

Helping Keep Americans Connected

The USAC Connection High Cost & Low Income monthly newsletter will give you information about upcoming program deadlines, tips to help you ensure timely and proper filings, and other information.

High Cost Program

Tips for Using the Online Form 525 for CETCs

Last March, USAC rolled out the online Form 525 (e525) for Competitive ETCs (CETCs) to use for filing their line count data. USAC strongly encourages CETCs to use the e525 to ensure accurate data entry for calculating support payments. Keep your eyes open for an email from USAC with detailed information on how to set up online access in the near future.

Access to e525 is managed through USAC's [E-File System](#). Your first step is to make sure you have access to E-File. It is critical that you identify your online users, update their information, and/or confirm their User IDs and passwords.

E-File is also used to file Form 498 and Form 499 online. Your company Officer or General Contact as found on Form 498 (*Service Provider Identification Number and Contact Information Form*) should have received a User ID and password from USAC. If you need assistance with E-File, call **(888) 641-8722**.

Once an Officer and/or a General Contact has access to E-File, they can set up an "Authorized" user to enter the Form 525 data. Only the Officer and General Contact (they may be the same person) have the authority to submit the e525 until other "Authorized" users – such as company staff, as well as agents – are

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Low Income Program

ETCs Must File Form 497 Revisions for 2007 Low Income Support by March 31, 2009

March 31, 2009 is the last day to submit revisions to [Form 497](#) (*Lifeline and Link Up Worksheet*) for 2007. USAC's administrative window for submitting revisions to Form 497 will close March 31, 2009, for all months prior to January 2008. This applies to submission of data on Form 497, including original (first-time) submissions and revisions of previously submitted data. USAC's administrative window for submitting data for the year 2006 is currently closed.

You may submit FCC Form 497 via [email](#) or via fax to 866-873-4665. You may also mail Form 497 to the following address:

USAC Low Income Program
444 Hoes Lane
Piscataway, NJ 08854

Please contact the Low Income Customer Service Center at 866-873-4727 if you have questions.

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Low Income Program

2009 Federal Poverty Guidelines Released

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released the 2009 Federal Poverty Guidelines January 23, 2009 in the [Federal Register](#). Eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) in federal default states, ETCs with customers residing on federally recognized tribal lands, and ETCs in non-federal default states that use total household income as a criterion for Lifeline and Link Up should update any materials containing the federal poverty guidelines. USAC has updated all pages on lifelinesupport.org to reflect these changes.

The chart to the right shows the amounts (based on 135% of the federal poverty guidelines) used in federal default states. USAC also posts the [federal poverty guidelines](#) at 100%, 125%, 150%, and 175% because some states have an income-based eligibility criterion at one of these levels.

135%			
Persons in Family or Household	48 Contiguous States and D.C.	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$14,621	\$18,266	\$16,821
2	\$19,670	\$24,584	\$22,626
3	\$24,719	\$30,902	\$28,431
4	\$29,768	\$37,220	\$34,236
5	\$34,817	\$43,538	\$40,041
6	\$39,866	\$49,856	\$45,846
7	\$44,915	\$56,174	\$51,651
8	\$49,964	\$62,492	\$57,456
For Each Additional Person, add	\$5,049	\$6,318	\$5,805

Please contact USAC's Low Income Team via [e-mail](#) with any questions.

Changes to DTV Transition Notification

The DTV Delay Act, extending the analog to digital broadcast transition to June 12, 2009, was signed into law February 11, 2009. The FCC extended ETCs' outreach obligations via a February 20, 2009 order (see [FCC 09-11](#)).

Background—In March 2008, the FCC revised Part 54 of the Universal Service rules to include a section on DTV outreach (see [Public Notice](#)). 47 C.F.R. § 54.418 required all ETCs to notify their Lifeline and Link Up customers about the DTV transition using bill inserts or language on a monthly bill. In April 2008, the FCC released a reconsideration order ([FCC 08-119](#)), expanding its rules to include stand-alone outreach materials (brochures, postcards, etc.) to the ways ETCs could notify their Lifeline and Link Up customers of the DTV transition.

