



GET CONNECTED

Rural Broadband Internet Access **TOOLKIT**

Helping Rural African American
Faith Communities
Get Connected to
Broadband Internet

Call 1 (877) 384-2575
www.GetInternet.gov/apply



What Is Broadband and Who Doesn't Have It?

Broadband connection is a high-speed internet service that allows you to quickly access and transmit data, like streaming videos, browsing websites, and downloading files, using a wired or wireless connection.



African Americans in the United States report a lack of broadband/internet access*



African Americans in southern rural communities experience lack of broadband access*

Get Connected Initiative, Faith Partners

Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Coordinator of Get Connected. She is the CEO and co-founder of Skinner Leadership Institute, and is a trusted advisor, public policy strategist, and faith leader. She has made significant contributions to American public policy, government, and community relations. She is known for her work in interfaith collaborations, leadership development programs, and advocacy for voting rights. She holds multiple degrees, including a law degree, and has authored books on spirituality and leadership.



Bishop James Levert Davis is the Presiding Prelate of the Second Episcopal District in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, covering Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C. He has a strong AME Church background and extensive theological education. He has led significant initiatives and achieved remarkable growth in various districts, including the 19th and 9th Episcopal Districts. He was appointed to his current position in 2016 during the 50th Quadrennial Session General Conference.



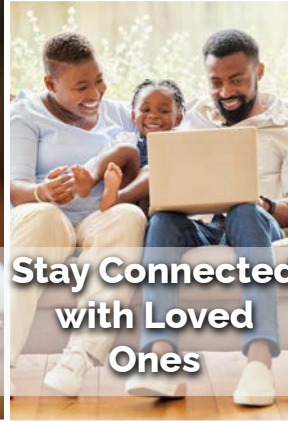
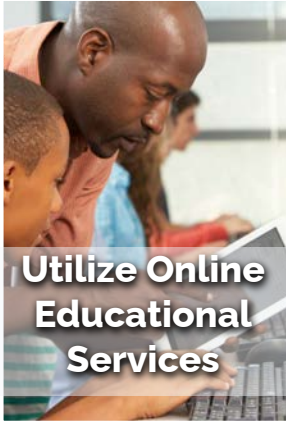
Bishop Terry Lamar Hill, Jr. is the founder and senior pastor of The Citadel Church of Jacksonville. He is a native of Florida and has a strong focus on family ministry. He is also a radio show host, actor, and author, with two devotionals to his name. He holds a degree from Lancaster Bible College and is pursuing a Master of Divinity degree. Additionally, he was consecrated as a Bishop and currently serves as the Secretary General in the United Covenant Churches of Christ.



Bishop Harry L. Seawright is the Presiding Prelate of the Ninth Episcopal District in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, covering Alabama. He was elected in 2016 on the first ballot, a historic event for the AME Church. Bishop Seawright holds advanced theological degrees, has served in pastoral positions, and actively contributes to economic development and health initiatives.



Without Broadband, You Won't Be Able to...



Find Out Your Connectivity Status



Alabama Broadband Map

33 of 67 Alabama counties lack high speed internet access, leaving only **18%** of Alabama households with coverage.

(USA Today)



North Carolina Broadband Map

The majority of the North Carolina counties that lack internet access also have higher rates of poverty and elderly populations.

(NC Broadband Availability Index)



Florida Broadband Map

While Florida has worked towards connectivity, **31%** of rural Florida still lacks broadband internet and high-speed access.

(Office of Broadband)

How to get Broadband Internet Access?

Two Steps to Enroll:

1. Submit an application through [GetInternet.gov/apply](https://www.getinternet.gov/apply)
2. Contact your preferred provider to have the discount applied [Companies Near Me Tool](#).

You must apply for both the program and contact a participating provider to receive the discount!

The Federal Communication Commission's (FCC's) [Affordable Connectivity Program](#) (ACP) provides **up to \$30** off your network bill and **up to \$100 discount** towards one laptop, desktop computer, or tablet per household.

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[www.GetInternet.gov/apply](https://www.getinternet.gov/apply)

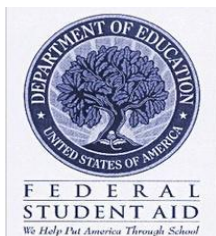
Ways to Qualify

If you qualify for any of the following government assistance programs, you also qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program:

- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year;
- Meet the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income internet program;
- Participate in one of these assistance programs:
 - Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program, including at U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Community Eligibility Provision schools.
 - SNAP
 - Medicaid
 - Federal Housing Assistance, including:
 - Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program (Section 8 Vouchers)
 - Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA)/Section 202/ Section 811
 - Public Housing
 - Affordable Housing Programs for American Indians, Alaska Natives or Native Hawaiians
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - WIC
 - Veterans Pension or Survivor Benefits or Lifeline;
- Participate in assistance programs for qualifying Tribal Lands.



