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September 2022, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Regional Council adopted resolution number 22-646-6 calling for broad support of a "Digital Equity Call for Action" to begin work to promote the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) campaign. SCAG has partnered with the California Emerging Technology Fund leverage (CETF) to the existina campaign for the ACP in this new pilot program. This toolkit has been created as a resource to communities as they plan and implement their own ACP promotion campaigns and programs to increase enrollment in the program.

AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

The ACP is a federal benefit program managed by the Federal Communications Commission that helps eligible households gain access to discounted rates for broadband services. The benefit program provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer or tablet from participating providers if they contribute more than \$10 and less than \$50 toward the purchase price.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

A household is eligible for the ACP if the household income is at or below \$200 of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or if a member of the household meets at least one of the criteria below:

- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income internet program
- Participates in one of these assistance programs:
 - The National School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision:
 - SNAP
 - Medicaid WIC
 - Federal Public Housing Assistance
 - > Veterans Pension or Survivor Benefits or Lifeline
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Participates in one of these assistance programs and lives on **Qualifying Tribal Lands**:
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
 - > Tribal TANF
 - Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
 - Tribal Head Start (income based)

PURPOSE OF TOOLKIT

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide local governments and leaders with the tools and resources to help them increase digital equity in their community through the promotion of the ACP. This toolkit is actionable, with ready-to-use messaging, including outreach materials, best practices in engagement, templates and other resources. The following sections have been outlined in this toolkit:

Engaging Your Community!

Promotional Materials

List of Partners Conducting ACP Outreach

Resources for Local Governments

Local leaders like you play an important role in closing the gap for access to broadband by launching ACP awareness campaigns and ACP enrollment strategies that allot additional funds to community-based organizations and trusted messengers. Together, we can make a difference in bridging the digital divide for needy households.

EQUITY

SCAG recognizes the importance of equity as a primary consideration in this pilot program as outlined in SCAG's adopted Racial Equity Early Action Plan. The plan affirms SCAG's commitment to advancing equity, justice, diversity and inclusion in Southern California and recognizes the importance of improving outcomes for low-income families and communities of color.

Equity Definition

As central to SCAG's work, racial equity describes the actions, policies and practices that eliminate bias and barriers that have historically and systemically marginalized communities of color, to ensure all people can be healthy, prosperous, and participate fully in civic life.

This toolkit focuses on equity as a primary consideration in community engagement and outreach. It is important to consider equity in your respective ACP promotion campaign and community engagement processes. We must all recognize the historic impacts of social and racial inequities and strategies must identify opportunities to advance and support equity.



GO HUMAN PROGRAM

This toolkit leverages SCAG's nationally recognized Go Human program, an award-winning community engagement program with the goals of reducing traffic collisions and encouraging people to walk and bike more in the SCAG region.



Since its inception, Go Human activities have expanded the conversation beyond vehicular violence into a variety of programs that fall into co-branded safety advertising and messaging, tactical demonstrations, and local champion engagement.

For more information on Go Human, please visit scag.ca.gov/go-human.







As a trusted leader in your community, you can play an essential role in ensuring that households are made aware of the Affordable Connectivity Program. Research has shown that information coming from a trusted messenger increases participation in qualifying federal programs, especially among historically disadvantaged groups.

As such, it is critical to consider a variety of community outreach best practices to raise awareness of the ACP and encourage participation. Please consider the following best practices in your community outreach efforts.

ACP COMMUNITY OUTREACH BEST PRACTICES

- 1 ASSESS
- 2 CONVENE
- **3** EDUCATE

- 4 ACTIVATE
- 5 SUSTAIN





ASSESS

Assess what barriers stand in the way of widespread broadband adoption in your community. Some of these barriers include:



Lack of awareness:

It could be simply that households are not aware that the ACP exists.



Trust:

Skepticism about the program and its benefits or households being weary of providing personal information when applying for the program.



Challenge in Enrollment:

A major challenge in applying for the ACP is lack of internet to apply online and language barriers could be challenges in enrollment.



CONVENE

Convene with local leaders and organizations.



Local leaders and organizations have a pulse on a variety of communities. Leverage partnerships with these established community leaders and trusted messengers who can serve as local ambassadors and champions of the ACP.



Local leaders and organizations

- Faith-based groups
- Community-based organizations
- Community centers
- Major employers
- Parent Leadership Groups
- Libraries
- Neighborhood groups
- School district leaders



EDUCATE

Educate the community on the ACP, launch your awareness campaign!



Leverage the promotional ACP materials provided in this toolkit including downloadable ACP fact sheets, social media posts, outreach content and materials for your customized awareness campaign.



