National Verifier Updates Guide

August 2023 | Affordable Connectivity Program Application Updates

After conducting outreach to the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) community of practitioners and examining its own data, the Universal Service Administrative Co. (USAC) continues to make enhancements to the National Verifier application. These changes make the ACP application process easier and more streamlined for the applicant.

Below you will find detailed information about these changes.

LearnACP

EducationSuperHighway’s free enrollment support certification course is self-timed, easy to follow and has been updated to reflect recent changes to the National Verifier application.

To take the course (again or for the first time), visit educationsuperhighway.org/LearnACP
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New Review Information Page Disclosure for Federal Pell Grant

If the applicant has selected to prove their eligibility based on receipt of a Federal Pell Grant, they will see an additional disclosure as seen on the right. The applicant should read the consent and then type their name to provide their digital signature, indicating their consent.
Confirm Household Size Signature

If the applicant is prompted to confirm their household, the last screen in this series now requests a digital signature instead of multiple initials.
Prove Eligibility Via Income

SCREEN 1
The applicant selects whether they have access to a document that shows proof of income. If the applicant selects no, they will be taken out of the proof of income sequence and they will choose another way to prove their eligibility.

SCREEN 2
The applicant then enters the number of people in their household. The system automatically generates the income amount that qualifies a household of that size for the ACP. The applicant will select Yes if their income is at or below that level or No if it is not and they can provide proof of eligibility in a different way. They then hit Next.

Note: All applicants who need to show proof of eligibility will be prompted to provide proof of income, regardless of whether they previously chose to apply through a different means of eligibility.
Prove Eligibility Via Income

SCREEN 3
The applicant then has access to upload proof of their income by selecting the Choose a File button.
Program-Specific Proof of Eligibility Screens

If the applicant cannot or chooses not to provide proof of eligibility via income, they can select the program that qualifies their household. Depending on what they select, different screens will appear. Each screen details documentation requirements, common examples and mistakes, how to upload the documentation, and additional information at the bottom. All possible screens are shown below.
Program-Specific Proof of Eligibility Screens

**USDA COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION SCHOOL**

Share proof that your child or dependent attends a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school

Your documents must include:
- Federal Tax Returns
- W2's
- Pay Stubs
- Social Security Benefits

Here are common examples
- Income Verification
- Federal Tax Returns
- W2's
- Pay Stubs
- Social Security Benefits

**FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL LUNCH OR BREAKFAST PROGRAM**

Share proof that your child or dependent gets the Free and Reduced-Priced School Lunch or Breakfast Program

Your documents must include:
- Federal Tax Returns
- W2's
- Pay Stubs
- Social Security Benefits

Here are common examples
- Income Verification
- Federal Tax Returns
- W2's
- Pay Stubs
- Social Security Benefits

**SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME**

Share proof that you get Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Your documents must include:
- Federal Tax Returns
- W2's
- Pay Stubs
- Social Security Benefits

Here are common examples
- Income Verification
- Federal Tax Returns
- W2's
- Pay Stubs
- Social Security Benefits

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Program-Specific Proof of Eligibility Screens

Applicants who select FEDERAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE, SPECIAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC), TRIBAL SPECIFIC PROGRAM, OR VETERANS PENSION AND SURVIVORS BENEFIT PROGRAMS will see this screen.
June 2023 Update

The URL to the ACP application was updated from AffordableConnectivity.gov to GetInternet.gov. Additionally, there is now a Spanish landing page and application accessible at AccedeInternet.gov.

USAC has begun launching a series of regular, small updates to the National Verifier to improve the user experience.

- CAPTCHA checks have now been removed from the application.
- Once approved, the applicant will now receive up to four reminder emails (or texts) from USAC to connect their ACP benefit with an internet service provider.
- The Before You Get Started section (as seen below in the March updates) has been removed from the National Verifier application.
March 2023 Updates

New “Before You Get Started” Page

Consumers will land on a new page to help them understand how their information will be used and tips on what they may need to provide before they start their application.

Consumers are encouraged to provide the last four digits of their Social Security number to reduce the need to provide extra documentation later in the process. Consumers who choose not to provide the last four digits of their Social Security number can still qualify and will need to upload identity documentation.
Updated Application Flow

The application has been reordered to streamline the application process. The new flow presents as one of two main pathways as outlined below:

ACP Application Overview

Before beginning our step-by-step walk-through, let's review the basic parts of the application.

The precise path of each application will vary depending on how the individual qualifies and how they choose to confirm their identity and eligibility. However, there are two main paths in the National Verifier.

