



**HEARTLAND
FORWARD**
AN INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC RENEWAL



**LEAGUE of UNITED LATIN
AMERICAN CITIZENS**

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CONTACT

Heartland Forward: Lara Sisselman, lara@cstrategies.com

LULAC: David Cruz, davidcruz@lulac.org

HEARTLAND FORWARD AND LEAGUE OF UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP TO INCREASE LATINO ENROLLMENT IN EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT

Partnership will work to close the digital divide, enroll eligible Latino households in federal \$50 a month discount for home internet service

Bentonville, Ark. - Today, Heartland Forward and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) announced a new partnership to lead on-the-ground advocacy and enrollment efforts to help connect Latino households to affordable internet through the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) Program. The collaboration includes \$50,000 in funding from Heartland Forward for LULAC to distribute on-the-ground outreach and enrollment activities to its local councils across the heartland states. Heartland Forward also will be distributing outreach materials and co-hosting a live, informational webinar for local councils nationwide with FCC staff to walk them through EBB eligibility requirements and enrollment processes.

The new partnership and need for community outreach will be the topic of a panel discussion today at LULAC's "Building Back Stronger for Today and Our Future" virtual summit featuring FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel, LULAC CEO Sindy Benavides, Heartland Forward Chief Program Officer Angie Cooper, LULAC Innovation and Technology Chair Caroline Sanchez Crozier, Director of Illinois Office of Broadband Matt Schmit, and Next Century Cities Executive Director Francella Ochillo.

"The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program can help households across the heartland and the country get connected to affordable internet, and the access to school, work, healthcare and more that connectivity brings, but that can only happen if eligible families know how to enroll," **said Angie Cooper, chief program officer of Heartland Forward.** "Heartland Forward is proud to partner with LULAC to reach eligible families right where they are and close the digital divide disproportionately impacting Latino communities."

"The FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit program today is as critical to bolstering the educational and economic potential of our community as the Little School of the 400 was in the 1950s," says **Domingo Garcia, LULAC national president.** "This pandemic has exposed the historical inequity in America as many of our children struggle to keep up with their studies with little or no affordable access to the internet. Broadband access is no longer a luxury but a necessity in every home for millions of Latinos across the United States and Puerto Rico. LULAC sees this initiative as an important step in providing a pathway to knowledge and opportunity that will pay enormous dividends to our nation," added Garcia.

The EBB program utilizes federal COVID-19 relief funding to provide eligible households discounts of up to \$50 a month on home internet service, making the service more affordable and accessible for qualifying low-income families. The program also offers a \$100 discount towards the purchase of a laptop, computer or tablet from a participating provider. As of [October 24](#), more than \$2.2 billion of the program's \$3.2 billion was available, and stakeholders have identified a lack of sufficient community outreach about the program as a key factor contributing to low enrollment.

"Close to one in three Latino families don't have at-home internet service," said **Sindy M. Benavides, chief executive officer of LULAC**. "The Emergency Broadband Benefit is an important way to get these families connected to the affordable internet they need. Our partnership with Heartland Forward will raise awareness within our communities of the program itself. Also, it will enable our local councils across the country to get eligible families enrolled. We are grateful to Heartland Forward for their collaboration and look forward to seeing the impact the Emergency Broadband Benefit can have on closing the digital divide in our communities."

According to a 2021 [Pew Research Study](#), only 67% of Hispanic adults reported owning a computer, compared to 80% of white adults, and only 65% said they have internet service at home, compared to 80% of white adults. Despite this demonstrated need for the EBB program, a study from the [National Hispanic Media Coalition](#) indicated that enrollment in Latino households lags the general population enrollment rate.

"More than seven million households have connected to affordable internet through the Emergency Broadband Benefit, but more work remains to ensure as many eligible families as possible know this resource is available to them," said **FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel**. "These milestones wouldn't be possible without the trusted leaders who've signed up to help us spread the word about this important program. Partnerships such as the one between Heartland Forward and LULAC are crucial to expanding outreach and enrollment efforts, particularly in Latino communities where many still don't have the home internet access they need."

Those eligible can enroll in the EBB program in several different ways. If they do not have access to the internet, they can sign up through a participating broadband provider or by calling (833) 511-0311 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. any day of the week to request a mail-in application and more information about the program. If they do have access to the internet, they can apply online at getemergencybroadband.org. Additional information about the EBB is available at www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit.

Heartland Forward's partnership with LULAC is part of its broader campaign to promote EBB and boost enrollment throughout the heartland. In June, Heartland Forward launched a public awareness campaign including television, radio, digital advertisements and coordinated community outreach with federal, state and local collaborators. These efforts are part of Heartland Forward's three-year Connecting the Heartland initiative focused on ensuring families and businesses across America's heartland have access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service, with initial efforts in Illinois, Arkansas, Ohio and Tennessee. Learn more about this effort at <https://connectingtheheartland.com/>

About Heartland Forward

Heartland Forward is a nonpartisan, 501c3 organization whose mission is to improve economic performance in the center of the United States by advocating for fact-based solutions to foster job creation, knowledge-based and inclusive growth and improved health outcomes. Heartland Forward conducts independent, data-driven research and programs to facilitate action-oriented discussion and impactful policy recommendations. To learn more, visit <https://heartlandforward.org/>.

About League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is the nation's largest and oldest Hispanic civil rights volunteer-based organization that empowers Hispanic Americans and builds strong Latino communities. Headquartered in Washington, DC, with 1,000 councils around the United States and Puerto Rico, LULAC's programs, services, and advocacy address the most important issues for Latinos, meeting the critical needs of today and the future. For more information, visit <https://lulac.org/>

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