

Q and A TBS 2021

Q: What qualifies a customer for TBS?

A: A customer must have an active residential broadband account and self-attest to a COVID related need Telehealth, Remote Work, or Education.

Q: If the Governor ends the emergency declaration due to COVID-19, does the subsidy end?

A: No, the program is not tied to the Emergency Order. Legislation allows TBS benefits to be paid until 12/30/21.

Q: Last year, the ACH's came through as a bulk payment with no other information - account number, customer name, amount per customer. Is it possible to get the breakdown along with the bulk payment?

A: We have asked for an enhancement to be added to the dashboard so that providers will be able to see payments.

Q: Will there be any new marketing materials sent out or should we just plan to use what was provided last year?

A: The same materials can be used, please e-mail chrstine.peterson@vermont.gov if you need the materials sent to you.

Q: Can customers apply for the federal EBB program and the state TBS program?

A: Yes, customers can get both. The Department is asking that providers apply the \$50.00 EBB benefit first and apply TBS to the balance.

For example, if a customer's broadband bill is \$60.00 and applies for both programs, \$50.00 would be applied for EBB and \$10.00 for TBS.

Q: To confirm, it sounds like this is going longer than 2 months?

A: Yes, the legislature authorized funding in two bills. H.138 authorized the state to give subsidies for January and February 2021 to consumers who received awards in 2020. H.315 authorized the state to open the application process to all Vermonters for March-December 2021.

Q: Will we have to check Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) credits starting when we go into March?

A: EBB started taking applications from consumers on 5/12/21. The Department has confirmed that the EBB benefit is applied at the time the consumer applies, the FCC will not fund credits retroactively. May would be the first month that both benefits could be applied.

Q: When entering the MRC in the Salesforce tool will we enter ONLY the amount that should be credited? If the customer has a \$60 bill and received \$50, do we enter \$10 in the MRC field?

A: The Department will work with Salesforce to update the reviewer guide and reviewer portal to clarify the amount that should be entered.

Q: How are others handling the 4-8-week delay in account credits? Do you allow customers to go/stay in arrears if they have been approved? Or carry forward a credit? Does the program prescribe how to handle this?

A: The Department is advising consumers of the wait time. If a customer is up for disconnect, we ask the consumer that they contact the provider and ask for an extension.