![EducationSuperHighway logo]

AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

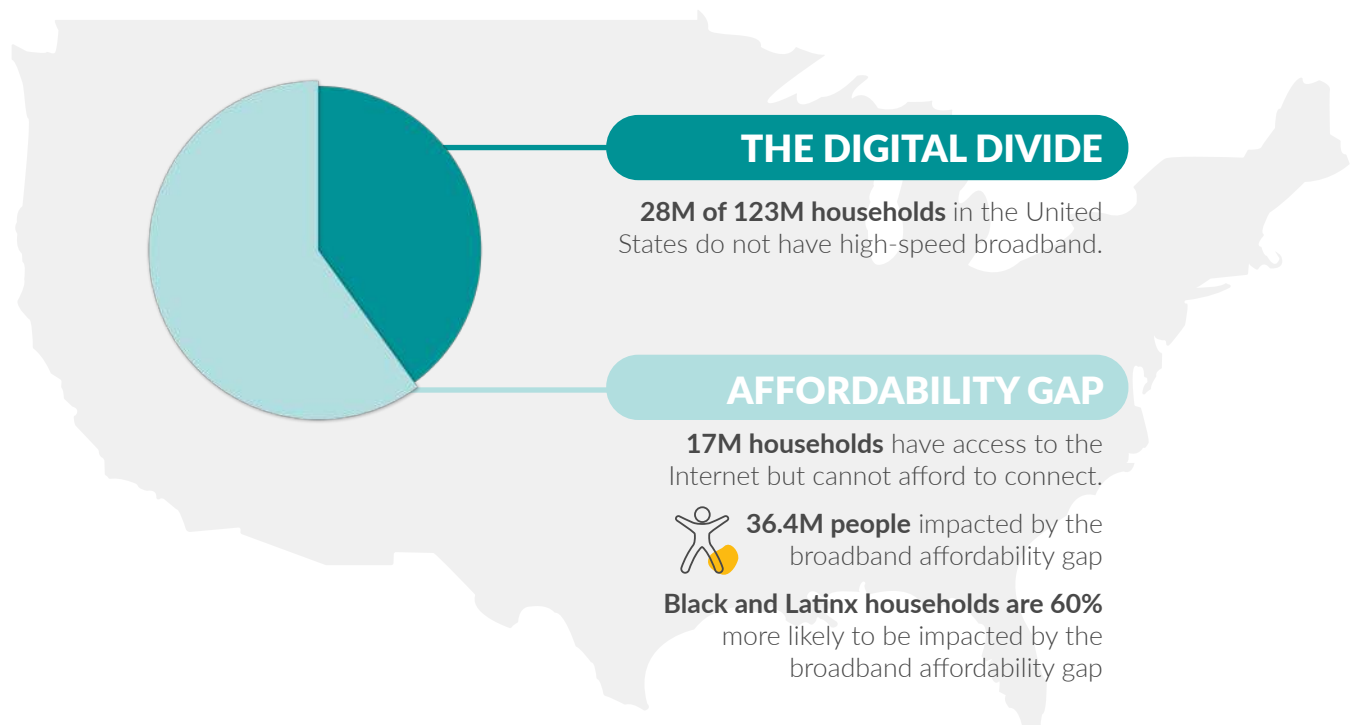## *Adoption Toolkit for Local Leaders*

A guide to closing the digital divide in America's cities

2022 | **No Home Left Offline**

17 MILLION U.S. HOUSEHOLDS
LACK HOME INTERNET BECAUSE THEY CANNOT AFFORD IT

Approximately 28 million households in the United States do not have high-speed broadband. 17 million of these households are offline simply because they cannot afford an available internet connection. This broadband affordability gap is concentrated in America's cities and has become one of the primary inhibitors of access to economic security and opportunity. It is a reality centered in our nation's poorest communities and disproportionately impacts Black and Latinx communities.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

28M of 123M households in the United States do not have high-speed broadband.

AFFORDABILITY GAP

17M households have access to the Internet but cannot afford to connect.

