# BEST PRACTICES FOR REACHING UNCONNECTED HOUSEHOLDS

Over the past year, EducationSuperHighway has conducted ACP adoption pilots around the country in partnership with states, cities, school districts, housing authorities, and other trusted institutions. This work, along with feedback from other organizations helping households sign-up for the ACP and home broadband service, has identified a series of complex awareness and enrollment challenges that keep under-resourced households offline.

To close the broadband affordability gap, we need to ensure that unconnected households know about the ACP, trust the program, and support exists to help them enroll. By leveraging community resources and engaging trusted messengers and community institutions, it is possible to provide high-quality information and data while responding to the specific context and concerns of the most marginalized populations.

## #1 UNDERSTAND WHY ADOPTION IS LOW

Three key barriers stand in the way of widespread broadband adoption for households on the wrong side of the broadband affordability gap.

### Awareness

Many families eligible for the ACP are simply not aware that the program exists. In many communities, 75% of eligible households are unaware of the Affordable Connectivity Program.

### Trust

Many unconnected households are concerned about sharing personal information as part of the enrollment process. As is true with other government programs, there is general skepticism about the benefit and unexpected costs.

### Enrollment Challenges

Signing up for the Affordable Connectivity Program can be confusing, requiring households to provide documentation of their income status that many cannot easily access. Lack of internet access and language barriers are a major barrier to adoption.

## #2 CONVENE A COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER GROUP

- Local leaders have a deep understanding of local context and should take steps to identify and activate representatives of under-resourced populations who can serve as local ambassadors and share information about the Affordable Connectivity Program.

- These trusted messengers and influencers should include:
  - Community-based organizations
  - Community leaders

- Faith leaders
- School district leaders
- Libraries
- Community health centers
- Business organization and major employers
- Workforce development organizations

## #3 CREATE A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

- Assess the available communication channels and reach of community leaders and organizations (e.g., newsletters, calling campaigns, events, social media, in-person meetings, etc.)

- Create a written communications plan with specific dates for outreach activities. Ensure your plan identifies:
  - Audience/populations you intend to reach
  - Language or translation needs
  - Communication channels you will utilize
  - Timing of your activity (start and end dates)
  - Content required to deliver your activity (e.g., copy, images)
  - Responsible persons

- Follow up regularly with your stakeholder group, set recurring meetings to solicit feedback, share successes and opportunities for improvement.

## #4  LAUNCH GENERAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

- Leverage our press release, social media kit, and FAQs to let people know exactly what the ACP is, how they sign-up and how to find internet plans.

- Keep messages simple, clear, and actionable. Explain the importance of getting online and the difference that having a home internet connection can make in their lives.

- Ensure that all communications are community-specific, multilingual, and clearly outline the steps necessary to get online.

- Take a multi-channel approach to outreach (e.g., paper, digital, phone, and in-person). Remember to meet residents where they are at by leveraging partner channels to reach key populations.

- Always use clear, unambiguous language to educate and answer common concerns, including those about eligibility, hidden costs, and use of personal data.

## #5 ACTIVATE TRUSTED MESSENGERS

- Equip trusted messengers with talking points, ACP FAQs, and promotional materials that enable them to easily share key information.

- Ensure messengers can confidently respond to objections and help community members navigate questions about eligibility and enrollment.

- Invest in local, frequent, and ongoing engagement from trusted messengers and organizations that are already actively engaged in the community.

- Provide platforms for community messengers to engage the public. This can be through city channels, joint events, or local media opportunities.

- Ensure local television, news, and radio media have a complete list of available spokespeople and their contact information.

## #6 BUILD CAPACITY TO SUPPORT ACP ENROLLMENT

- Direct residents and community partners to experts and resources. If households need to talk to someone about eligibility or application status, they can call the **ACP Support Center at 1-877-384-2575,** seven days a week, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET.

- Organize and implement ACP enrollment events and workshops that assist community members with signing up for the Affordable Connectivity Program and subscribing to internet service. Establish and share a calendar of these events and include ways to incentivize attendance e.g. a meal, food distribution or device giveaways.

- Co-create solutions with community leaders, who are often best placed to offer effective fixes that will work best for the groups they represent.

- Share stories that show how previously skeptical or concerned residents have been positively impacted by ACP enrollment.

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