Affordable Connectivity Claims System Enhancements

May 11, 2023
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- **A copy of the slide deck is in the “Handouts” section of webinar panel**
Meet Our Team

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Agenda

• Program Overview
• Claims Process Overview
• Partial Upload Process
• How to Claim Reimbursement
  • Certify Claims
  • Revisions
• Resources
Program Overview
Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a Federal Communications Commission benefit program that helps low-income households pay for broadband service and connected devices.

Eligible households can receive:

- **$30 Standard Discount**
  Up to $30/month discount for broadband services

- **$75 Tribal Discount**
  Up to $75/month discount for broadband services for households on qualifying Tribal lands

- **Device Discount**
  A one-time discount of up to $100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet (consumer co-pay above $10 and less than $50 required)

*The ACP benefit is limited to one monthly service discount and one device discount per household*
Claims Process Overview
Service providers use the **Affordable Connectivity Claims System (ACCS)** to claim ACP subscribers for reimbursement and to certify reimbursement claims.

- The ACCS is available through USAC’s [One Portal](#) system.
- Service providers claim the monthly service reimbursement amount for each eligible subscriber, as well as any one-time device benefit reimbursement.
Claims Process
Snapshot of Subscribers Eligible for Reimbursement

- On the first of the month, USAC takes a snapshot of all subscribers entered in the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) that may be claimed for reimbursement for the prior month
  - For example, a snapshot taken on April 1 shows the subscribers eligible to be claimed for the March data month
  - Consumers who have not been entered in NLAD are not eligible for reimbursement
  - Consumers who transferred to a different provider prior to the snapshot are not eligible for reimbursement
- Subscribers should only be claimed if they are receiving ACP service
  - For example, subscribers who have enrolled but have not started receiving service are not eligible to be claimed
Determining the Claim Amount
ACP Reimbursement Claims

• Service providers can only claim reimbursement for the discount passed on to the consumer

• Consumers must receive service in the data month to be claimed for reimbursement

• Consumers must receive and use service in the data month to be claimed for reimbursement if they are not assessed and do not pay a fee for their ACP service
Determining the Claim Amount
Applying the ACP & Lifeline Benefits

- Eligible consumers can choose to apply their ACP and Lifeline benefits to the same broadband service
- The full Lifeline discount must be applied first, then the ACP discount can be applied to the remaining amount
- The ACP discount cannot be applied to a service plan that is already offered with no fee to the end user as a result of Lifeline program support or other benefit programs
Determining the Claim Amount
Reimbursement – Partial Months

• If a service provider prorates consumer costs for a partial month of service, the provider should only seek reimbursement for the actual discount applied to the consumer bill

• USAC does not prorate ACP claims – it is the responsibility of the service provider to enter the correct reimbursement amount in the claims template

• If a consumer de-enrolls with a service provider before the snapshot date, that consumer cannot be claimed for reimbursement
## Claims Process

### Reason Codes

Service providers are required to provide a reason code for all unclaimed subscriber records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U1</td>
<td>Signed up for ACP, no usage yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U2</td>
<td>Subscriber is in a non-usage cure period (snapshot date falls within the 15-day cure period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U3</td>
<td>Subscriber lost eligibility prior to snapshot, but was not de-enrolled from NLAD prior to snapshot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U4</td>
<td>Subscriber’s account is suspended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U5</td>
<td>Failed to match subscriber in ETC’s internal system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U6</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Claims Process
Filing Period for Claims

- Service providers have up to **six months from the snapshot date** to submit original claims or upward revisions on previous claims (applies to March 2022 data months and on)
  - **Example 1:** For the March 2023 data month (April 1 snapshot) providers must submit original claims by October 2, 2023 (since October 1 falls on a weekend)
  - **Example 2:** If a provider submits an original claim for the March 2023 data month on September 1, they still have until October 2 (since October 1 falls on a weekend) to submit an upward revision
- There is no time restriction on downward revisions
- Providers must certify claims by the 15th to receive payment at the end of the same month
Questions?
Partial Upload Process
Partial Upload Process
Overview

• Aims to improve the claims upload process for service providers

• All rows in a claims template that successfully pass row level validations are saved and do not need to be resubmitted if other rows have errors
  • Service providers are no longer required to include all subscribers for a SAC in their claims upload, then can now upload smaller batches of subscribers
  • There is a new partial filing template that providers can download
  • The new “Partially Uploaded” SAC status indicates if some, but not all subscribers in a SAC have a rate

• These enhancements are optional, and providers can continue to file ACP claims using the same process they have been

• These changes do not impact the Lifeline claims process
How to Claim Reimbursement
Claim Reimbursement
Overview

Review Claims
- Download and review list of subscribers eligible for reimbursement

Complete Claims Template
- Populate and submit claims template with necessary information about each subscriber

Certify Claims
- Certify claims submission within six months of the snapshot date (taken on 1st of the month)
Claim Reimbursement
User Accounts and Responsibilities

497 Officer
Must certify reimbursement claims, and can upload, modify, and submit claims

497 User
Can upload, modify, and submit claims, but cannot certify claims

Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs) that participate in Lifeline and ACP:
- The 497 Officer and 497 User roles are assigned and managed in E-file, which can be accessed through USAC’s One Portal system

ACP-only Providers:
- The 497 Officer is assigned during the election process
- To change the 497 Officer or add a 497 User, email ACPProgram@usac.org with the subject “ACP 497 Officer Request”
Claim Reimbursement

