

Proposed Resolution in Support of a Requirement to Offer a Connected Device Discount in the Affordable Connectivity Program

Issue: The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) does not require internet service providers offering a service discount to offer the \$100 connected device discount to eligible households.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) NACo urges for the requirement of internet service providers to offer the \$100 connected device discount to eligible households as part of the ACP. NACo further urges a change to policy to allow ACP eligible households to use the \$100 connected device discount at providers other than the service provider from which they receive their \$30 internet service discount.

Background: High speed broadband internet is a vital aspect of life in modern America. Among its many uses, broadband internet is essential for the economy, education, and medical services. Through the Federal Infrastructure Law, the ACP was created to help eligible low-income households pay for broadband internet with a \$30 dollar monthly discount for internet service and a one-time \$100 discount for an eligible connected device. This program is one part of a federal funding initiative to increase digital equity and allow all Americans to adopt and access broadband internet.

As of April 2023, over 17.4 million households were enrolled in the ACP and enrollment is only expected to increase. While numerous households have received the internet service discount benefit, ACP funding has only supported the \$100 discount for 4 million connected devices. This signals that less than 25% of all enrolled households have received the connected device discount. One barrier to the use of the connected device discount is that enrollees must receive the connected device discount through their ACP internet service provider. However, ACP internet service providers are not required to offer the device discount. In actuality, only one out of the 11 largest internet service providers in the United States, all who participate in the ACP, offers the device discount to ACP enrollees. This results in an equity gap between ACP enrolled households as there are millions of households that are only able to use the program's internet service discount and not the connected device discount.

Closing this and other digital equity divisions is an essential aspect of achieving the goals of programs like the ACP. These goals include equitable access, adoption, and use of broadband internet for all Americans. Once accessed and adopted, the use of broadband internet will allow all Americans to have more options to participate in their community, expand economic and educational opportunities, and receive medical services. However, without a connected device many households are unable to access, adopt, and successfully use the broadband internet that would allow them to thrive in the modern world.

Fiscal/Rural/Urban Impact: This policy change would increase the equitable distribution of affordable connected devices to low-income households enrolled in the American Connectivity Program.

Sponsor(s): Jennifer Clark, Lake County Board Member