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For Immediate Release

**COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS
ENCOURAGES ROBUST PARTICIPATION IN
EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT COMMENT PERIOD**

WASHINGTON, January 4, 2021—The Federal Communications Commission’s Wireline Competition Bureau today released a [Public Notice](#) seeking comment on rules governing the Emergency Broadband Benefit created by Congress last month. In response, Commissioner Starks issued the following statement:

“Tens of millions of Americans do not have broadband simply because they cannot afford it. No family should have to decide between keeping the lights on or getting the household connected, especially during a public health crisis that has made being online more essential than ever. The Emergency Broadband Benefit is poised to connect tens of millions of Americans and to jumpstart a long-term focus on broadband affordability at the FCC. This is long overdue for struggling Americans, including those who are recently unemployed due to the pandemic.

“I have great expectations for this program. If we’re successful, the Emergency Broadband Benefit will reach more low-income people than any previous FCC effort to close the digital divide. That’s a high bar, and we need robust public input to clear that hurdle. I look forward to engaging with a wide range of commenters as we develop this vital program over the next two months.

“I hope commenters will focus in particular on how we can encourage every eligible American to access this emergency benefit. We need to use every tool at our disposal to educate the public about the Emergency Broadband Benefit, promote robust provider participation, and make it as easy as possible to sign up. Affordable broadband has never been closer for millions of families, and we must execute.

“I also encourage commenters to focus on consumer protections. We know, for example, that it may be challenging to communicate how long this benefit will last, given the uncertainties about how long it will take to exhaust the appropriated funds. I welcome detailed feedback on how we can ensure transparency and clear communication with beneficiaries.”

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