



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

ACP Newsletter - January 2024

January 30, 2024

FCC Announces ACP Wind-Down

On January 11, 2024, due to a lack of additional funding from Congress, the FCC released an [Order](#) announcing wind-down procedures for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Funding for the program is anticipated to run through April 2024. (This date is an estimate and may change) The Order requires providers to send notices to their enrolled households informing them of the end of the program and sets the last day of enrollments into the ACP as **February 7, 2024**, by 11:59 ET. Summaries of certain requirements can be referenced below, but providers should review the FCC's [Order](#) for detailed information on notice requirements to households, updates on claims deadlines, and other wind-down procedures and requirements.

Service Provider Outreach Responsibilities

Service providers must send at least three notices to consumers about the upcoming program changes, in writing, and in a manner that is accessible to people with disabilities.

The first required notice must have been sent no later than 14 days after the release of the Order - by January 25 - and generally advise ACP households about the possibility of program termination and the potential impact on their broadband service and bills.

The second and third notices must be sent after the FCC issues a 60-day notice of the final fully funded month of the program, which is expected to occur in February, and communicate the following:

- That the ACP is ending
- The impact on the consumers' bill
- The date of the last bill that the consumer will receive the ACP benefit on
- That the consumer may change their service or opt-out of continuing service after the end of the ACP

USAC will send further communication to providers about the second and third notices once the FCC issues the 60-day notice of the final fully funded month of the program.

ACP Enrollment Freeze – February 7, 2024

Service providers must enroll newly qualified consumers in the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) by **11:59 p.m. ET on February 7, 2024**, for consumers to receive the benefit. **Enrollments for the ACP after February 7 at 11:59 p.m. ET will not be permitted.** Consumers enrolled in the program before February 8 will remain eligible to receive their current monthly benefit and one-time device benefit through the continuation of the program. For all consumers currently enrolled in NLAD, no further action is required.

USAC will stop processing new service provider election notices at 6 p.m. ET on February 7, 2024. FCC will stop accepting provider applications at the same time. New service providers will not be accepted into the ACP and participating providers will not be able to add new jurisdictions to their election notices. While application and election notice reviews are frozen, service providers will still be required to maintain up-to-date election notice information on file with USAC and must continue to update contact, device, or other participation information within ten business days of the change in information.

Recertification Continues

Recertification will continue even with the enrollment freeze. ACP subscribers will need to complete the 2023 recertification process if they receive outreach from USAC. If a subscriber does NOT recertify by their designated deadline, they will be de-enrolled and unable to reapply and reenroll for the ACP after February 7 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

De-Enrollments and Transfers in NLAD

The enrollment freeze that starts February 8 does not affect transfer transactions in NLAD. Service providers can still perform transfer transactions and active subscribers can still transfer to a new provider, but service providers, are not required to perform transfer transactions during the freeze. Active subscribers will

not be required to requalify before transferring. However, **consumers who are de-enrolled will NOT be able to re-apply and re-enroll in the ACP after the enrollment freeze. All rules related to transfers, including requirements regarding consent and the one-per-month transfer limit, will still apply.**

Revised Claims Process

The submission timeline for claims has been revised to ensure a timely accounting of final provider claims during wind-down. Beginning with the February 1, 2024, snapshot, service providers will have a two-month window to submit claims for reimbursement or upward revisions. Providers will have until the 1st of the second month after the snapshot date to certify and submit claims. For example, all claims and upward revisions for the February 1, 2024, snapshot must be submitted no later than April 1, 2024. In addition, all claims and upward revisions for all preceding months must be submitted no later than April 1, 2024.

Reimbursement claims submitted after the deadline will not be processed, however, downward revisions will continue to be accepted. Providers are strongly encouraged to submit all remaining claims and revisions as soon as possible to facilitate the efficient wind down of the ACP.

Resources

For more information on the ACP Wind-Down, please review any of the following resources:

- USAC's [ACP Wind-Down Webinar](#)
- USAC's [ACP Wind-Down Office Hours](#)
- USAC's [Bulletin Announcing the ACP Wind Down](#)
- USAC's [Webinars Page](#)
- The FCC's [ACP Wind-Down Fact Sheet](#)
- The FCC's [ACP Wind-Down FAQs](#)

USAC's Notices to Consumers on ACP Wind Down

Beginning in early February and continuing through April, USAC will be sending out written notices to consumers informing them about the program winding down. The timing and release of these notices is subject to change if the projected last fully funded month is no longer April 2024. These consumer notices will include information about the program's expected end date and will direct

consumers to various resources including to [AffordableConnectivity.gov](https://www.AffordableConnectivity.gov) and to their service providers, to learn more about how the program winding down will affect them. The consumer notices that USAC will be sending out are separate from the required notices that service providers must send out to their consumers. Service providers are required to send a minimum of three notices to consumers about ACP Wind-Down as outlined in the FCC's [Order](#).

