receive a partial discount until the end of May, when the program funds will be fully exhausted.
2. **Changes to your Internet or Phone Bill:** The final fully funded month is April of 2024, ACP customers should have received their final discount on their April 1, 2024, invoice.
3. **Flexibility in Service Plans:** ACP households will not be charged termination fees or fees for changing plans with the same or different ACP internet company.

Stay Informed and Get Prepared:

4. **Regular Updates:** Consistently check emails, text messages, and mail for notices from your internet or phone company about how the ACP ending may impact your internet or phone bill.

5. **Inquiries and Options**: Contact your internet company and ask if they have a lower cost plan and/or a low-income program. When calling, have account and billing verification information.
6. **Compare and Connect:** Use the online tool **Compare and Connect** to help you find low-cost internet plans and get help enrolling. You can decide if you want to continue your internet plan at full cost (without the ACP discount), switch to a different plan, or cancel your internet service.
7. **Additional Information**: Visit the FCC's website at **fcc.gov/acp** or **https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov/** for FAQs and guidance about the ACP wind-down process.
8. **Direct Assistance**: Contact a Digital Navigator! Dial 2-1-1 to schedule a one-on-one appointment with a **Digital Navigator** and learn about your options for affordable internet. The hotline operates 24/7 and is available in 150 languages. Press 8 for language services.

 Schedule an appointment with a Digital Navigator!

COLLATERAL MATERIALS

- FCC ACP Wind-Down Info
- Digital Navigator Flyers
- PHLConnectED Flyers