COMMUNITY INTERNET PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DC OFFICE OF THE CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICE
DC STATE BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE

Published: October 17, 2022

What is the Community Internet Program?

The Community Internet Program ("CIP") is a cooperative effort by DC's Office of the Chief Technology Officer ("OCTO") and the Department of General Services ("DGS") to bring higher performance, lower cost wireless broadband internet service to DC residents. Through the CIP, internet service providers ("ISP") that offer high performing wireless broadband service at low prices can operate wireless network equipment from the rooftops of DC government buildings for the purpose of serving DC residents participating in CIP.

How can I use the Community Internet Program to get free, high-speed internet access?

If you enroll in the federal Affordable Connectivity Program ("ACP"), ISPs participating in DC's CIP program are required to offer you either a broadband home or mobile connection for no out-of-pocket cost. If you choose a home broadband connection, the participating ISP of your choice will provide you with a connection at 200 Megabits per second ("Mbps") download and upload speed, or better. If you choose a mobile broadband connection, the participating ISP of your choice will provide you with a connection at 100 Mbps download, 20 Mbps upload speed, or better.

To learn more about eligibility, and to enroll in the ACP, please visit: https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov/

I do not qualify for the federal ACP program, what can CIP do for me?

As part of CIP, participating ISPs are required to offer a Middle-Class Affordability Plan, with the same performance thresholds (200/200 for a home connection, 100/20 for a mobile one) to all DC residents within an area covered by CIP, regardless of income. Middle-Class Affordability Plans are capped at $90 (three times the ACP reimbursement amount) out-of-pocket.

How can I find out if CIP is available in my area?

CIP launched in May 2022 in the Trinidad neighborhood in Ward 5. DC is working hard to expand the geographic range of the CIP program. If you would like to request the program be expanded to your neighborhood, please let us know at dcstatebroadband@dc.gov. In the meantime, however, the ACP benefit is available throughout DC right now. Be sure to visit https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov/ to learn more about ACP eligibility, and to enroll in the ACP.

If I get a CIP plan, will DC Government be my Internet Service Provider?

No. DC does not provide residential internet service through the CIP. Instead, DC provides CIP-participating ISPs rooftop space from which they can operate their private broadband network. When a DC resident obtains broadband service through CIP, they choose their own ISP, and automatically enjoy the performance and affordability benefits of CIP.

What can I do if I have a problem with my CIP service?

While CIP-participating ISPs engage in extensive testing when developing and deploying their network presence in DC, any service can have hiccups. If you have obtained a CIP plan, and have concerns about your connection speed, you should run a free, online speed test at https://www.speedtest.net/. While a variety of outside conditions can temporarily slow or interrupt internet connectivity, if you find your CIP plan's performance falling below its speed standards with any regularity, you can reach out directly to your CIP provider's customer service contact or directly to OCTO through the CIP Liaison at dcstatebroadband@dc.gov.

What can I do if I'm blown away by how fast my CIP service is?

Most Americans do not have access to internet near CIP's home internet speed standard of 200 Mbps upload and download speed. In 2020, for example, the average American had a download speed a little over 42 Mbps. Anytime you would like to share your connection speed with DC, feel free to run a speed test at https://www.speedtest.net/ and let us know about your experience with CIP at dcstatebroadband@dc.gov or on Twitter at twitter.com/octodc.

What can I do if I obtain service through CIP and am charged any out-of-pocket cost for an ACP Plan, or more than $90 out-of-pocket for a Middle-Class Affordability Plan?

CIP participants share DC's enthusiasm for providing high-performance broadband at low prices. If you have any questions about your monthly bill, you should reach out directly to your CIP provider's customer service contact. If a dispute concerning the price ceilings for ACP or Middle-Class Affordability Plans persists, please reach out directly to OCTO through the CIP Liaison at dcstatebroadand@dc.gov.

How does the CIP program fit into DC's larger digital equity efforts?

Every DC resident deserves to have access to high-speed and affordable broadband internet. By encouraging ISPs to make new, high-speed, low-cost wireless broadband services available to residents, CIP helps to make sure residents have a variety of great choices in meeting their home or mobile broadband needs. The requirement that CIP providers offer a no out-of-pocket ACP plan helps to drive utilization of the federal ACP benefit. Additionally, CIP providers are required to conduct community engagement, and to report on these efforts in DC on an ongoing basis.

FAQ for ISPs

Should I participate in CIP?

