Lifeline Program: An Overview of the Lifeline Benefit for Low-Income Native and Tribal Consumers
Housekeeping

• Audio is available through your computer’s speakers
• The audience will remain on mute
• Enter questions at any time using the “Questions” box
  • There is a large audience signed in today. We will accept as many questions as possible!
• If your audio or slides freeze, restart the webinar
• Copy of the slide deck in the “handouts” section of webinar panel
Today’s Presenters

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Agenda

1. USAC: Who We Are
2. Lifeline Program Details
3. National Verifier Overview
   - Apply Online
   - Apply with Paper Form
4. COVID-19 Relief
5. Resources
USAC: Who We Are
USAC: Who We Are
The Universal Service Administrative Company

- The Universal Service Fund exists to ensure that all people in the United States have access to quality, affordable connectivity services
- USAC is an independent, not-for-profit organization designated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as the permanent administrator of the Universal Service Fund and its four programs
USAC: Who We Are
The Mission of Universal Service

USAC works to ensure that all people in the United States have access to quality, affordable connectivity services through these four programs:

• High Cost (Connect America Fund)
• Lifeline Program
• Rural Health Care Program
• Schools and Libraries Program (E-Rate)
Lifeline Program Details
Lifeline Program Details

- Lifeline offers a **monthly discount** on phone or internet service
- All eligible consumers can receive a discount of up to $9.25 per month
- Consumers who live on qualifying Tribal lands can 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
Lifeline Program Details

Lifeline Benefit

Lifeline support is provided directly to the phone or internet company, which passes the support on to the consumer as a discount off of the consumer’s bill. Lifeline support is based on which service(s) a consumer receives that meets the Lifeline minimum service standards.

Service Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voice (mobile or landline)</td>
<td>Subscriber is provided a voice only service that meets the minimum service standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadband (internet)</td>
<td>Subscriber is provided a broadband only service that meets the minimum service standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundled Voice</td>
<td>Subscriber is provided a voice and broadband service that meets the voice minimum service standards only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundled Broadband</td>
<td>Subscriber is provided a voice and broadband service that meets the broadband minimum service standards only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundled Voice and Broadband</td>
<td>Subscriber is provided a voice and broadband service that meets both the voice and broadband minimum service standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minimum Service Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Mobile Voice</th>
<th>Mobile Broadband</th>
<th>Home Broadband</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mobile Voice</td>
<td>Mobile Broadband</td>
<td>Home Broadband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speed: 3G or better; Usage Allowance: 3 GB</td>
<td>Speed: 20/3 Mbps; Usage Allowance: 1024 GB</td>
<td>Speed: 20/3 Mbps; Usage Allowance: 1024 GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1000 Minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lifeline Program Details
How to Qualify (1/2)

Consumers can qualify for the Lifeline Program by showing that:

1. Their income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines, or
2. They participate in at least one of the following qualifying government programs:
   • Medicaid
   • Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
   • Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
   • Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
   • Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit
Lifeline Program Details
How to Qualify (2/2)

Residents of Tribal lands can also demonstrate their eligibility for Lifeline by participating in one of the following programs:

• Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance (BIA-GA)
• Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TTANF)
• Tribal Head Start (must meet qualifying income standard)
• Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
Lifeline Program Details

Program Rules

- Lifeline is available only to consumers who can demonstrate their eligibility
- Only one Lifeline benefit is permitted per independent economic household (economic household is a group of people that share income and expenses)
- Consumers are required to recertify their eligibility every year
Lifeline Program Details
Tribal Lands

Lower 48

AK and HI

Legend

State Outline
County Outline
Tribal Lands - Consumers residing in these areas can receive enhanced support and Link Up, and can qualify using a Tribal program.

Universal Service Administration Co. [Created May 1, 2013]

For more information about the Lifeline Tribal Enhanced Subsidy visit:
www.usac.org/lifeline/tribal.html

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Lifeline Program Details
Terms to Know

- **Recertification**: Each year, consumers are asked to confirm they are still eligible for the Lifeline Program.
- **Anniversary Date**: The date by which consumers must complete recertification.
- **National Verifier**: The national application system that consumers in most states can use to apply for the program.
- **Service provider portal**: The online system that phone and internet companies may use to help their consumers submit an application for Lifeline.
- **Consumer portal**: The online system that consumers may use on their own to submit an application for Lifeline.
- **Reverification**: One-time process that all existing Lifeline consumers must complete to verify they meet the National Verifier eligibility standards.
National Verifier Overview
National Verifier Overview

• The National Verifier (NV) is the Lifeline Program’s application system that checks a consumer’s Lifeline eligibility

• After determining eligibility, a consumer still works with the phone or internet company they select to enroll in Lifeline and receive service
About the National Verifier

• 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

• The map shows all states where the NV has launched

* In Texas, Oregon, and California, the NV relies on existing state eligibility processes.
Ways to Use the National Verifier

**Option 1: Apply Online**

- The consumer visits CheckLifeline.org from any computer or mobile device to create an account and complete the electronic application.
- The consumer is found qualified to participate in the program by the National Verifier.
- The consumer contacts a service provider to enroll in Lifeline.

