

BROADBAND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



One of the biggest hurdles in broadband deployment is finding the funding to undertake the varying projects necessary for ubiquitous connectivity in a community. There are a myriad of federal funding programs available to help communities improve broadband connectivity. This document will highlight some of the existing federal funding programs, what they fund, where to apply, and important dates.

This explainer is not an exhaustive list of available funding opportunities. For a more comprehensive list of federal funding options, the National Telecommunications Information Administration (“NTIA”) has created a Federal Funding Guide that outlines broadband funding programs from a variety of federal agencies. Review NTIA’s 2021 guide [here](#). States may also make funding available for community projects. Click [here](#) for contacts and resources for state broadband programs.

Federal Communications Commission: Lifeline Program

The Lifeline Program is the FCC’s program to help make communications services more affordable for low-income consumers. Consumers can receive up to a \$9.25 monthly discount on service for eligible low-income broadband subscribers (up to \$34.25 for those on Tribal lands). The Lifeline Program also provides \$5.25 for monthly voice-only service.

There are two ways to become eligible for the Lifeline Program. First, consumers can qualify for Lifeline if their income is 135% or less than the Federal Poverty Guidelines. If applying for Lifeline using this method proof of income may be required, such as a tax return or pay stub. Second, a household is eligible for Lifeline if anyone in the household participates in one of the following programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit

To apply for Lifeline, a consumer must generally use the National Verifier application system. The National Verifier is a centralized system established by the FCC and operated by USAC that verifies Lifeline applicants’ eligibility and recertifies subscriber eligibility annually. Consumers who would like assistance from a service provider when applying can use the “Companies Near Me” tool to locate a Lifeline program service provider in their area.

To learn more about the Lifeline program you can visit the FCC’s [website](#) or USAC’s [website](#).