Utilize multiple outreach strategies as part of your approach (in-person, digital, phone and innovative). Remember to meet residents where they are at!



Keep messaging simple. There is no need to use extensive vocabulary. Keep your messaging simple and straightforward.



Make messaging visual. When possible, use visuals to communicate your message including flyers, posters, or other materials.



EDUCATE

Educate the community on the ACP, launch your awareness campaign!



Know your audience!

- Know your audience. Position your messaging to work with this audience, accounting for how they will receive your position and how it will benefit them or their community.
- Understand that communities can be incredibly diverse.
- Consider that there may be other languages other than English spoken in this community.
- Understand the range in literacy levels (including digital literacy).
- Prepare for age diversity (youth, adults, older adults, etc.)
- Ask yourself how best to craft your messaging with this audience, what would be relevant information?



ACTIVATE

Activate trusted messengers.



Cultivate trusted messengers can be local ambassadors that promote the ACP, please see page 16 of this toolkit for how to develop your own Digital Ambassadors' Program



Provide trusted messengers with talking points, promotional materials for when promoting the ACP and encouraging enrollment in the program





SUSTAIN

Sustain and build your capacity for ongoing ACP enrollment. Direct individuals to resources and establish support contacts. If a household has questions about the their application status, they can call the ACP Support Center at (877) 384-2575 or email <u>ACPSupport@usac.org</u>.



Establish recurring ACP enrollment events in your community in partnership with other groups.



Track ACP enrollment data. You can view how your community is doing through the <u>Affordable Connectivity Program Dashboard</u>.



KEY MESSAGING



The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a federal program that provides low-income individuals and households with a monthly discount on a new or existing internet service.

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) can help you with:

- 1. Up to \$30 per month toward internet service.
- 2. Up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.
- 3. A one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer or tablet from participating providers if they contribute more than \$10 and less than \$50 toward the purchase price.



The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is limited to one monthly service discount and one device per household.

Households are eligible to enroll if their household is below 200 percent of the federal poverty line or if someone in their household is currently receiving a government public benefit such as Medi-Cal, SNAP, SSI, WIC, Pell Grant or Free and Reduced-Price Lunch.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

This section covers how you can engage your community in your own ACP promotion campaigns. These strategies should be chosen based on your capacity, strengths and resources at your disposal.

CONVENE STAKEHOLDERS AND LOCAL LEADERS

Leverage existing partnerships with community members, community groups and coordinate activities/events to promote the ACP.









DIGITAL / VIRTUAL STRATEGIES

Digital- social media, email/texting, digital transit agency signage/ads Traditional media including, but limited to, radio, public service announcements (PSAs), newspapers

Presentationscoordinate virtual presentations to promote the ACP program

PRESENTATIONS



Virtual and/or in-person customizable presentations.

IN-PERSON STRATEGIES

Leverage existing programming/services to do pop-up signup ACP enrollments; Pop-up engagement is an important component of in-person strategies and includes sign-ups at civic events, local institutions and other trusted community sites.

GO HUMAN KIT OF PARTS

Pop-ups at existing civic events in target areas and opportunities to leverage <u>SCAG's Go Human Kit of Parts</u> or Community Hubs to facilitate accessibility and safety to sign-up locations. The Kit of Parts resource provides pop-up materials to temporarily demonstrate potential and planned street design treatments, however it can be utilized

INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

The following strategies will depend on your capacity and ability to employ these strategies in your respective communities.

"Week of Action" event: An organized event of activities to promote the ACP program and encourage enrollment. The event can wrap up with an in-person ACP sign-up event.

DEVELOPING YOUR OWN LOCAL DIGITAL AMBASSADOR (S) PROGRAM

This section outlines how you can develop your own local Digital Ambassador Program to champion and promote the ACP program.

PURPOSE

The Digital Ambassador Program is a paid community engagement and leadership development opportunity for community members. Through this program, participants will learn about digital equity, mobilize sign-up and outreach efforts, and become digital champions for their community.

The Digital Ambassador Program will consist of a cohort of trusted community members to lead local engagement efforts such as community-accessible sign-up opportunities at locations in communities, such as libraries, community centers, etc., and provide hands-on training to eligible households.

DIGITAL AMBASSADOR FRAMEWORK

The framework below considers the Planning, Implementation & Management and Closing of the project. At the end of the framework there is a projected timeline.







