



Louisiana Office of Broadband  
Development & Connectivity  
[connect.la.gov](http://connect.la.gov)

Veneeth Iyengar  
*Executive Director*

July 26, 2023

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

It is critical that we address a pending issue that could negatively affect our efforts toward eliminating the digital divide. Funding for the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program will expire in the summer of 2024 unless it is reauthorized. Granting access to high-speed internet without addressing affordability will prevent hundreds of thousands of Louisianians from maximizing the effects of this service on their lives. Thus, reauthorization of ACP funding is a crucial step toward eliminating the digital divide. We strongly encourage you to support this worthwhile goal.

In every parish in the state, Louisianians have already felt the positive effects of this program. More than 479,000 households, as of July 25, have received immediate relief from the ACP. About 52% of eligible recipients in Louisiana receiving benefits, while exceeding the national average of, 37%.

Since the formation of the Louisiana Office of Broadband Development and Connectivity, branded as ConnectLA, the office has worked tirelessly in partnership with federal, state, tribal and local entities to eliminate the digital divide by 2029.

In Louisiana, there are nearly 1.7 million households, 42% of which are Black or Latino, that struggle to access high-speed, affordable internet due to lack of access, affordability, digital skills and/or devices.

ConnectLA has partnered with internet service providers, nonprofits, academic organizations, economic development organizations, public safety entities, agriculture communities and others to develop and implement tactical solutions to address the digital divide. Outcomes from these discussions include:

- Louisiana received the eighth-largest allocation from the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program and tenth largest, per capita, in the country.
- \$176 million in U.S. Department of Treasury American Rescue Plan Act dollars have been obligated to expand access to more than 80,000 locations in the state, many in rural areas such as Avoyelles, St. Martin, Livingston and Lafourche parishes where projects are well underway.

Louisiana Division of Administration

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- Louisiana’s community and technical colleges have issued more than 600 broadband workforce certifications during the past twelve months. By 2023, the community and technical college system projects that 3,000 students will have completed a broadband certification. Classes are offered at institutions statewide.
- Louisiana is considered to have the best and most aggressive broadband effort in the country.

The accomplishments above will not be as beneficial for all Louisianians without the FCC’s Affordable Connectivity Program. We, the undersigned, thank you for your attention to our position and hope you are willing to support the ACP. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

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President & CEO

Capital Area United Way

**Dr. Holly Boffy**

President

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*On behalf of*

Louisiana Telecom Association

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