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NARUC
National Association of Regulatory
Utility Commissioners

NARUC, State Members and Partners Highlight Accessible Communication Initiatives for National Digital Connectivity and Lifeline Awareness Week

WASHINGTON (September 11, 2023) — To raise awareness about digital inclusion and ensure equitable access to vital communication services, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates, the Federal Communications Commission and state public utility commissions from across the nation will observe the National Digital Connectivity and Lifeline Awareness Week from September 11 to 15. This observance has been a tradition since its establishment in 2008, a week after Labor Day, highlighting the benefits of the Lifeline and the Affordable Connectivity programs.

Lifeline is an affordable, inclusive program for low-income consumers, offering a way to connect with the nation's voice and broadband networks, secure employment opportunities, access essential healthcare services, stay connected with family and seek assistance during emergencies. The ability to stay connected holds the power to bridge the gap between social inclusion and isolation.

The NARUC Board of Directors passed two resolutions at its July policy summit in support of permanent [funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program](#) and to [expand Lifeline week to include broadband services](#). As the latter resolution states, “despite its obvious importance, broadband is still far from ubiquitous — millions of our nation’s households do not yet have access to adequate broadband service.”

“Digital connectivity is vital to an advancing society. Expanding the program’s name reflects the more than 20 million households enrolled in the Affordable Connectivity Program to receive assistance for broadband services,” said Nebraska Commissioner and NARUC Telecommunications Chairman Tim Schram. “Digital Connectivity and Lifeline Awareness Week reminds both participants and service providers about eligibility and recertification requirements in both the Lifeline and ACP programs.”

“NARUC recognizes the importance of digital connectivity and the benefits of the FCC’s Lifeline Program for communities across the country,” said NARUC President and Connecticut Commissioner Michael A. Caron. “We are pleased to join our federal partners, stakeholder groups and state commissions in the national awareness campaign.”

The federal Lifeline Program provides substantial assistance to eligible low-income consumers who are either participants in specified public assistance programs or meet specific income criteria. These consumers can benefit from discounts of up to \$9.25 per month for broadband-qualifying services, up to \$5.25 per month for voice-qualifying services and up to \$34.25 per month for residents residing on Tribal lands. An additional \$25 discount is also available for low-

income subscribers residing on Tribal lands. The program's eligibility and regulations can be accessed at <http://www.lifelinesupport.org>. A dedicated American Sign Language video describing the Lifeline program can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/wwkjVrd5xHc>.

The Affordable Connectivity Program offers benefits to qualifying households, including a monthly discount of up to \$30 for broadband services per eligible household, with an increased benefit of up to \$75 for households on 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. The funds are transferred directly from ACP to the participating broadband service providers.

For comprehensive information about the ACP, visit <https://www.fcc.gov/acp>. To access more resources, visit NARUC's Digital Connectivity and Lifeline Awareness page at bit.ly/4892OCg.

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About NARUC

NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC's member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of state public utility commissions before the three branches of the federal government.