

New Law Makes Many Active Duty, Veterans and Survivors Eligible for Free or Discounted Broadband Internet

Active duty members, veterans and survivors may be eligible for free or discounted internet, and up to a \$100 discount on a computer, thanks to a new program from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program is a \$3.2 billion federal initiative created by Congress to help lower the cost of high-speed internet for low-income Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To be eligible for the program, a household or household member must:

- Have an income that is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines or participate in SNAP, Medicaid or Lifeline;
- Participate in the free and reduced-price school lunch or breakfast program;
- Have received a federal Pell Grant during the current year;
- Have experienced a substantial loss of income due to job loss or furlough since Feb. 29, 2020, with a total 2020 income at or below \$99,000 for single filers or \$198,000 for joint filers; or
- Meet the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income or COVID-19 program.

For a family of four in most of the country, an income equal to 135% of the poverty level is \$35,775; for a family of two, that amount is \$23,517. Income limits are higher for Alaska and Hawaii. See the [Department of Health and Human Services website](#) to calculate other levels.

A revised program from Comcast is giving disabled veterans and low-income veterans and military families in the company's service area free internet connections for two months, according to a Comcast release.

Currently, those veterans and military families have access to the company's Internet Essentials plan, which provides qualifying users with basic internet service for \$9.95 per month. But between now and June 30, 2021 new Internet Essentials customers will receive two months free in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

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