Medicaid



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program



Frequently Asked Questions

- **How do I get started with my application for the Affordable Connectivity Program?**
 - You can go to [GetInternet.gov/apply](https://www.getinternet.gov/apply) to check your eligibility and start the application online. Eligible households can also enroll through an approved provider.
- **Do I receive the funds directly each month?**
 - No, the Affordable Connectivity Program provides a monthly discount on internet service of up to \$30 per eligible household (or up to \$75 per eligible household on Tribal lands). The participating broadband service provider will receive the funds directly.
- **How does the \$100 device benefit work?**
 - Participating internet service providers can be reimbursed up to \$100 if they supply a connected device to a household, provided the household pays more than \$10 but less than \$50 for the device. In other words, to take advantage of this benefit, it must be done through your participating internet service provider, and you must contribute a portion of the cost.
- **Which internet providers are participating in the Affordable Connectivity Program?**
 - Various internet providers, including those offering landline and wireless services, will participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program. Depending on where you live, you may have a choice of providers. Check with the internet service providers in your area through [Companies Near Me Tool](#). You can search internet service providers by city, state/territory, or zip code.
- **Where can I find more information on the Affordable Connectivity Program?**
 - Both [FCC.gov/ACP](https://www.fcc.gov/ACP) and [AffordableConnectivity.gov](https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov) provide detailed information about the Affordable Connectivity Program for consumers and digital navigators. The information previously available at [GetInternet.gov/apply](https://www.getinternet.gov/apply) will continue to be available by accessing [whitehouse.gov/getinternet](https://www.whitehouse.gov/getinternet).
- **What if I don't have broadband access in my community? What do I do?**
 - Refer to the sample letters. Contact your congressional and state representative to get them to advocate for you and provide these crucial services to your community. Also contact major service providers to let them know there is a lack of broadband coverage in your area so they can put more towers there and provide service for you.
- **How do I check if my broadband service isn't good?**
 - Use the broadband maps on the previous page to review the service in your area. If the percentage of coverage is low (usually under 50-80 percent) then you need to push for more service in your area.



Sample Letter to Political Representative

Dear [YOUR POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVE],

I am writing to ask your leadership with closing the digital divide in our county. The lack of affordable broadband in rural southern communities has created significant barriers to educational opportunities, maintain familial relations virtually, access to faith-based services, online voter registration, and access to healthcare.

The **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)**, launched by the Federal Communications Commission in 2021, has provided nearly 18 million low-income households across the country with resources to pay for necessary broadband service. The ACP provides eligible households a \$30 per month discount on high-speed internet services, making access free for many participants. For example, as of May 2023, more than 750,000 North Carolina households are currently participating in the program.

Unfortunately, the future of this critically important program is hanging in the balance. Based on current take rates, the funding appropriated for the ACP program (\$14.2B) could be exhausted in late 2023 or early 2024. Congress must act now to replenish ACP funding for a few years until longer-term subsidy reforms are in place. If the ACP program expires, millions of households, and hundreds of thousands across the south, will lose financial support for their broadband needs. As a constituent and concerned citizen, I urge you to take action to address this pressing issue. Specifically, I ask you to support extension of the ACP, a critical tool for bridging the digital divide for communities of color and rural communities that have been left behind in the digital revolution.

We deserve the same services that most other Americans have. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to your response and actions on this important issue.

Sincerely,
YOUR NAME



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Sincerely,
YOUR NAME



Sample Letter To State Broadband Office

Dear [STATE BROADBAND OFFICE],

I am writing to urge (name of state) broadband leaders to provide more access to broadband services, particularly in rural southern Black communities in my state. The lack of reliable internet access in these areas has created significant barriers to educational opportunities, maintain familial relations virtually, access to faith-based services, online voting registration practices, and access to healthcare.

As a resident in a rural district, I have witnessed firsthand the impact of the digital divide on our communities. Many households lack access to reliable internet services, making it difficult for them to participate fully in online learning, telehealth services, or remote work. This is especially true in southern Black rural communities, where the lack of broadband infrastructure affects these communities at two times the rate it affects white communities and has created significant inequities.

As (name of state) expands broadband deployment with funding under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) grants, I urge the state to take action to address this critical issue. Specifically, I urge you to expand broadband infrastructure to unserved and underserved areas, including rural southern Black communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I believe that by working together, we can bridge the digital divide and ensure that everyone can have access to the tools and resources they need to succeed.

Sincerely,
YOUR NAME

Get Connected and Change Your Life

To Apply Call 1 (877) 384-2575 or Visit
www.GetInternet.gov/apply



To join in our push for rural broadband access and raising our collective voices to decision makers and carriers in your area visit:

www.SkinnerLeaders.org/getconnected

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