36.4M people impacted by the broadband affordability gap

Black and Latinx households are 60% more likely to be impacted by the broadband affordability gap

THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM CAN CONNECT THESE HOUSEHOLDS

Over the past year, closing the broadband affordability gap has become a national priority. Congress allocated $65 billion to expand high-speed internet access in the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA). This includes $14.2 billion for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), a federal benefit that aims to connect individuals by providing eligible households a discount of $30 per month toward their home Internet bill or ($75 per month for households on Tribal lands). The ACP benefit can be applied to a new or existing plan. In addition, the program provides a one-time $100 discount toward a connected device through a participating provider.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

A household is eligible if their total household income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, *or;*

One member of the household meets at least one of the criteria below:

- Participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline;
- Is 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;
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year;
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating broadband provider's existing low-income program; or
- Participates in one of several Tribal specific programs, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal Head Start (only households meeting the relevant income qualifying standard), Tribal TANF, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.

TAKE ACTION TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE ACP

Unfortunately, while 51.6 million households are eligible for the ACP, including 17.7 million currently unconnected households, **adoption rates remain critically low**.

Local leaders can play a critical role in closing the broadband affordability gap by launching ACP awareness campaigns and **developing broadband affordability plans and ACP enrollment support strategies** that allocate Digital Equity Act funds to community-based organizations and trusted institutions.
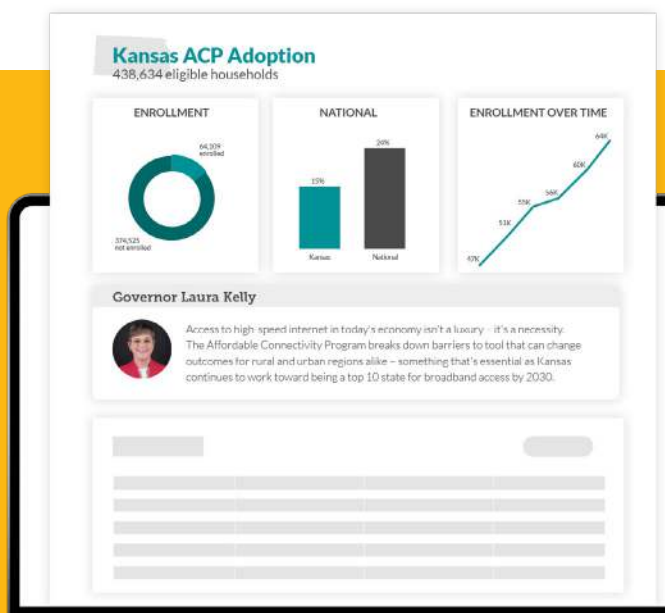
EducationSuperHighway's Affordable Connectivity Program Enrollment Dashboard provides local leaders with the most up-to-date data on the number of ACP-eligible households, the number that have enrolled, and the number that still lack a high-speed home connection. The dashboard enables state and city planners to effectively target new federal broadband funding to support ACP awareness and adoption efforts.

Discover

Latest State & City
ACP Adoption Rates

nohomeleftoffline.org/acpdata

Kansas ACP Adoption
438,634 eligible households

ENROLLMENT | NATIONAL | ENROLLMENT OVER TIME

64,309 enrolled

374,325 not enrolled

15% | 26%

Kansas | National

Governor Laura Kelly

Access to high-speed internet in today's economy isn't a luxury – it's a necessity. The Affordable Connectivity Program breaks down barriers to tool that can change outcomes for rural and urban regions alike – something that's essential as Kansas continues to work toward being a top 10 state for broadband access by 2030.

ACTION PLAN
FOR LOCAL LEADERS

With unprecedented funding and a broad coalition of support, we now have a historic opportunity to close the digital divide.

PREPARE
a communications and outreach plan

PROMOTE
the ACP via government communcations channels

CONVENE
stakeholders to unite behind your city-wide goal

IMPLEMENT
outreach by CBO's and trusted institutions

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

LOCAL LEADERS	• Convene stakeholders behind a community-wide goal to raise awareness of the ACP. • Activate communications channels because studies show most residents are unaware of the ACP and enrollment is low. • Provide resources to community-based organizations to amplify awareness and support enrollment.
COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS	• Support the initiative and ACP adoption campaigns as trusted community voices. • Launch ACP awareness campaigns with your community members. • Plan or direct community members to in-person and virtual outreach events.
INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS	• Provide a dedicated direct line for ACP enrollment with trained representatives. • Share a clear and documented process for residents interacting with them to sign up for the ACP and broadband service (include eligibility information and the documents/information needed to enroll). • Provide a transparent pricing and plan structure for what the ACP subsidy covers and what it doesn't.

