

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY  
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – WASHINGTON, DC  
April 9 – 11, 2024**

**RENEWAL OF FUNDS FOR THE BROADBAND AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM**

**ISSUE:** In conjunction with the historic national investment in broad infrastructure and digital equity, the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) has bridged the digital divide by closing the affordability gap within the region. Thus, broadband has become more affordable for over 21 million households nationwide. ACP and its predecessor, the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB), have been the most successful programs in American history to make home broadband more affordable and help bridge the digital divide. However, without urgent support from Congress, 22 million households could lose internet access as early as mid-2024.

**ACTION:** The Monday Morning Group urges Congress to continue funding of the Affordable Connectivity Program, while holding participating Internet Service Providers accountable for providing appropriate levels of quality and affordable service to eligible households. Specifically, we urge Congress to consider the following programmatic changes:

- Restructure the \$100 device credit to allow a consumer to apply it towards a different provider from the one that offers them the monthly internet service bill credit.
- With respect to funding high-quality internet services through the ACP, Congress could instruct the Federal Communications Commissions to prioritize application of the ACP towards high-speed home broadband services, where feasible and equitable.
- Consider expanding eligibility categories for the program to better reach residents in need, by adding eligibility for those receiving unemployment compensation, public job seeking assistance, social security, agricultural subsidies, and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), among others.

**BACKGROUND:** Addressing the digital divide remains a top priority for the County of Riverside. Internet access has become a necessity for every American—it is no longer a luxury, but many households remain isolated. Within Riverside County alone, 360,000 households face affordability challenges and qualify for the ACP. Recognizing this substantial need, the County of Riverside launched an extensive outreach campaign in October 2022, with the goal of informing and assisting residents in enrolling for the ACP. To date, we have successfully enrolled 213,000 households or 59% of Riverside County’s eligible households.

Families across Riverside County and the nation rely on this program to provide affordable access to the internet, it is key to bridging the digital divide. Overall, ACP has made broadband more affordable for over 22 million households. By connecting these households to high-speed internet, the ACP is helping to build stronger, more resilient communities designed to succeed in the 21st century economy.

Preserving and reallocating funds to the ACP will allow us to build upon the progress we’ve made in closing the digital divide—rather than falling behind in a mission we cannot afford to lose. As such, the County of Riverside stands ready to work with you to find a solution to ensure ongoing funding for ACP. Which is why we support reforms to the contributing formula for the Universal Service Fund, and hope that Congress will closely consult with the Senate Working Group to find possible funding solutions.

Despite the availability of high-speed internet plans, many households still have difficulty affording a home internet subscription. Within Riverside County, as many as 360,000 households face affordability challenges affecting their ability to pay for an internet subscription and the devices needed to take advantage of that connectivity. Thanks to Riverside County’s extensive outreach campaign, which began in October 2022, 189,000 households in Riverside County— or 53% of eligible households—are now enrolled in the program. Statewide, as of October 2023, over 2.5 million, or 44% of, eligible households are enrolled in ACP.

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These crucial programs have become victims of their own success, with ACP's \$14.2 billion in funding rapidly depleting as millions of families have come to rely on it. Nearly two years after ACP launched, Congress must continue funding the program and respond to lessons learned with reforms to make improvements.