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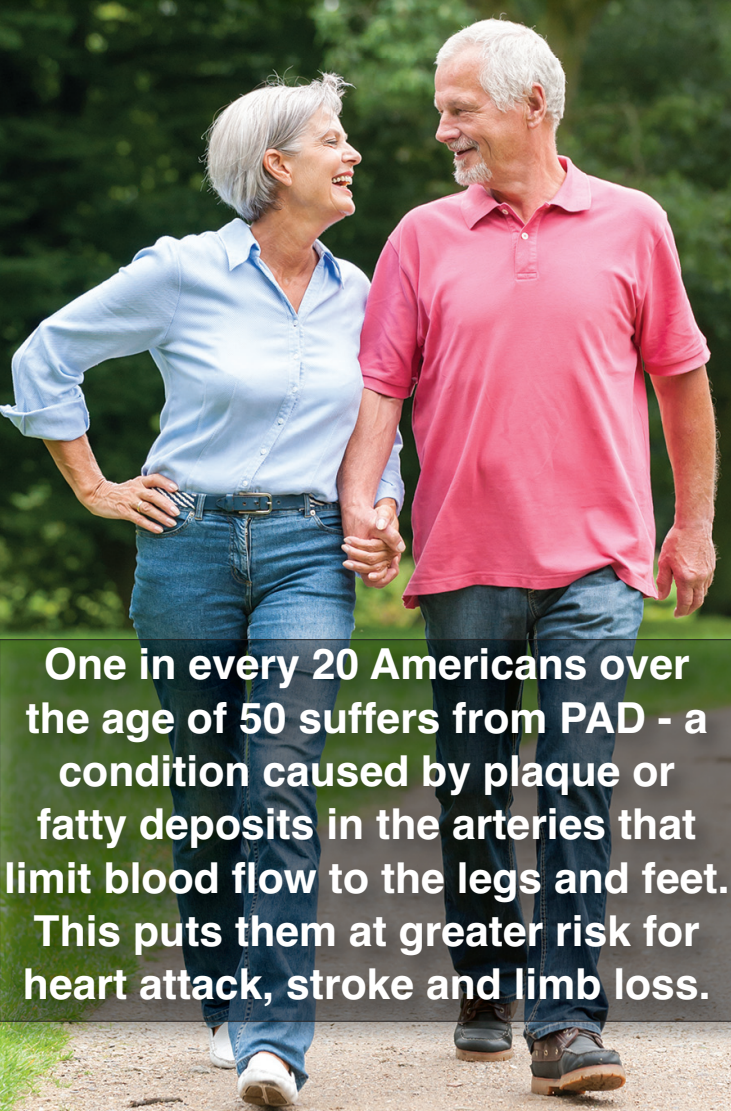
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N.C. Households Can Get Help With Monthly Internet Bills From Federal Program

Governor Urges N.C. Families to Sign Up Starting May 12 for Discounts on Internet, Computers

North Carolinians can get critical help to pay for high-speed internet from a \$3.2 billion federal program opening in May for families and households working, learning and shopping from home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Many North Carolina families struggle to afford high-speed internet," North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper said. "The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program will help bridge the digital divide so that people in need can get online to talk with their doctors, learn remotely, find or do work, and connect with friends and family."

The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP, online at: getemergencybroadband.org) gives a discount of up to \$50 a month to a household's internet bill. That increases to \$75 a month for those living on tribal lands. Eligible households can also get a one-time discount of \$100 toward the purchase of a laptop, tablet or desktop computer through participating providers.

Enrollment in EBBP will open on May 12. Households with an income at or less than 135 percent of federal poverty guidelines are eligible for the EBBP. A household also qualifies if at least one member participates in a federal benefits program such as Medicaid, SNAP, or Lifeline, receives benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program, lost a job or a significant amount of income in the past year, received a Federal Pell Grant, or is part of an internet service provider's low-income or COVID-19 program.

"Affordability is one barrier among the inequities that prevent numerous North Carolina residents and households from accessing high-speed, high-quality internet," Jim Weaver, North Carolina Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) secretary and state chief information officer, said. "This benefit can spur demand for building infrastructure to bring that service into areas of the state that have little or no access to broadband."

Administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the program was created by Congress in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 to help Americans access healthcare, jobs, classrooms and businesses during the pandemic. Many types of providers, including those offering landline and wireless broadband, are offering the discount. The FCC gives extensive guidance for providers seeking to participate.

The NCDIT Broadband Infrastructure Office (BIO) offers guidance on how North Carolina households can apply for the benefit and how providers in the state can participate in it.

The FCC's consumer site (getemergencybroadband.org) has detailed information on how households can qualify and apply for the program. Households can also see a list of participating providers in their state. Governor Cooper has called on internet service providers in North Carolina to participate in the program so that more North Carolinians can afford to get online.

The EBBP will end six months after the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declares the pandemic is over or when the program uses all its \$3.2 billion funding, whichever happens first. Providers must notify consumers at least 30 days before the discount ends and must let consumers opt-in to continue service before charging them a higher rate.

To help get high-speed internet service to even more North Carolinians, NCDIT's Broadband Infrastructure Office is currently conducting a survey to gather better data on broadband availability and quality in the state. All North Carolinians are encouraged to take the five-minute survey by visiting ncbroadband.gov/survey or calling 919-750-0553.

request for proposals

DRIVEWAY & PARKING LOT

Union County Community Action, Inc. (UCCA) is seeking proposals from qualified contractors to pave driveways and parking areas at our Fayetteville Street Head Start facility (105 Fayetteville Street, Hamlet, NC 28345).

Proposals will be accepted until 3:30pm on Friday, May 14, 2021.

For complete requirements and specifications, you may download a copy of the RFP packet from UCCA's website at www.uccainc.org/procurement.

Interested parties may also contact

Eric C. Faulkner, Director of Human Resources
at (980) 699-9050
or eric.faulkner@uccainc.org

Bowman Class of 1970 Reunion

The Class of 1970 of Bowman Senior High School is planning a 50th Class Reunion, to be held on October 16, 2021. Actually it has been 51 years since they graduated, but last year's big reunion was postponed due to Covid. Better late than never!

If you are interested in joining your classmates for the reunion, you are asked to please contact one of the following people by this Friday, May 14. This will help with the planning for the reunion.

- Janet Brower Ross 704-695-5457
- Carol Benton Black 704-695-5345
- Kay Howell Vaughn 704-694-8016
- Sandra Pegram Mabry 704-695-5611
- Gayle Davis Pegram 704-690-4783
- Fran Turner Thomas 704-694-8803

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