

# MEDIA RELEASE

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COUNTY OF ERIE  
OFFICE OF THE  
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## Emergency Broadband Benefit Program to launch May 12

Erie, PA – County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper invites Erie County residents in need to enroll in the FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, beginning Wednesday, May 12, to receive a monthly discount on broadband service.

Eligible households could receive discounts of up to \$50 a month for broadband service, and up to \$75 a month if the household is on Tribal lands. A one-time discount of up to \$100 on a computer or tablet will also be offered to eligible households.

Eligible households can enroll through an approved provider or by visiting <https://getemergencybroadband.org>.

Under the law, the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program is open to households that meet the following eligibility requirements:

- participants in existing low-income or pandemic relief programs offered by a broadband provider
- Lifeline subscribers, including those that are on Medicaid or accept SNAP benefits
- households with kids receiving free and reduced-price lunch or school breakfast
- Pell grant recipients
- those who have lost jobs and seen their income reduced in the last year

Access to the internet became critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, when most everything – learning, living and working – went virtual. This program is another step toward providing a way to connect for struggling families.

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The first major step took place in May 2020, when County Executive Dahlkemper, in partnership with Erick Friedman, director of Information Technology for Erie County, and the Erie County Public Library announced the expansion of the reach of Wi-Fi networks at all Erie County Public Library locations. This expansion enabled the Wi-Fi network at each Erie County Public Library location to be accessed from anywhere in the library's parking lot or within approximately 100 feet from the buildings.

“Over the last year, we learned the definition of essential as everyone searched for new ways to stay connected to one another,” said County Executive Dahlkemper. “County government has embraced technology in a robust manner, permitting us to serve our residents with minimal interruption. We are grateful for these efforts to be enhanced on a larger scale now with the assistance of the FCC. I encourage residents to take advantage of this opportunity and enroll on May 12.”

According to the FCC, appropriate privacy and security safeguards are being put in place, and it urges providers to test their own systems.

“Affordability and accessibility are two key factors in expanding broadband services throughout Erie County,” said Friedman. “Our goal is 100% availability for all residents, and this program takes a major step in making broadband more affordable.”

For more information about the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, please visit:  
<https://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit>

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