ConectAquí: Closing the Digital Divide for Latinos

OUR WORK

At UnidosUS, we recognize the **Digital Divide** as one of the most pressing civil rights challenges that Latinos face today. Without equal access to affordable, stable home internet, millions are left disconnected from opportunities in education, healthcare and economic mobility.

The Challenge

16 million Latinos still lack home internet, despite a pandemic surge in need.*

20% of Latinos rely on smartphones for internet, **compared to 12% of whites** (2024).†

Broadband Gap: Latino and Black households are **10 years behind** white households in adoption.‡

Cost Barrier: Low-income households (under $50K/year) are least likely to have broadband;§ median Latino household income is **$51,811**.¶

Leveraging the Affordable Connectivity Program: ConectAquí

On August 5, 2022, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) launched the Affordable Connectivity Outreach Grant Program to promote awareness of the nation's largest-ever broadband affordability initiative: **the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)**.

- The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) provided a discount of $30 per month toward internet service for eligible households and up to $75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.

- Eligible households could also receive a one-time discount of up to $100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer or tablet from participating providers.

After receiving the grant award in June 2023, UnidosUS partnered with four Affiliate organizations across California — Mission Economic Development Agency (San Francisco), El Sol Science and Arts Academy (Santa Ana), Chicano Federation of San Diego County and Eastmont Community Center (Los Angeles) — to host community outreach and enrollment events aimed at connecting Latinos to affordable broadband services.

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* Atske, Sara, and Andrew Perrin, "Home Broadband Adoption, Computer Ownership Vary by Race, Ethnicity in the U.S.," Pew Research Center, July 16, 2021, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/07/16/home-broadband-adoption-computer-ownership-vary-by-race-ethnicity-in-the-u-s/.

† Pew Research Center, "Mobile Fact Sheet," January 31, 2024, https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/?tabItem=d40cde3f-c455-4f0e-9be0-0aefcdaeee00.

‡ Llovio, Louis, "Blacks and Hispanics More Likely to Lack Access to Internet and Technology, Study Finds," Sarasota Herald-Tribune, November 22, 2020, https://www.heraldtribune.com/story/news/local/2020/11/22/blacks-and-hispanics-more-likely-to-lack-access-to-internet/3765787001/.

§ Horrigan, John B., "The Numbers behind the Broadband 'Homework Gap'," Pew Research Center, April 20, 2015, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2015/04/20/the-numbers-behind-the-broadband-homework-gap/.

¶ Price, Gary, "New Data: U.S. Census Bureau Releases New American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Interactive Data Visualization Tools Available," Library Journal, December 10, 2020, https://shorturl.at/tYMho.

OUR IMPACT

Despite the early closure of the ACP due to funding shortages, the *ConectAquí* Program made significant strides in the seven months it operated before its official wind-down on February 7, 2024:

11,305 individuals were reached with vital information on the Affordable Connectivity Program **through community outreach events.**

98% of participants learned about the ACP for the first time through these efforts.

120 individuals successfully enrolled in the program, collectively saving $3,600 monthly, which would have amounted to $43,200 annually across participating communities, had the program been sustained.

Of the individuals who qualified for the program, **84% were enrolled in Medicare or SNAP.**

The majority of individuals reached through the program **identified as Hispanic/Latinx (96%)**, with women comprising 82% of participants.

82%
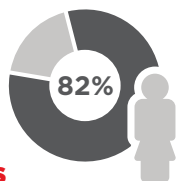
64% of enrolled households were families of between three to five members.

84% of participants came from households earning $49,999 or less annually, highlighting the financial barriers many faced before accessing affordable broadband.

BEFORE THE ACP

Many clients had unreliable or non-optimal internet solutions, with **53% relying on DSL and 39% having unspecified service types.**

FOLLOWING THE ACP

95% of participants transitioned to more stable DSL services, improving their internet access.

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