Emergency Broadband Benefit Program to Affordable Connectivity Program Transition: System Changes

December 11, 2021

National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) enrollments into the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB Program) will cease on December 30, 2021 at 6 pm EST. The EBB Program will transition to the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) on December 31, 2021. USAC will utilize the National Verifier and the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) to check consumer eligibility and enroll consumers in the ACP.

On December 31, 2021 USAC will begin accepting enrollments in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Service providers should review the information below to begin to prepare for the transition to the new program.

System Outages

Both the National Verifier and NLAD will be unavailable while USAC transitions the systems from EBBP to ACP. The systems will be unavailable for approximately 6 hours on December 30, 2021, from 6 pm ET until approximately 11:59 p.m. ET.

Changes to the National Verifier on 12/31/2021

Service providers and consumers can begin submitting ACP applications on Dec. 31, 2021 by visiting the National Verifier website or by API. The website address will be updated to ACPBenefit.org (website will be live on December 31). Changes to the application form itself will be minor, although the form may be modified if the Commission's rules for ACP, expected to be adopted in mid-January, require additional changes.

- All references to "EBBP" or "EBB" will be replaced with "ACP"
- Eligibility programs available will be updated to reflect the ACP rules
    - Special Supplemental Nutritional Program for Woman, Infants and Children (WIC) will be available to select as a qualifying program
    - A list of participating Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools will be available for applicants to select from when they indicate they qualify through the Free and Reduced Price School Lunch or Breakfast program. Applicants will still need to provide documentation proving eligibility.
    - Substantial Loss of Income will no longer be available to select as a qualifying program
    - The income threshold has increased to 200% of the federal poverty guidelines

EBB Program applications will be accepted and processed until 6 pm EST on Dec. 30, 2021. On December 31, all pre-existing EBB Program applications, except those that do not qualify through an ACP eligibility program (i.e. substantial loss of income) will roll over and become eligible for ACP enrollment.

Changes to the NLAD on 12/31/2021

Enrollments in ACP can begin on Dec. 31, 2021. On that date, all new enrollments will be into the ACP. However, service providers will be able to continue to manage their legacy EBB subscribers in NLAD during the transition period between the two programs. Review the changes to each transaction type in NLAD below.

- Verify/Enroll : All successful enroll transactions will enroll a subscriber in ACP and all verify responses will refer to the subscriber's eligibility to enroll for ACP. Service providers will be required to complete new consent field specific to ACP rather than the existing consent field, which is specific to the EBB Program. Eligibility programs will be updated to reflect the rule changes – E52 (Substantial loss of income) will no longer be available but a new option will exist for E54 (WIC). E53 will be modified to remove the COVID-19 program.
- Transfer : Upon successful transfer, the subscriber will remain enrolled in whichever program (EBB or ACP) they were enrolled in prior to the transfer – the service provider cannot choose which program the subscriber is transferred into. Service providers must provide the EBBP or ACP consent field. All eligibility programs will be accepted (including E52, COVID-19 Program, and E54), but a service provider may receive an error if they choose an eligibility program that is not applicable to the program the subscriber is enrolled in.
- Update : Update will be used to maintain a subscriber's record within whichever program they are enrolled in. It cannot be used to move subscribers between the EBB Program and ACP. The only change for ACP is that the ACP consent field should be used rather than the existing consent field, as applicable for subscribers enrolled in ACP rather than the EBB Program.
- De-enroll: There are no changes to the de-enroll transaction.
- Reports: Reports will include both EBB and ACP subscribers and will indicate which subscribers are enrolled in the EBB Program and which are enrolled in the ACP. Optional API changes will be available to allow providers to incorporate new report fields as they are ready.

Moving existing EBB subscriber into ACP

Service providers can move subscribers from the EBB Program to ACP using a new type of update transaction. The new transaction type, "updateACP," can be performed by batch or API. The transaction will require limited fields, to ensure that subscribers can be easily moved to the new program when the service provider is ready to make that change after the conclusion of the 60-day transition period on March 1, 2022.

Note: After December 30 and throughout the 60-day transition period, existing EBB subscribers will remain eligible to be claimed for up to the $50 service rate. However, once a provider moves an existing EBB subscriber into ACP, the subscriber will only be eligible to be claimed for up to the $30 service rate for ACP.

During this 60-day transition, **USAC cautions against providers moving existing EBB subscribers into ACP to ensure the $50 service rate can be claimed through the March 1 snapshot, and February data month. Once a service provider moves a consumer to the ACP program, this action cannot be undone.**

EBB Program and ACP Claims

USAC will continue to accept claims for legacy EBB Program subscribers via the Emergency Broadband Claims System. Service providers do not need to plan for a change to the claims process for legacy EBBP subscribers.

USAC will provide additional information on ACP claims soon.

Changes to National Verifier and NLAD APIs and Batch

USAC understands that API and batch changes can be disruptive for service providers and has worked to limit the changes that will be required to begin participating in ACP. However, service providers who use either of these application or enrollment methods should plan for limited changes.

Changes will be required to accommodate updated eligibility programs, a new consent field specific to ACP, and new validations and error codes associated with these changes. For both batch and API, the use of the new consent field is optional when managing existing EBB Program subscribers – the field does not need to be included in requests or the batch template until providers begin enrolling and managing ACP subscribers.

Updated API Specifications and the revised batch template will be available the week of December 13.

Upcoming Trainings

Affordable Connectivity Program Overview Webinar:

Tuesday, December 14, 2021 @ 3 p.m. ET: Register

Affordable Connectivity Program System Changes Office Hours:

Thursday, December 16, 2021 @ 2 p.m. ET: Register

Need Help? Contact Us!

For questions about the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, service providers can visit USAC.org and consumers should visit GetEmergencyBroadband.org. For general program support, service providers should email EBBElection@usac.org and consumers should email EBBHelp@usac.org. Both providers and consumers may also call the Emergency Broadband Support Center at 833-511-0311 for assistance.