New ETC requirements—ETCs must continue to notify their Lifeline and Link Up customers of the impending DTV transition through **June 30, 2009**. All materials sent between **April 1, 2009** and **June 30, 2009** should convey, at a minimum, the following language (emphasis added by FCC):

The nationwide switch to digital television broadcasting will be complete on June 12, 2009, but your local television stations may switch sooner. After the switch, analog-only television sets that receive TV programming through an antenna will need a converter box to continue to receive over-the-air TV. Watch your local stations to find out when they will turn off their analog signal and switch to digital-only broadcasting. Analog-only TVs should continue to work as before to receive low power, Class A or translator television stations and with cable and satellite TV services, gaming consoles, VCRs, DVD players, and similar products.

Information about the DTV transition is available from **your local television stations**, www.DTV.gov, or **1-888-CALL-FCC (TTY 1-888-TELL-FCC)**, and from www.dtv2009.gov or 1-888-DTV-2009 (**TTY 1-877-530-2634**) for information about subsidized coupons for digital-to-analog converter boxes.

All ETCs that receive federal USF support must include the above language on all Lifeline and Link Up related outreach materials in addition to the monthly bill inserts or stand-alone mailer (postcard, brochure, etc).

High Cost Program

established.

In the case of agent-entered data, an authorized company representative must make a final certification that the agent is authorized for the e525. This can be done online using the e525.

Step-by-step instructions for setting up “Authorized” users can be found in the [E-File User Guide](#) on pages 25-37.

Further information on using e525 can be found on the [High Cost](#) section of USAC’s website. If you have questions about the e525, please [e-mail](#) or call (202) 776-0200.

<i>Important High Cost Program Filing Deadlines</i>				
DATE	TYPE OF CARRIER	COMPONENT	FILING TYPE	FILING DATA DUE
MARCH 30	RURAL & RATE-OF-RETURN	HCL, LSS, ICLS	VOLUNTARY*	QUARTERLY LINE COUNTS AS OF PREVIOUS 9/30
	CETC		MANDATORY	
	NON-RURAL, CETC	HCM	MANDATORY	QUARTERLY LINE COUNTS AS OF PREVIOUS 9/30
MARCH 31	RATE-OF-RETURN	ICLS	MANDATORY	PROJECTIONS (FORM 508) FOR UPCOMING PROGRAM YEAR (JULY-JUNE)
MARCH**	PRICE-CAP, CETC	IAS	MANDATORY	QUARTERLY LINE COUNTS AS OF PREVIOUS 12/31
APRIL 16	PRICE-CAP	IAS	MANDATORY	CMT REVENUE, UNE ZONE RATES, UNE ZONE BOUNDARIES AS OF PREVIOUS 12/31
JUNE 30	RATE-OF-RETURN	ICLS	VOLUNTARY	REVISIONS TO PROJECTIONS FOR CURRENT & UPCOMING PROGRAM YEARS
	RATE-OF-RETURN, CETC	ICLS	MANDATORY	ANNUAL USE CERTIFICATION FOR UPCOMING PROGRAM YEAR (JULY-JUNE)
	PRICE-CAP, CETC	IAS	MANDATORY	ANNUAL USE CERTIFICATION FOR UPCOMING PROGRAM YEAR (JULY-JUNE)
JUNE**	PRICE-CAP, CETC	IAS	MANDATORY	QUARTERLY LINE COUNTS AS OF 3/31
JULY 31	RURAL & NON-RURAL ILECs	HCL	MANDATORY	ANNUAL FILING OF COST, INVESTMENT, EXPENSE (PART 36) DATA FOR PREVIOUS CALENDAR YEAR (FILED WITH NATIONAL EXCHANGE CARRIER ASSOC.)
	NON-RURAL, CETC	HCM	MANDATORY	QUARTERLY LINE COUNTS AS OF PREVIOUS 12/31
	RURAL & RATE-OF-RETURN, CETC	HCL, LSS, ICLS	MANDATORY	QUARTERLY LINE COUNTS AS OF PREVIOUS 12/31

*MANDATORY FOR ILECs IF COMPETITION EXISTS /**DUE ON LAST BUSINESS DAY OF MONTH

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USAC appreciates feedback on this newsletter. For any questions or comments, please contact Ed Rovetto, Program Manager, External Relations, at erovetto@usac.org.

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