

# Affordable Broadband Is Available



Technology continues to change the way we interact with individuals, businesses and colleagues, and the city is using these resources to create a more inclusive New York we can all age independently in. At the Department for the Aging, we have seen firsthand how broadband service has uplifted older residents in every borough. During the pandemic, internet service was essential for older New Yorkers to access our virtual programs, which is why we have continued our efforts to make the internet more accessible.

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), run by the Federal Communications Commission, allows residents who meet certain income requirements to receive a \$30 discount on their broadband bill and a onetime credit of up to \$100 to purchase an internet-enabled device.

Many people who qualify though may not even know it. Residents enrolled in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance (FHPA), in the Veterans Pension, or are currently receiving Survivor Benefits, Social Security or enrolled in Lifeline, qualify for ACP.

To make sure older adults know about the ACP, the Department's network of more than 300 adult centers across the city have been promoting it, so their members sign up.

There are several ways you can [apply](#) for the ACP too, and you can also fill out the form for a dependent who qualifies. The first is online by visiting [www.acpbenefit.org](http://www.acpbenefit.org). On the program's website you will also find the [application](#) and household worksheet. For the [application](#) and [mail-in form](#) you will need to provide your full name, address, birthdate, email address (while you do not need an email address it is recommended you sign up for one) and proof of a government identification.

The government identification can include your Social Security number, tribal identification number, driver's license, military passport, or taxpayer identification number. You then mark how you qualify for the ACP. It will also ask if you are currently enrolled in a qualifying program including SNAP, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, FHPA, Veterans Pension or Survivor Benefits Programs, Federal Pell Grant, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), or Free and Reduced Price School Lunch or Breakfast Program (NSLP) or Community Eligibility Provision School (CEP).

If you qualify because of a child dependent, you need to provide the child's full legal name, date of birth, and a form of government identification for them which can

be a social security number, tribal identification number, driver's license, military ID, passport, or a individual taxpayer identification number. If someone in your household receives WIC, NSLP or CEP, you will need to fill out the sections that asks for the child's school's name, school district and the state you are located in. There is also a section for qualifying tribal programs that you can check if you are currently enrolled in them.

If you qualify because your income is 200 percent below the federal poverty guidelines, you will need to check the box that most closely resembles your income level.

On the [household worksheet](#), you need to provide similar information about yourself as in the application, in addition to whether you live with another adult, and if so indicate whether they are already enrolled in ACP, and if you share expenses with them.

Once all the forms are complete you can mail them to ACP Support Center, P.O. Box 7080, London, KY 40742.

If you have question, you can speak with a representative over the phone by calling the ACP at 877-384-2575. Make sure to have all the information mentioned above handy in case you need to provide it to the individual you speak with. If you're eligible for ACP, you could receive a low-cost service plan that is fully covered through this program. The Biden-Harris Administration recently announced a deal with large internet providers to offer ACP eligible households with a low-cost service plan that is \$30 a month maximum. By pairing that with the ACP, qualified households can get internet service at no cost. Several New York City providers are participating in this program including Verizon, Comcast and Spectrum.

Making sure those who qualify for the ACP is only one of the ways the City is helping residents get online. For those living in NY-CHA complexes, 10,000 Wi-Fi enabled tablets were distributed to older adults.

The Department for the Aging also distributed an additional 11,000 tablets to communities throughout the city. These computer tablets allow older New Yorkers to access important City services online, participate in virtual programs, email and message loved ones, all of which help limit social isolation.

The benefits of having internet access for older adults was apparent even before the pandemic, because many of them were already taking part in online classes. But while older adults were sheltering in their homes at the height of COVID-19, gaining access to the internet helped many of them sign up for important program including GetFoodNYC, vaccination appointments, tax preparations and SNAP.

Being able to utilize city resources and participate in programs this way has become much more popular in the last few years and we see no reason it won't be as we recover from COVID-19.

For nearly five decades, the Department for the Aging's knowledge on health, safety, and expertise in implementing programs, have had tremendous impacts on the quality of life for older New Yorkers. Using the internet will enhance these services, while reaching even more individuals who need them.



By Commissioner  
**Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez**