



Globe Opinion

LETTERS

Boost in digital access for low-income Americans is welcome — now sustain it

Updated May 19, 2022, 2:00 a.m.



METAMORWORKS - STOCK.ADOBE.COM

The commitment from major Internet companies to provide higher-speed service to low-income Americans through the Affordable Connectivity Program carries enormous potential to increase digital access ([“Discounted Net services offered for low income,”](#) Business, May 10). However, that potential will be realized only if the federal subsidy reaches most, if not all, eligible households and does not lead to a price cliff for participants.

Currently, [48 million](#) American households are eligible to sign up for the Affordable Connectivity Program based on their income, but total enrollment is [nowhere near that number](#). The persistent gap reinforces the need for government officials and Internet service providers to partner with trusted community-based organizations to identify and enroll eligible participants.

Officials also must resolve confusion over whether existing Internet customers are eligible to receive the subsidy and then follow up by investing in proven, culturally responsive digital skills training so that participants are prepared to take advantage of digital access. In addition, officials and ISPs must address concerns that subsidy funding will run out in just [a few years](#); they must create safeguards to ensure that costs stay low while bandwidths support the need, so that enrollees are not suddenly and unexpectedly stuck with a higher bill.

That is how we'll sustainably increase the number of people across the country with access to the Internet.

Marvin Venay

Chief advocacy officer

Tech Goes Home

Boston

Tech Goes Home is a nonprofit working to expand digital equity in Greater Boston and beyond.