Yes! If you provide wireless broadband internet, and want to help bring faster, more affordable broadband access to DC residents, DC is excited to work with you!

I want to participate in CIP. What's my first step?

To learn more about how you can participate in CIP, please reach out directly to the CIP Liaison at dcstatebroadband@dc.gov or [complete this form](#).

What speeds do I need to offer?

For fixed location wireless, 200 Mbps symmetrical. For mobile wireless, 100 Mbps down, 20 Mbps up. For both connection types, latency below 100 milliseconds.

What technologies am I allowed to use to offer wireless broadband through CIP?

CIP is technology neutral. You may use licensed, unlicensed, or a combination of licensed and unlicensed spectrum. You may use hub-and-spoke, mesh, or any other wireless network architecture. So long as you maintain compliance with federal and local law, do not create signal interference with other licensees, and are able to meet or exceed CIPs performance standards, your choice of wireless technologies likely is not constrained by the CIP program.

How will CIP distinguish between fixed location and mobile wireless networks?

Fixed location wireless services are those providing broadband internet connectivity between two fixed locations by use of radio transmissions. Examples include hub-and-spoke, or mesh networks that provide connectivity among transmitters and receivers mounted on each customer's premises.

Mobile wireless services are those providing broadband internet connectivity between one or more fixed locations and a mobile device using entirely FCC-licensed spectrum or some combination of FCC-licensed and unlicensed spectrum. Examples include 5G cell phone service, as well as 5G service to mobile hot spots customers place within their own home, apartment, or condo unit.

Does CIP constrain my freedom to set prices or offer different service packages?

No. CIP does not prohibit any pricing or service packages. CIP participants are required to offer at least one ACP Plan that meets or exceeds the program's performance standards, at no out-of-pocket cost, and at least one Middle-Class

Affordability Plan that meets or exceeds the program's performance standards, at an out-of-pocket cost that does not exceed $90, three times the current ACP monthly reimbursement amount. So long as a CIP provider offers both plans, that provider is free to offer as many other plans, pricing, and performance levels it likes.

Do I need to have a Districtwide presence before I can participate in the CIP program?

No. The geographic scope of your CIP responsibilities is defined in the written CIP Requirements, which are incorporated into any Master License Agreement entered into as part of the CIP program. The nature of the geographic scope of your CIP responsibilities differs depending on whether you offer a fixed location or mobile broadband service. For more detail concerning the geographic scope of CIP responsibilities, please reach out to the CIP Liaison at dcstatebroadband@dc.gov.

If I have service interruptions, will I be kicked out of the CIP program?

No. The CIP program provides a detailed notice and cure process for resolving service problems that cause a CIP provider to fall below the relevant network performance standards.

How do I know that all CIP participants will be treated the same?

CIP is not a public-private-partnership with one or more providers, and there are no preferred CIP providers. The program is open to any existing or new ISP able to meet the program's performance, price, and other standards described in greater detail in the CIP Requirements document. While DC reserves the right to issue updated CIP Requirements from time to time, any such issuance will be shared with all CIP participants, and all participants will be given the option immediately to replace an earlier version of the CIP Requirements in that provider's existing Master License Agreement. If a CIP participant declines to incorporate an updated draft of the CIP Requirements into its existing Master License Agreement at the time of issuance, the new CIP Requirements will be incorporated at the next Master License Agreement renewal.

Where can I get answers to technical questions relating to insurance requirements, antenna size and type restrictions, electricity access, or fiber access?

Answers to technical questions–some of which may vary from building to building–can be directed to the CIP Liaison at dctstatebroadband@dc.gov.

What kind of access will I have to DC buildings for network maintenance?

Building access rules will vary from building to building, but DC understands the need for immediate access when a participant needs to resolve an internet outage. Your immediate point of contact for network emergencies, whether during or outside regular business hours, will be the OCTO Network Operations Center ("NOC"), available at noc@dc.gov. After you have opened a ticket with the NOC, you should reach out to the CIP Liaison, to ensure program management is aware of the incident.

What buildings are available as potential antenna sites?

While CIP participants will be given equal access to all DC buildings within the scope of the CIP program, DC reserves the right to include or exclude any DC building from the CIP program. A listing of all buildings owned or managed by DC is available upon request at dcstatebroadband@dc.gov. If you would like to deploy network equipment in any DC building as part of the CIP program, please reach out to the CIP Liaison at dcstatebroadband@dc.gov and to discuss the CIP-status of any DC building.