**Contact ellen@educationsuperhighway.org for questions about implementing the toolkit.**

1. CONVENE

Unite community-based organizations, Internet Service Providers, and trusted institutions behind a community-wide goal to raise awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program. Ensure they understand the critical role they play in helping residents sign up for the ACP and internet service.

- **DESIGNATE AN INDIVIDUAL OR OFFICE** to serve as a principal coordinating entity that can lead this effort across city agencies, such as a Chief of Staff, Director of Communications, or Broadband Advisor.

- **UTILIZE THE TEMPLATE LETTERS** EducationSuperHighway has created to invite your stakeholders to an in-person gathering or webinar.

- **HOST AN IN-PERSON OR VIRTUAL MEETING** of Internet Service Providers in your city to outline their role in the initiative. Ensure each has a clear and documented process for residents interacting with them to sign up for the ACP and broadband service. Our team can provide guidance and help facilitate this meeting.

- **HOST AN IN-PERSON MEETING OR WEBINAR** for community-based organizations and trusted institutions in your city to outline their role in the initiative; educate them on the ACP; and share best practices for effective outreach and awareness events. Our team can provide guidance and help to facilitate this meeting.

> **Resources:**
> - Community-Based Organization Email Template
> - Internet Service Provider (ISP) Email Template
> - Local Institutions (School Districts, Housing Authorities, Libraries) Email Template
> - Affordable Connectivity Program Fact Sheet
> - Frequently Asked Questions
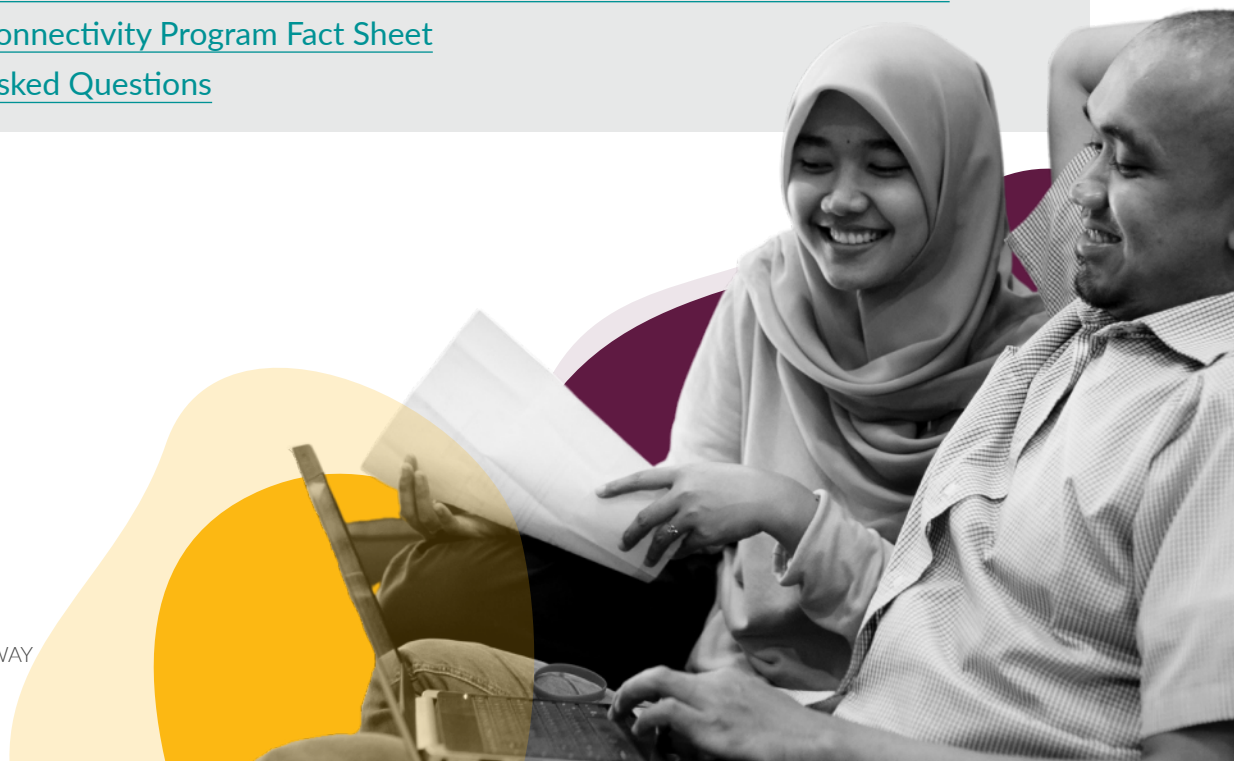
2. PREPARE

