

# State and Federal Broadband Subscription Subsidies

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE

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# Federal & State Lifeline

- ▶ \$9.25 credit on telephone or broadband bill for participating carriers.
  - ▶ Carriers must be Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (“ETCs”)
  - ▶ Only 3 Wireless ETC selling in Vermont – Qlink, Tracfone, Life Wireless
  - ▶ 1 Broadband only ETC – Burlington Telecom
  - ▶ 9,353 Vermont Subscribers (November 2020)
- ▶ State provides an additional \$4.25 subsidy for Telephone service only

# Vermont Temporary Broadband Subsidy

- ▶ Goal: Keep Vermonters facing economic hardship from losing internet service during COVID-19
- ▶ PSD allocated \$3M in CRF funding toward TBS
- ▶ Salesforce application similar to most other state CRF programs
- ▶ **\$40 credit per month (\$400)** (or full amount of monthly subscription, whichever is lower).
- ▶ Retroactive subsidy, March-December
- ▶ Covered subscribers of participating or non-participating ISPs.



# TBS Eligibility

- ▶ COVID related hardship:
  - ▶ 20% loss in monthly income year over year for March-June
  - ▶ layoff
  - ▶ Furlough
  - ▶ 20% reduction in wage-hours due to COVID-19
  - ▶ Reduction in work due to closure of a childcare or assisted living facility.
- ▶ COVID-19 health related impacts to self, a member of the household, or family member requiring quarantine, hospital assistance, or hospice care by the utility service account holder
- ▶ Eligibility requirements were the same for VCAAP.
- ▶ Pandemic Related Need: remote work, remote learning, telehealth

# Participating ISPs

- ▶ Comcast
- ▶ Consolidated Communications
- ▶ Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom
- ▶ Franklin Telephone
- ▶ TDS
- ▶ Topsham Telephone
- ▶ Shoreham Telephone
- ▶ ECFiber
- ▶ Burlington Telecom
- ▶ Cloud Alliance/Kingdom Fiber
- ▶ Vermont Telephone/Vtel Wireless
- ▶ Charter (verification only)
- ▶ PSD hired an outside firm to verify applications for customers of non-participating ISPs. Checks were sent to customers of non-participating ISPs.

# Who We Served

- ▶ 2,935 Applicants
- ▶ \$920,712.62 Awarded
- ▶ Average Award: \$313.70





# New Federal Emergency Broadband Benefit Program

- ▶ \$3.2 Billion in funding
- ▶ Administered by the FCC and USAC
- ▶ Subsidy to begin in March
- ▶ Available to low income
  - ▶ existing Lifeline customer
  - ▶ National School Lunch Program
  - ▶ Substantial loss of income since February 29, 2020
  - ▶ Pell Grant
  - ▶ Subscriber of already established provider's low-income program
- ▶ Credit up to \$50/month (\$75 for tribal lands subscribers)
- ▶ \$100 toward a connected device
- ▶ Final rules not published
- ▶ Estimated to last 8-9 months