

## Hamilton Digital Inclusion Program

Hamilton is committed to providing training, education, support and options for affordability in order to increase broadband adoption, understanding and usage for all individuals, particularly for those who may lack other resources. Hamilton broadband plans do not include data caps or otherwise restrict the amount of data consumed by its customers.

We recognize that for many individuals, there may be substantial barriers to broadband adoption that increase the digital divide that exists in many underserved populations, including those with lower income, individuals with disabilities and the elderly. There are many reasons these individuals may not use the internet, some of which include a lack of resources, accessibility, understanding, or that they just don't see a relevance. Hamilton is a proud participant in the Nebraska Telephone Assistance Program (NTAP) Lifeline program, the Federal Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program and also provides broadband training and outreach to communities. The below information provides an outline of the key components of Hamilton's Digital Inclusion Program.

### **NTAP, Lifeline and Emergency Broadband Program Provider**

**Lifeline and NTAP** - Hamilton participates in the Nebraska Telephone Assistance Program, a government program that offer qualified households a discount on their broadband internet or telephone service. This non-transferable programs provide monthly service discounts for qualifying service. NTAP reduces the cost of service up to \$12.75 per month.



NTAP is a government assistance program administered by the Nebraska Public Service Commission. To qualify for NTAP, subscribers must be approved by the Lifeline National Verifier. All applicants must be approved via electronic record checking or by providing documentation showing a household income that is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or the subscriber, one or more of the subscriber's dependents living in the same household must provide documentation showing they receive benefits from one of the following assistance programs:

- Medicaid
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Veterans Pension Benefit/Survivors Pension Benefit

**Federal EBB Program** - In addition, Hamilton is proud to be participating in the FCC Emergency Broadband Program which allows eligible households to save up to \$50 a month on internet service.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP) is a temporary emergency federal government benefit program operated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to assist customers in the purchase of internet access.

A household is eligible if one member of the household has at least one of the following qualifications:

- Qualifies for the Lifeline program, including those who are on Medicaid or receive SNAP benefits.
- Receives benefits under the free and reduced school breakfast or lunch program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision, or did so in the 2019-2020 school year.
- Experienced a substantial loss of income since February 29, 2020, and the household had a total income in 2020 below \$99,000 for single filers and \$198,000 for joint filers.
- Received a federal Pell Grant in the current year.
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating providers existing low income or COVID-19 program.

The Emergency Broadband Benefit is non-transferable and is limited to one discount per household. Upon the program's conclusion, subscribers will be subject to Hamilton's regular rates, terms and conditions.

### **Digital Inclusion and Literacy Training**

Hamilton Telecommunications has a team of highly-trained technicians and personable, caring customer support representatives who are available to provide training within each of our communities to further enhance understanding and usage of Internet services, enhancing basic literacy skills and increasing comfort levels with accessing the Internet.

Hamilton will provide training in each of the communities designed to increase knowledge of the Internet and enhance the comfort level and skill of individuals

that provide understanding in a non-intimidating format. By increasing the confidence of individuals in using the Internet, it is our goal that increased literacy and Internet adoption can be achieved, closing the gap in digital literacy.

Hamilton has provided trainings on many topics, including those outlined here in other communities and would plan to offer training, including on the topics below. Training may be held in person, or virtually via webinar for each community, depending on comfort level and ways to best reach the individuals in need of the training.

- Broadband Basics & Safety – For individuals who are new to going online or don't quite feel comfortable doing so, this is a great place to start.
- Broadband Productivity – Training to learn more about the tools available on the Internet that aid in productivity and organization.
- Broadband Office – Learn how to use the free, office-based Google Drive, Docs and Sheets tools.
- Broadband Memories – Learn how to use the Internet to create photo albums, photo sharing and store your most precious memories.
- Broadband Connections
- Broadband Safety – Learn how to protect yourself, your data and finances while online and recognize suspicious requests or pop ups.

By increasing the confidence and digital literacy in current non-adopters, including the elderly and low-income populations, we believe the objectives of increased adoption and utilization can be achieved.