Develop a communications plans for raising awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program in your community.

- **OUTLINE A CLEAR PROCESS** on how you will communicate to residents about the availability of the Affordable Connectivity Program, why they qualify, and how they can learn more and enroll. Use our communications plan template to plan a calendar of outreach activities.

- **EDUCATE INDIVIDUALS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**, community-based organizations and trusted institutions on how the Affordable Connectivity Program works, the application process, applying the benefit to an internet plan, and other FAQs so they can confidently advise community members and help them enroll.

- **EQUIP TRUSTED MESSENGERS** with talking points to easily share key information and best practices for identifying and reaching unconnected households.

Resources:

- Communications Plan Template
- Best Practices for Reaching Unconnected Households
- LearnACP Affordable Connectivity Program Certification

3. PROMOTE

Promote the Affordable Connectivity Program using city communications channels and launch outreach campaigns that raise awareness and encourage participation.

- **CREATE AN AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM WEBSITE** for your community or a landing page to the city website.

- **HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE** with community-based organizations and trusted institutions that are participating in the initiative.

- **ISSUE A JOINT PRESS RELEASE** that ensures community members are aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program. Use EducationSuperHighway's sample press release that is customized with digital divide statistics and sample quotes.

- **EXECUTE THE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN** using city communications channels and EducationSuperHighway's social media toolkit.

Resources:

- Press Kit Templates
  - Sample Media Advisory
  - Sample Press Release
  - Press Event Tips
  - Talking Points

- Website Template
- About GetACP.org
- GetACP.org Video
- Social Media Toolkit
- EducationSuperHighway's Resource Hub

  Download center for free and customizable marketing materials designed to increase awareness of the ACP and support enrollment in your community.

Explore

Free Enrollment Support Tools

GetACP.org

Affordable Connectivity Program

Affordable Home Internet. Made Easy.

Get started

Presented by:

Education SUPERHIGHWAY

4. IMPLEMENT

Activate community partners (community-based organizations, trusted institutions, city influencers) to amplify outreach efforts.

- **MAKE SURE COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND TRUSTED INSTITUTIONS** have promotional materials and equip trusted messengers with talking points, ACP FAQs that enable them to easily share key information.

- **HOST A WEBINAR** for community-based organizations and trusted institutions to ask questions prior to starting community outreach.

- **SCHEDULE 30-, 60-, AND 90-DAY CHECK-IN MEETINGS** with community-based organizations and trusted institutions, to track their efforts and troubleshoot challenges.

- **REVIEW ACP ENROLLMENT DATA** on our Affordable Connectivity Program Enrollment Dashboard prior to the check-in meetings to allow your community to track your progress. EducationSuperHighway recommends that local communities issue regular press announcements highlighting your success and helping to maintain a community-wide focus on the initiative.

About EducationSuperHighway

EducationSuperHighway is a national non-profit with the mission to close the digital divide for the 18 million households that have access to the internet but can't afford to connect. We focus on America's most unconnected communities, where more than 25% of people don't have internet.

From 2012 to 2020, we led the effort that closed the classroom connectivity gap. In 2013, only 10% of students had access to digital learning in their classrooms. Today, thanks to an unprecedented bipartisan effort by federal, state, and school district leaders, supported by K-12 advocacy organizations, the classroom connectivity gap is closed – 47 million students are connected, and 99.3% of America's schools have a high-speed broadband connection.