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FCC EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT COULD HELP CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE FOR MANY STUDENTS

The Idaho State Board of Education is working to build awareness about a new Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program to help lower the cost of broadband service to eligible households during the pandemic.

The FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit program provides a discount of up to \$50 per month toward broadband service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.

“We made great progress last year to close the “digital divide” in our state after our schools transitioned to remote learning as a result of the pandemic,” State Board President Kurt Liebich said. “This program can potentially help us close the gap further and we want to make sure parents are aware of it.”

A household is eligible for the Emergency Broadband Benefit if one member meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Has an income that is at or below 135 percent of the [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#) or participates in certain 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 February 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; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income or COVID-19 program.

Emergency Broadband Benefit enrollment begins Wednesday, May 12, 2021.

Eligible households can enroll through a [participating broadband provider](#) or directly with the [Universal Service Administrative Company \(USAC\)](#) using an online or mail-in application.

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

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