**Option 2: Apply by Mail**

- The consumer fills out the National Verifier Lifeline Application Form, One-Per-Household Worksheet, and provides proof of program eligibility and proof of identity.
- The consumer mails in their documentation to the Lifeline Support Center or delivers it to their service provider.

**Option 3: Apply Through a Service Provider**

- The consumer visits a service provider store or website.
- The service provider will collect the consumer’s information via the National Verifier service provider portal or service provider website.
- The consumer can find service providers in their area using the “Companies Near Me” tool on USAC’s website.

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Apply Online

CheckLifeline.org

New consumers sign in here

Returning consumers sign in here

Lifeline National Verifier

Qualify for Lifeline!
Lifeline is a federal benefit that lowers the monthly cost of phone or internet service. Qualifying is the first step to getting your Lifeline Benefit.

What is your state or territory?
Choose
Get Started

Do you need to recertify?
If you already get Lifeline and received a notice that said you need to recertify, use the recertify button.

Recertify to keep Lifeline

Are you a service provider?
If you are a service provider and need to qualify your customer for Lifeline, use the service provider portal.

Sign in as a Service Provider >
Apply Online

Your Information
We will use this information to find out if you qualify for the Lifeline Program.

What is your full legal name?
The name you use on official documents, like your Social Security Card or State ID. Not a nickname.

First Name
Middle Name (Optional)
Last Name
Suffix (Optional)

What is your date of birth?
Month Day Year

What is your home address?
The address where you will get service. Do not use a P.O. Box.

Street Number and Name
RED HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF TOWN

City
State WA Zip Code 12345

Consumers may enter a descriptive address or the intersection near where they reside if they don't have a street number/name.
Apply Online

The consumer will create their username and password and log in to the system.

Create Your Account
Making an account will let us keep your information safe. It will also let you save it and can come back to it any time.

Choose your username.
Choose something that you can easily remember. If it helps, use your name in some form.

Username

Choose your password.
Make sure it is something you can remember. It has to follow the requirements below.

Password

Password Requirements
- At least 8 letters or numbers long
- At least 1 capital letter
- At least 1 number (0-9)
- At least 1 special character (@#$%&)
Apply Online

Help us secure your account. Choose 3 security questions that only you know the answers to.
Make sure you can remember these answers. These will help you get back into your account if you forget your username or password.

Security Question 1
Select one

Your Answer to Security Question 1

Security Question 2
Select one

Your Answer to Security Question 2

Security Question 3

What is the best way to reach you?
We will use this to contact you when you need to reset your password and to let you know when there are updates to your application status.

Email  Phone  Mail

What is your email address?
example@email.com

Sign In To Your Account

Your account is created!
Please sign in so we know it is still you and then you can complete the process.

Username
Forgot your username?

Password
Forgot your password?

By signing in, I accept the terms and conditions of the National Verifier system.

Don’t Have an Account?
Find out if you qualify for the Lifeline program by creating an account.

Create an Account

Print an application to mail in?
If you want to fill out the form on paper, you can print a paper form to mail in.
Welcome Jane Mary Smith
Lifeline is a federal program that lowers the cost of phone or internet services.

My Applications
Here are all your applications from the last 180 days. You can start a new application when your last one expires.

Apply or Transfer Your Service
Complete a new application if you'd like to sign up for Lifeline again or want to transfer your benefit to a different company.

Update Your Address
If you already get Lifeline but have moved recently, update your address here and let your company know as soon as possible.

Find a Company Near Me
Lifeline is a federal benefit. If you are not happy with your Lifeline service, you can move to another phone or internet company.
Tell Us Which Program You Are In

To qualify for Lifeline, we need to know which government assistance program you are in.

Are you in any of these?

Check all that apply.

- [ ] SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or Food Stamps
- [ ] Medicaid
- [ ] Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- [ ] Federal Public Housing Assistance
- [ ] Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Programs
- [ ] Tribal Specific Program (only choose if you live on tribal lands)
- [ ] I don't participate in one of these programs, I want to qualify through my income.
- [ ] I am not in any of these, but my child or dependent is in one of these programs.

Review Your Information

Before we check if you qualify for Lifeline, make sure your information is right.

Double check the information below.

Full Legal Name: Jane Mary Smith  
Date of Birth: March 10, 1959  
Last 4 Numbers of SSN: 1234  
Address: 123 Main Street, Apt 206  
Chicago, IL 56789

The information you gave us will be used to check if you qualify for Lifeline. Please confirm that it is okay.