Reminder on Timely Application of the ACP Benefit

All participating service providers in the ACP are required to apply the ACP benefit to a consumer's bill on or before the start of the household's next billing cycle and pass through the discount to the household prior to claiming reimbursement ([47 CFR § 54.1806\(d\)\(10\)](#)). The benefit must be applied no later than the start of the first billing cycle following a household's enrollment or transfer within the program.

Service providers cannot require consumers to use their service for a month before applying the ACP benefit to the household's bill. It is critical for service providers to apply the ACP benefit to a consumer's bill in a timely manner. Service providers should review their benefit application processes to ensure that they do not conflict with program rules.

Non-Usage Compliance Reminder

If a service provider does not assess or collect a monthly fee from a subscriber, the service provider cannot claim reimbursement for the subscriber if the subscriber does not use their ACP service at least once every 30 days. Usage activity by the subscriber includes:

- Completing an outbound call or using data
- Buying minutes or data to add to the subscriber's service plan
- Sending a text message
- Answering an incoming call (calls from the subscriber's ACP service provider or the ACP service provider's agent or representative are not considered usage)
- Responding to direct contact from the subscriber's ACP service provider to confirm the subscriber wants to continue receiving ACP service

If the subscriber does not use their service within 30 consecutive days (non-usage), the service provider must give the subscriber notice that, if they do not use the service in the next 15 days, their service will be terminated. Service providers must de-enroll subscribers who do not cure their non-usage (i.e., subscribers who do not use their ACP service in the 15-day cure period). Service providers are unable to claim reimbursement for subscribers who are in the cure period and do not cure their non-usage. Service providers should properly indicate non-usage as the reason for the de-enrollment in USAC's systems.

Consumers de-enrolled from the ACP for non-usage may reapply by submitting an online application by visiting [GetInternet.gov](https://www.getinternet.gov), applying with the assistance of an ACP service provider, or by mailing in a completed [paper application](#). However, consumers that are de-enrolled after the enrollment freeze will not be able to re-enroll in ACP.

Program Integrity Efforts

On September 29, 2023, the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) released a [public notice](#) announcing additional program integrity measures to ensure providers are receiving reimbursement from the ACP for fully subsidized service only for households using their service. This public notice was released a day after the FCC's Office of Inspector General (OIG) issued an [advisory](#) raising concerns about ACP provider non-compliance with the [ACP usage and de-enrollment rules](#) (47 C.F.R. § 54.407(c)(2), 54.1808(c), and 54.1809(c)).

USAC conducts program integrity reviews to help ensure compliance with the non-usage rules. During these efforts, service providers will receive requests to provide documentation (e.g., types of plans offered to consumers, Call Detail Records (CDRs), etc.) to demonstrate compliance with the non-usage requirements.

The best way to prepare for any data request is to ensure that you are following ACP document retention requirements. ACP service providers are required to maintain records of their compliance with all FCC ACP rules ([47 C.F.R. § 54.1811](#)). Service providers must maintain the required documentation for as long as the subscriber receives ACP service from that service provider, but for no less than the six full preceding calendar years.

Claims for July 2023 Data Month Due by February 1, 2024

Providers must submit and certify original claims or revisions for the July 2023 data month (snapshot taken on August 1, 2023) by 11:59 p.m. ET on February 1, 2024. For more information on the claims deadline, providers can refer to the bulletin USAC released on [September 15](#).



February Maintenance Schedule

As part of continual system improvements, USAC conducts regular system maintenance. Scheduled maintenance dates are available on the [National Lifeline Accountability Database \(NLAD\) Maintenance Schedule](#) and the [National Verifier \(NV\) Maintenance Schedule](#) pages.

System Maintenance

February 23

NV, NV Carrier API, NLAD, Lifeline Claims System (LCS), Representative Accountability Database (RAD), and the Affordable Connectivity Claims System (ACCS) will be unavailable due to scheduled monthly maintenance from Friday, February 23 at 10:00 p.m. until 3:00 a.m. ET on Saturday, February 24.

Need Help? Contact Us!

For questions about the Affordable Connectivity Program, service providers can visit [USAC.org](#), and consumers should visit [AffordableConnectivity.gov](#). Consumers can apply for the ACP at [GetInternet.gov](#), and Spanish-speaking consumers can apply at [Accedealnternet.gov](#). For general program support, service providers should email ACProgram@usac.org and consumers should email

ACPSupport@usac.org. Both providers and consumers may also call the ACP Support Center at (877) 384-2575 for assistance.

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