Path 1: Applicants who already receive SNAP and/or Medicaid benefits may auto-qualify with a Social Security number. They will follow this path:

1. Enter the full home address of where the applicant wants service and their contact information.
2. Choose to confirm identity with their Social Security number.
3. Enter their full name and date of birth.
4. Choose how they would like to confirm eligibility (SNAP or Medicaid).
5. Review information.
6. Find out if they qualify or need to provide more information.
7. Create an account.
8. Complete certification.

Path 2: Applicants who do not auto-qualify because they choose not to use the last four digits of their Social Security number or because they do not participate in SNAP or Medicaid (or another program that shares participant information with USAC) will follow this path:

1. Enter the full home address of where the applicant wants service and their contact information.
2. Choose how to confirm identity.
3. Enter their full name and date of birth.
4. Choose how they would like to confirm eligibility. If the applicant chooses qualification through a child or dependent, they will then select the child or dependent’s qualifying program, enter the child or dependent’s personal information, and identification documentation, if applicable.
5. Review information.
6. Find out if they qualify or need to provide more information.
7. Create an account.
8. Provide additional information and upload documentation if prompted to confirm their identity, address, and/or eligibility.

If applicants do not complete their application (for example, they do not create an account or they fail to certify their application) they will receive an email from USAC with information on how to complete their application.
Qualifying Program Updates

The initial qualifying program question has been simplified to ask the consumer if they think they qualify through Medicaid or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Previously, consumers were required to select how they qualify by selecting their income or all of the programs in which they participate first. This change will make it easier for applicants to navigate the application and allows for a quicker path to approval for many. All consumers (or the benefit qualifying person on their application) will be checked against available database connections regardless of how they respond to the qualifying program question.

If the consumer selects NO, after they hit Next, they will see the screen at right where they can select how they qualify.

If the consumer selects that they don’t participate in any of these “but I have a child or dependent who may qualify,” another dropdown will appear (as seen at left) where they can select how their dependent qualifies for the ACP.

After this step, the consumer will then choose a form of ID for their dependent and upload documents, if applicable. And finally, they will enter their dependent’s name and date of birth.
Eligibility Results Before Account Creation

The National Verifier has automated database connections to verify a consumer’s eligibility, identity, and address information to determine if they qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program. The outcome of these database checks will be shared with consumers before they are required to create an account or sign into their existing account. This enhancement is designed to increase consumer confidence to complete the enrollment process.

Consumers who pass the automated checks will receive notice that they qualify. Consumers who do not automatically qualify will receive information explaining why they have not yet qualified and direct them to next steps.

On the same page, the system will automatically identify whether a consumer has an existing account and prompt the consumer to create an account or sign in depending on their unique circumstance.

Depending on their unique inputs, each consumer’s results will look different. Examples below:
Streamlined Certification –
Initials No Longer Required

The language for the certification statements has been simplified so it is easier for consumers to understand. With this enhancement, consumers will only have to sign once at the end of the certifications page to affirm they agree to the statements.

Clear Enrollment Instructions

Consumers who qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program will receive clear and specific instructions on how to enroll with a participating provider.

- **When a consumer qualifies**, they will be informed that they are approved and directed to contact an internet provider to receive their benefit. Additionally, consumers will receive specific instructions on what to tell a provider to enroll.

- **Consumers who already have internet** will be instructed to contact their internet provider and say, "I have been approved for the Affordable Connectivity Program and would like to apply it to my service."

- **Consumers who do not currently have internet** will be instructed to find an internet provider and say, "I have been approved for the Affordable Connectivity Program and would like to sign up for internet."

These updates will help facilitate consumers’ pathway through the final step to enroll and begin receiving their benefit.
New and Updated Email Outreach

Two new emails will be released to encourage consumers to complete their application:

- **Consumers who start an application but do not create an account within one day** will receive an email reminding them to create an account to finish their application.

- **Consumers who start an application and create an account but do not sign the certification within one day** will receive an email reminding them to sign in and finish their application.

The email outreach to consumers who qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program is also being updated to align with changes to the consumer portal. Consumers will receive clear and specific instructions on how to enroll with a participating provider.

Application Support

If applicants have any questions or need assistance, they can contact the Universal Service Administrative Company, ACP Support Center via:

- ACPSupport@usac.org
- 877-384-2575, seven days a week, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. ET

ABOUT EDUCATIONSUPERHIGHWAY

EducationSuperHighway is a national non-profit with the mission to close the digital divide for the 18 million households that have access to the Internet but can’t afford to connect. We focus on America’s most unconnected communities, where more than 25% of people don’t have Internet.

From 2012-2020 we led the effort that closed the classroom connectivity gap. In 2013, only 10% of students had access to digital learning in their classrooms. Today, thanks to an unprecedented bi-partisan effort by federal, state, and school district leaders, supported by K-12 advocacy organizations, the classroom connectivity gap is closed – 47 million students are connected, and 99.3% of America’s schools have a high-speed broadband connection.

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