PLANNING

To develop your Digital Ambassador Program, you need to consider the following:

DIGITAL AMBASSADOR COHORT SIZE: 3-5 Ambassadors

2 DIGITAL AMBASSADOR QUALIFICATIONS:

The cohort should reflect a diversity of fields, backgrounds and skills and consist of local trusted community members such as but not limited to:

- Community residents, community leaders, and/or faith groups
- Youth leaders, 16 years of age and up
- School or school district staff, school leaders, parents, grandparents and/or caregivers
- Community-based Organizations
- Others committed to leadership development, equity and digital inclusion

3 COMPENSATION:

To support equitable engagement practices and incentivize participation, the Digital Ambassador Program is a paid opportunity, and each Ambassador is paid for their time and leadership. Compensation will depend on your organization's funding, project timeline and Ambassador expectations.

Below is an example of an estimate for compensation.

COMPENSATION	TOTAL COMPLETED HOURS	PROJECTED LENGTH OF TIME
\$2,500 MAX (\$25 AN HOUR)	100	8 MONTHS

EXPECTATIONS:

Clearly define what activities your Digital Ambassador is responsible for and must complete to be compensated.

The following is an example of expected activities:

- Attend and actively participate in a training webinar.
- Lead local engagement efforts in target communities such as community accessible sign-up events, flyer distribution etc.
- Conduct hands-on digital literacy training with community members.
- Attend monthly Digital Ambassador Cohort meetings (number of meetings is dependent on project timeline).

5 COMMUNICATION:

Program activities may be hosted in-person or remotely dependent on capacity, availability and need. This includes meetings and training. Sign up events must be conducted in person. Reminder to consider language needs, digital literacy, and accessibility.

(RECRUITMENT:

In order to create a cohort of local trusted community members from diverse fields, backgrounds, language abilities and skills, it is recommended to conduct a "Call for Ambassadors"

A "Call for Ambassadors" allows for the identification of the Ambassadors through an equitable application and selection process. It is recommended to leverage partnerships with local leaders and community groups for the identification of these Ambassadors as well as create a promotional plan that is culturally relevant and in multiple languages.

IMPLEMENTATION & MANAGEMENT

Once the Ambassadors have been selected and the cohort is established it is important to ...

- Train the Ambassadors: All Ambassadors must complete a training webinar to become digital champions in their community.
- Schedule and Conduct Monthly Meetings: These meetings are to report progress and challenges and to receive support.
- Lead and coordinate local engagement efforts: This will be led by the Ambassadors and be focused on the target areas.
- Track Progress: Ambassadors will need to keep track of their activities, sign ups, and outcomes. Your agency should keep track of ACP enrollment in your target areas.

CLOSING

Once all activities have been completed it is important to evaluate success. Here are a few questions to consider:

Did you reach your goals?

What recurring challenges did you learn?

Did ACP enrollment increase?

DIGITAL AMBASSADOR TIMELINE

In this projected timeline the Digital Ambassador Program would be a minimum of eight months.



The materials below include downloadable ACP fact sheets, social media posts, outreach content and materials for your customized awareness campaign. If you would like to utilize any of the outreach materials, please visit, https://scag.ca.gov/broadband.

FLYERS

Ready-made handouts that provide essential information about the ACP program to help consumers determine eligibility and how they can apply for benefits.





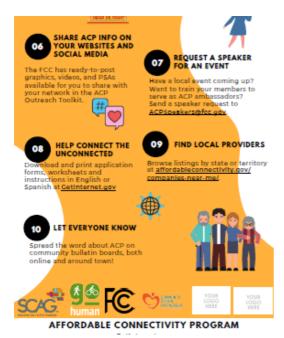


INFOGRAPHIC

An infographic, 10 Ways to Spread the Word, outlining how consumers, local governments and agencies can spread the word of the ACP program.









BROADCAST ADS

Video and radio public service announcements (PSA) that can be shared with community members.



30 Second ACP Radio PSA Script: If you are struggling to afford internet service for your household, there is a new government program that may be able to help. It's called the Affordable Connectivity Program and it provides up to a \$30 monthly discount to qualifying households.

Find more information about the program, including if you qualify and how to enroll at Get Internet dot gov (GetInternet.gov). Or call toll free at 877 384 2575. That's 877 384 2575.

30 Second ACP Radio PSA Script – (Tribal): If you are struggling to afford internet service for your household, there is a new US government program that may be able to help. It's called the Affordable Connectivity Program and it provides up to a \$75 monthly discount on your broadband bill to qualifying households on qualifying Tribal lands.

Find more information about the program, including if you qualify and how to enroll at Get Internet dot gov (GetInternet.gov). Or call toll free at 877 384 2575 That's 877 384 2575

VIDEO PSA

Video and radio public service announcements (PSA) that can be shared with community members. Please find the <u>ACP Overview Video (Youtube)</u>

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Designed for use on Facebook and Instagram, these posts engage specific audiences — such as students, seniors or families that receive government assistance — while providing information on ACP benefits and eligibility.