Log In

- Log in to One Portal
  - Select Affordable Connectivity Claims System (ACCS) under the Lifeline section of the dashboard
  - Reminder: ACCS users must have 497 Officer or 497 User entitlements to access the system
Claim Reimbursement

Log In

- Under the Claims section of NLAD, select the Affordable Connectivity Program Claims link
**Claim Reimbursement**

Download Claims (1 of 2)

On the **ACP File or Revise Claim** page of ACCS, providers can file an original claim or a revision:

- Select the data month, year, and filing type
  - Search results will generate in the **SAC Status** section based on the applied filters
- New SAC Status for **Partially Uploaded**
- Click **Continue** to begin filing

**Note**: The claims template is typically available for download after 11:30 a.m. ET on the 1\textsuperscript{st} of the month
Claim Reimbursement
Download Claims (2 of 2)

• To download a filing template, click on the **Download original filing template** link
  • This list includes subscriber data from the NLAD subscriber snapshot report, which is taken on the 1st of the month
  • Subscriber data can be pulled for a specific SPIN/SAC

• The **partial filing template** is also available for providers

• Click **Download** to review list of subscribers eligible for reimbursement
**Claim Reimbursement**

Complete Claims Template (1 of 6)

**Populate** claims template with necessary information (rate, reason code, and device benefit) for each subscriber

- **Rate** – enter the dollar amount for each subscriber that should be claimed or unclaimed
- **Reason Code** – enter a reason code for each unclaimed subscriber record
- **Device Benefit** – enter rate for one-time device benefit (if applicable), which should be no more than the market rate minus the co-pay amount
  - This should correspond to the information in NLAD and the ACP Device Information Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subscriber ID</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Reason Code</td>
<td>Device Benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123456789A</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123456789B</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>U1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123456789C</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Claim Reimbursement
Complete Claims Template (2 of 6)

- Save as a .csv file
- Select Upload File to submit claims template
Claim Reimbursement
Complete Claims Template (3 of 6)

• For a successful upload, users receive a success message
• The **Subscriber Counts** table updates to reflect the latest uploaded claims template
• View a detailed report by clicking on the **Download to review uploaded data** link
Claim Reimbursement
Complete Claims Template (4 of 6)

• For an unsuccessful upload, users receive an error message and can download the error file to review the failures
  • Make the necessary changes and upload the claims file again
• Users will receive a new error message that notifies them if some subscribers are missing a rate
  • Providers can download the partial filing template to see which subscribers need a rate entered
A file can contain only some of the subscribers in a SAC and be accepted if there are no errors.

However, a SAC must have the “Uploaded” SAC status in order to be submitted and certified.

- All subscribers in a SAC must have a rate or reason code in order to be certified.
Claim Reimbursement
Complete Claims Template (6 of 6)

• After successfully uploading a claim, click on the View Support Summary link to review a summary of claims before submitting the filing to the 497 Officer to certify

• From the Support Summary page, users can select filings to submit to the 497 Officer to certify
  • Select the claims that are ready to be submitted and enter required contact information
  • Click Submit to Officer to Certify
Claim Reimbursement
Certify Claims

• As a 497 Officer, log in to USAC’s One Portal to access the ACCS
  • In NLAD, click on Affordable Connectivity Program Claims link under the Claims section
  • Under the ACP Certify Claim page, select the Month and Year to certify original claims and revisions
  • Click Continue to begin certifying the claim(s)
Claim Reimbursement
Certify Claims

- Select the claims that are ready to certify
- Click View under the Support Details column to confirm the information
Claim Reimbursement
Certify Claims

• Review the **Certify and Sign** page
• Sign at the bottom of the page
• Select **Certify Claims**
• A success message is displayed – “Claim has now been successfully certified.”

**Note:** Claims **must be certified** (not just uploaded) by the 15th (or next business day if the 15th falls on a weekend or holiday) to receive payment at the end of the same month.
Revisions
Revisions

Overview

A **revision** is when the provider submits and certifies an original filing, but then makes changes to it in a later filing period

- Service providers use the same filing process as original claims for revisions
- Providers access the revisions workflow by selecting **Revision** from the filing type dropdown on the **ACP File or Revise Claim** page
- Revisions are available beginning the first day of the next filing period after an original claim is certified
- Upward revisions are only allowed within 6 months of the snapshot, and there is no time restriction for downward revisions

⚠️ When filing revisions only include the subscribers you want to revise in the claims template
Revisions

Revise Claim Page

- From the **ACP File or Revise Claim** page, download the most current filing template to begin a revision
  - The template will include the most recent certified claims data
- Edit the template and then upload the file to begin a revision
  - Only subscribers with revisions should be included in the revised template
  - Upward and downward revisions can be made in the same file
Revision

Revise Claim

• For an unsuccessful upload, users receive an error message and can download the error file to review the failures
  • If an upward revision is submitted outside of the filing window (six months from the snapshot date) an error message will be returned
    • The subscriber’s Rate cannot be increased, the revision is outside the administrative window
• Make the necessary changes and upload the claims revision file (only subscribers with revisions should be included in the revised template) again
Resources

• Visit our File ACP Reimbursement Claims webpage for more information on ACCS
• Download the Claims Input Template Sample and list of Error Descriptions
• Detailed instructions are available in ACCS on the following pages:
  • ACP File or Revise Claim
  • ACP Certify Claim
  • Filing History
Stay Informed About the ACP

- Sign up for ACP email updates and upcoming events
- Visit USAC’s website for service provider updates
- Find upcoming trainings and other resources on the ACP Learn page
- Questions? Email ACProgram@usac.org
Thank You!