

TC-1 Resolution Supporting Permanent Funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program

Whereas the federal government has made a historic investment in the Affordable Connectivity Program (“ACP” or “Program”) implemented by the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) to increase access to affordable high-speed broadband for eligible low-income families;

Whereas the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“Infrastructure Act”) funded the \$14.2 billion budget for the ACP, including specifically designated funds to administer and promote the Program;

Whereas the Infrastructure Act reflects that the federal government and states have been long-term partners in jointly implementing and promoting programs that increase access to broadband;

Whereas the Infrastructure Act provides eligibility for ACP to all households that are currently enrolled in Lifeline; the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; and the Medicaid Program implemented by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services;

Whereas in July 2022, NARUC passed a resolution urging state commissions, the FCC, and the Universal Service Administrative Company (“USAC”) to work collaboratively with federal and state agencies that implement programs whose target participants are eligible for Lifeline and ACP to promote awareness of the Program among eligible households;

Whereas as of June 2023, approximately 19 million eligible households are enrolled in ACP, which represents 41 percent of the estimated 46.3 million households eligible for ACP;

Whereas ACP is a temporary program that runs from April 2022 until the program expends all of its funds;

Whereas as of June 2023, there are \$8.6 billion of remaining ACP appropriations available for disbursement;

Whereas ACP is expected to disburse all remaining appropriations by the second quarter of 2024;

Whereas establishing a new federal assistance program was a complex process at the federal, state, territory, tribal and local levels. It required an extensive amount of effort by the FCC, USAC, states, internet service providers, and community organizations to get the program up and running, ensure that customers were aware of the program, review applications, and verify eligibility;

Whereas the lack of a permanent low-income broadband assistance program with government oversight is troubling because universal high-speed internet access is essential for a well-functioning economy; *and*

Whereas should the ACP expire without establishing a permanent fund, broadband customers who have relied on ACP to help pay their bills will suffer without this assistance; *now, therefore be it*

Resolved that the Board of Directors of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, convened at its 2023 Summer Policy Summit in Austin, Texas, urges Congress to provide permanent annual funding for a federal Low-Income Affordable Connectivity Program.

Passed by the Committee on Telecommunications on July 18, 2023

Passed by the NARUC Board of Directors on July 19, 2023