RESOURCES FOR LOCAL JURISDICTIONS

The following resources have been created by the FCC to promote the ACP and can easily be used by local governments and administrators. To find additional outreach materials, please visit the FCC's ACP Consumer Outreach Toolkit, https://www.fcc.gov/acp-consumer-outreach-toolkit.

LETTER TO RESIDENTS:

Letter templates can be utilized by your jurisdiction to invite pre-qualified applicants to participate in ACP.

ACP TOOLKIT WEBSITE BADGE

Website badges were developed to be used by local agencies and administrators in promoting the ACP program.

SAMPLE OUTGOING TEXT MESSAGES TO RESIDENTS:

Sample text messages have been created to share with residents. Please pay close attention to the disclaimer.

LIST OF PARTNERS CONDUCTING ACP OUTREACH

Please see below for a list of organizations, local jurisdictions and companies that are dedicated to promoting the ACP:

- 211 San Diego
- 42 Comms
- Accenture
- Adventist Health
- Anza Electric Cooperative
- Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gómez Reyes
- AT&T
- BizFed
- Broadband Consortium of the Pacific Coast
- California Department of Transportation
- California State University, San Bernardino
- California Community Foundation
- California Emerging Technology Fund
- California Governor's Office of Business & Economic Development
- California State Association of Counties
- Certified Development Company Small Business Finance
- Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California/GoldenStateNet
- Center for Community Investment
- Charter Communications
- City of Bell Gardens
- City of Long Beach
- City of Menifee
- City of Ontario
- City of Palm Desert
- Climate Resolve
- Comcast Cable

LIST OF PARTNERS CONDUCTING ACP OUTREACH

- Community Action Partnership of Orange County
- Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County
- County of Imperial
- County of Los Angeles
- · County of Orange
- County of Riverside
- County of San Bernardino
- County of San Diego
- · County of Ventura
- Cox Communications
- Crown Castle
- Cruz Strategies
- Coachella Valley Association of Governments
- Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.
- First 5 Los Angeles
- Frontier Cable
- Great Harvest Community Center
- HawksBill Group
- Heintz Government Public Relations Group
- Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles
- Housing Authority of the City of San Buenaventura
- Imperial County District Office
- Imperial County Office of Education
- Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation
- Inland Action
- Inland Empire Community Foundation
- Inland Empire Health Plan
- Inland Empire Regional Broadband Consortium
- Kaiser Permanente
- KLM Strategies

LIST OF PARTNERS CONDUCTING ACP OUTREACH

- Korean American Federation of Los Angeles
- Los Angeles Care Health Plan
- Larson LLP
- League of California Cities
- Lewis & Company, Inc.
- Lewis Group of Companies
- Loeb & Loeb LLP
- Loma Linda University
- Los Angeles County Department of Water and Power
- Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation
- Los Angeles County Office of Education
- Maria Guadagnoli Inclusion Advocacy
- Media News Group, Inc.
- Mexican American Opportunity Foundation
- Montgomery Strategies
- National Community Renaissance
- Office of California Governor Newsom
- Office of Orange County Supervisor Andrew Do
- Office of Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley
- Orange County Business Council
- Orange County Department of Education
- Orange County Office of Education
- Pacific Lightwave
- Parity Development
- Park View Legacy
- Program Director for SoCal United Way
- Public Policy Institute of California
- Race Communications
- RebuildSoCal
- Riverside Community College District

LIST OF PARTNERS CONDUCTING ACP OUTREACH

- Riverside County Office of Education
- Riverside University Health System
- Rolling Start Inc.
- · Saeshe, Inc.
- Salimpour Pediatric Medical Group
- San Bernardino County Office of Education
- San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools
- San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
- San Diego Association of Governments
- San Diego Foundation
- San Francisco Consumer Action
- San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
- Service Employees International Union
- Sonoma, County of Santa Rosa
- South Bay Cities Council of Governments
- Southern California Group
- Southern California Tribal Chairmen's Association
- State of California
- T-Mobile
- The Hawksbill Group
- The James Irvine Foundation
- The Nolan Group
- University of California, Riverside
- Ultimate Internet Access
- United Way Los Angeles
- United Way of California
- Valley Vision
- Ventura County Office of Education
- Verizon Wireless
- Vermont Slauson Economic Development Corporation

LIST OF PARTNERS CONDUCTING ACP OUTREACH

- Viasat Communications
- Western University of Health
- Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases

O5 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



ACP Consumer Outreach Toolkit



10 Tips for Outreach Partners