

**UAMS News Bureau**

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**UAMS Receives \$1 Million FCC Grant to Enroll Arkansans  
in Affordable Connectivity Program for Broadband Internet**

LITTLE ROCK — The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) awarded the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) \$1 million to fund outreach for the commission’s Affordable Connectivity Program, which helps ensure that households across America have access to broadband internet.

The FCC created the Affordable Connectivity Program to help households struggling to pay for internet service. The benefit provides up to \$30 per month for internet service and a one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer or tablet purchased through participating providers.

"The UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation is committed to seeing affordable, easily accessible broadband in homes throughout Arkansas, and this funding will allow us to collaborate with other leaders statewide to do just that," said Roy Kitchen, executive director for UAMS e-Link and the principal investigator on the grant.

"Between our two FCC grants, we plan to reach every county in Arkansas through multiday, boots-on-the-ground outreach to bring awareness and enrollment of this program directly to those who can benefit from discounted broadband in the home. We also have a highly concentrated focus on outreach in the Arkansas Delta to usher in as many new enrollees and broadband users as possible," he added.

Broadband has become an essential utility, akin to electricity and water, Kitchen said. "We hope to drive home that message in a friendly, culturally sensitive way that amplifies program enrollment in Arkansas," he said.

The FCC Affordable Connectivity Program is a benefit program that helps ensure households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, health care and more. UAMS will use a tailored approach to reach communities with the lowest program adoption rates and/or the highest number of eligible households.

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Households are eligible for the program if total income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Households are also eligible if they meet one of several criteria, such as being part of federal assistance programs.

The FCC has struggled with adoption rates, Kitchen said, which are attributed to the lack of awareness of the program and its benefits, including difficulty in understanding eligibility requirements. The UAMS awareness campaign will address these shortcomings. Two full-time equivalent employees will be hired to manage the grants, and other e-Link program managers will assist as needed. The campaign will be expanded across the state and advertised at festivals, sporting events, storefronts and other locations across underserved Arkansas counties.

“We are excited about new relationships these awards have helped develop, such as with the Arkansas State Library and Arkansas housing authorities, along with various internet service providers and cooperative extension programs,” said Bonnie Whaley, MBA, assistant director for UAMS e-Link. “We are soliciting their assistance with outreach that should begin this month. We are also aligning with our fellow grant recipients in Arkansas to ensure that we are optimizing the reach of our programs and maximizing the impact on unserved and underserved populations.”

To learn more about the Affordable Connectivity Program, visit [www.fcc.gov/acp](http://www.fcc.gov/acp).

UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute and Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS' clinical enterprise. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,240 students, 913 medical residents and fellows, and five dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 11,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit [www.uams.edu](http://www.uams.edu) or [www.uamshealth.com](http://www.uamshealth.com). Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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