



L.A. County Launches New Phase of “Delete The Divide” Campaign to Enroll Residents to Get \$50/Month Off Internet Bill

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Upcoming Deadline to Enroll for Federal Emergency Broadband Benefit is Dec. 31, 2021



Left to right, Jamel Thomas, program administrator, Delete the Divide, Christine Juarez, program administrator, DTD, Selwyn Hollins, director, Internal Service Department (ISD), Felicia Divinity, program administrator, DTD, Mark Colton, director, (ISD)

Los Angeles County is launching a new phase of its “Delete the Divide” campaign today to encourage residents to learn if they may qualify for up to \$50 a month off their internet bill. An estimated 822,000 County households may be eligible, including households with at least one person already participating in one of these programs: Cal-Fresh, Medi-Cal, SSI, Lifeline or students with a Pell Grant. Qualified households are encouraged to apply before December 31, 2021 to receive the maximum benefits before the program evolves next year.

To apply for EBB, LA County residents can either call 866-696-8748 or apply online at <https://www.internetforallnow.org/applytoday>.

The initiative promotes the **Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB)**, a federally funded program for consumers with low-income that will show up as a discount on their Internet bills. The U.S. Congress and President Joe Biden established this benefit because of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, and they recently made the benefit permanent. The federally funded benefit will help households get online, save money and gain access to County digital services to obtain critical safety net resources such as housing, food assistance, and telehealth.

"If we, as a County, are ever going to truly realize digital equity, now is the time. So many of our opportunities and resources are accessible online, and yet, so many of our residents and small businesses do not have access – especially those in Black and Latino communities," Los Angeles Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda L. Solis said. She noted that she is proud of the investments that the Board has approved to expand infrastructure in order to provide low-income LA County residents with affordable, sustainable internet service.

The "Delete the Divide" campaign is administered by LA County's Internal Services Department (ISD) which is responsible to ensure the County's efforts to get all residents affordable broadband are aligned and coordinated. To reach communities that are impacted right now, the County is partnering with the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF). CETF developed a marketing and public awareness initiative that has been tailored for the County's Delete the Divide mission to get in the marketplace right away, including print materials, TV and Radio in multiple languages (English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese).

CETF has a history of funding community organizations to help residents understand affordable Internet offers and the FCC Broadband Benefit program. CETF grantees have assisted more than 250,000 households in California with getting affordable Internet.

"More than 365,000 Los Angeles County households do not have any Internet access at home and for the most part these are largely homes of people of color. The fifty dollars in assistance is a quick, short-term solution to help County residents get online. We're also working on long-term solutions that help delete the digital divide altogether and this is a great step toward that overall goal," said Selwyn Hollins, Director, Los Angeles County Internal Services Department.

"We're encouraging everyone to get the message out about how to get free or lower cost Internet service. The pandemic has shown us that having reliable Internet service is essential and should be available and affordable to everyone," said CETF President and CEO Sunne Wright McPeak.

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