Helping Consumers Apply for Lifeline

Presented by the FCC and USAC

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Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Speakers

- **Micah Caldwell**, Special Counsel, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau at FCC

- **Stephen Butler**, Senior Director, Lifeline Program at USAC

- **Leah Sorini**, Communications Specialist, Lifeline Program at USAC

Overview
Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)

- The Universal Service Fund exists to ensure that all people in the United States have access to quality, affordable connectivity services

- USAC is the organization designated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as the permanent administrator of the Universal Service Fund and its four programs:

  - Lifeline Program

  - High Cost Program (Connect America Fund)

  - Rural Health Care Program

  - Schools and Libraries Program (E-Rate)

Overview
Lifeline Program

A **monthly discount** on phone or Internet service for eligible low-income consumers

- All eligible consumers receive a discount of up to $9.25 per month

- Consumers who live on qualifying Tribal lands receive **enhanced support** of up to $34.25 per month

- Out of the seven million households that participate in Lifeline, about 274,000 of those receive enhanced support

- A household is defined as a group of people that share income and expenses, and only one Lifeline benefit is permitted per household

Overview
How to Qualify for Lifeline

Consumers qualify for Lifeline by showing that:

- Their **income** is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines, **OR**

- They participate in at least one of the following **qualifying government programs**:

  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

  - Medicaid

  - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

  - Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)

  - Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension

  - *Additional programs for **residents of federally-recognized Tribal lands***:

    - Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) General Assistance

    - Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

    - Tribal head Start

    - Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

Application Process
Ways to Use the National Verifier

The **National Verifier** (NV) checks a consumer's **Lifeline eligibility**. After eligibility is determined by the NV, a consumer selects a Lifeline-eligible phone or internet service in order to enroll in the program and receive service.

Consumers may apply through the NV using **one** of the three options below:

Option 1

Apply Online: Consumer Portal

- The consumer visits CheckLifeline.org from any computer or mobile device to create an account and complete the electronic application

Option 2

Apply with a Paper Form

- The consumer fills out the National Verifier Lifeline Application Form

- The consumer mails in their documentation to the Lifeline Support Center or delivers it to their service provider

Option 3

Apply with a Service Provider

- The consumer can find service providers in their area using the Companies Near Me tool on USAC's website

- The consumer visits a service provider store or website and the service provider will collect the consumer's information

Note: In California, Oregon, and Texas, the NV relies on existing state eligibility processes.

COVID-19 Response
Temporary Program Changes (1/2)

In response to the pandemic, the FCC released a series of waivers suspending the following rules and processes through **November 30**:

- Recertification

- Reverification

- General de-enrollment requirements (except de-enrollment at the user's request)

- Usage requirements

- USAC program integrity reviews

- Requirement to submit 3 consecutive months of income documentation

COVID-19 Response
Temporary Program Changes (2/2)

- The FCC also issued an [Order](#) to make it easier for those who reside in rural areas on **Tribal lands** to enroll in the Lifeline Program during the COVID-19 pandemic

- These temporary changes, which are in effect through **November 30, 2020**, include:

  - Allowing Tribal consumers in rural areas to receive service without immediately satisfying the documentation requirements for any errors in their application

  - Allowing service providers to elect to begin providing Lifeline service to consumers even if the consumer has not yet submitted supporting documentation to confirm their eligibility

Resources

The FCC and USAC launched a dedicated web page with: Lifeline Resources for State and Federal Partners

- Key Things to Know

- Lifeline Informational Material

- Application Process

- Lifeline Training Opportunities

- Contact Information

  - LifelineProgram@usac.org

  - **Lifeline Support Center**
    (800) 234-9473
    LifelineSupport@usac.org
    9 a.m. - 9 p.m. ET, 7 days/week

Questions?