



Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development

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For Immediate Release

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Emergency Broadband Benefit Program Offers Discounts

Helps qualifying Utah households with internet costs

SALT LAKE CITY (May 5, 2021) — Today, the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED), divisions of the Utah Department of Cultural and Community Engagement, the Utah State Board of Education, and Utah Communities Connect jointly announced their efforts to help build consumer awareness about the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB), a new Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program.

The temporary benefit will help to lower the cost of broadband service for eligible households during the COVID-19 pandemic. Enrollment for the program begins on May 12, 2021.

"Broadband internet is vital for Utahns' economic well-being, including participation in and access to online work, school, healthcare, and other essential services," said Dan Hemmert, GOED's executive director. "We know there are households that need to connect to the internet for essential services but can't afford it. The Emergency Broadband Benefit will help to ensure every household in Utah has access to the benefits of online connection as we complete our pandemic recovery."

The \$3.2 billion program provides a discount of up to \$50 per month toward broadband service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for qualifying households on qualifying tribal lands. Additionally, the benefit provides up to a \$100 per household discount toward a one-time purchase of a computer, laptop, or tablet if the household contributes more than \$10 and less than \$50 toward the purchase through a participating broadband provider.

Eligible households must include a member that meets one of the criteria below:

- Has an income that is at or below 135% of the [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#) or participates in specific assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, or the FCC's [Lifeline](#) program
- Approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision, in the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school year

- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year
- Experienced a substantial loss of income through job loss or furlough since Feb. 29, 2020, and the household had a total income in 2020 at or below \$99,000 for single filers and \$198,000 for joint filers
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income or COVID-19 program.

GOED, and its partners in the EBB program, realize the benefit is critical to ensuring as many Utah households are connected to broadband as possible. "This program extends a low-cost opportunity for internet and computing devices to households who may not have qualified for previous programs like Lifeline," said Utah State Librarian Chaundra Johnson. "The Utah State Library urges community partners to spread the word and make sure Utah's most vulnerable populations have a chance to participate in this unique discount program."

Additionally, this program will provide financial relief to historically underserved communities navigating increasingly digital spaces. "The full use of digital tools and technology is imperative to a thriving and equitable society for multicultural communities and families in Utah," said Nubia Peña, director of the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs.

Dr. Sydnee Dickson, superintendent of the Utah State Board of Education, commented, "We have to treat broadband as an essential utility, like electricity, to bridge the digital divide and resulting knowledge gap for families."

Additional Information

Informational materials have been created by the organizations and will be available for statewide distribution. Visit GOED's [Emergency Broadband Benefit](#) webpage for information about how to apply for the program.

Additional information about the Emergency Broadband Benefit is available at fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit or by calling 833-511-0311 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. (EDT) any day of the week.

About Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development

Under Gov. Spencer J. Cox's direction, the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) provides resources and support for business creation, growth, and recruitment. It also drives increased tourism, film production, outdoor recreation, and mixed martial arts in Utah. A GOED initiative, the Utah Innovation Center supports Utah's key industries and helps Utah innovators win federal research and development dollars through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. Utilizing state resources and private sector contracts, GOED administers programs in economic areas that demonstrate the highest potential for development and the most opportunity for Utahns. Learn more at business.utah.gov or by calling (801) 538-8680.

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