By checking this box you are consenting that all of the information you are providing may be collected, used, shared, and retained for the purposes of applying for and/or receiving the Lifeline program benefit.
Apply Online

Agreement

You are almost done qualifying. Please initial next to each statement and sign this form to finish the process.

I understand that it is against the law to lie on this form and agree, under penalty of perjury, to the following statements:

Initial

JS

Your Signature

Type your full legal name (the same as you gave us before) below.

Jane Mary Smith

☑ I understand this is a digital signature, and is the same as if I signed my name with a pen.

Scroll Down

…There are 9 total statements to initial

You Qualify for Lifeline

Sign up for Lifeline by Apr 30, 2018 (Based on US Eastern Time)

You have 90 days from today to sign up for Lifeline with a phone or internet company.

How to sign up

1. Choose a company
   Find one using the list of service providers near you.

2. Tell them you qualified for Lifeline online, and ask them to sign you up.
   Bring the following with you:
   - A form of identification (like a driver’s license)
   - Your confirmation number: NRB-2U1-23W

3. After they sign you up, you will start getting your phone or internet service.

The consumer’s “Qualified” eligibility result will expire in 90 days so they must sign up with a company by the listed date.

If you do not sign up by Apr 30, 2018 (Based on US Eastern Time) you will need to come back to this site and fill this form out again.
## Apply Online
### Resolving Errors

If a consumer receives any of the following errors, they can resolve them by submitting documentation or additional information (the online system will also walk consumers through the process to submit more information):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error</th>
<th>Document/Proof Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMS (Address Management Service Error)</td>
<td>Address validation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplicate Address</td>
<td>Duplicate address flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>Proof of emancipated minor status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPIV (Identity Verification Error)</td>
<td>Proof of identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Eligibility</td>
<td>Proof of program/income eligibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Apply Online
Resolving Errors - AMS

- If a consumer entered a descriptive address or another address that cannot be verified, they will need to provide more information using this mapping tool.
- The map will try to locate the consumer’s home based on the information originally entered.
  - The latitude and longitude fields will automatically populate.
- The consumer can move the pin around to locate where they live.

We Didn’t Recognize Your Address
The U.S. Postal Service could not find the address you gave us.

Show us that your address is right.
This is the information you gave us.

We need to confirm where you live on the map below. Please double click on the map or use the (+) button on the top left to zoom in on the map. You can drop a pin once you have found your address on the map.

Note: If you have not zoomed in far enough on the map, you will not be able to drop a pin on the map.

LatITUDE
38.92529

LONGITUDE
-77.01403
Apply with Paper Form
Apply with Paper Form

- Consumers must complete all sections of the application (excluding page 7)
- Write clearly, using black ink and capital letters
- Consumers enter the same information they would include on the online application
Apply with Paper Form
Resolving Errors - AMS

Option 1: If a consumer has access to the internet but does not want to submit an online application, USAC recommends that they use a mapping tool (such as Google maps) to drop a pin where they live

- Consumers may take a screenshot of the mapping tool (the image should include the dropped pin and the consumer’s latitude and longitude coordinates) and print it out

Option 2: A consumer may use a map from their community (i.e., from a gas station or if their phone/internet company or Tribal government has maps of the area)

- The consumer must circle their home
- If coordinates are known, the consumer should write them on the map (otherwise, USAC will determine coordinates based on the map)
Apply with Paper Form
Resolving Errors - AMS

**Option 3:** Consumers may hand draw a map to show where they live

- This map should include **cross roads, identifiable landmarks**, and **distances**
- If coordinates are known, the consumer should write them on the map (otherwise, USAC will determine coordinates based on the map)
Apply with Paper Form Submission

- Consumers mail completed applications to:
  
  **USAC Lifeline Support Center**  
  **P.O. Box 7081**  
  **London, KY 40742**

- USAC will send an eligibility decision via mail from the Lifeline Support Center
  - If a consumer’s application receives an error and they need to submit more information, the consumer will also be notified via mail

- Consumers should receive eligibility decisions within 7 and 10 days

- Consumers can call the Lifeline Support Center to check their application status at (800) 234-9473
Apply with Paper Form

Tips

• If consumers have access to email, we encourage them to include their email address on their application

• Include copies of eligibility and identity documents as well as the One-Per-Household Worksheet to reduce processing time
  • The household worksheet and information on what documentation is needed to resolve specific errors can be found on LifelineSupport.org
COVID-19 Relief
COVID-19 Relief

The FCC and USAC have taken action to ensure that consumers have access to the communications services they need during the pandemic. These measures, effective through **August 31, 2020**, include:

- **Continued service**: The FCC temporarily waived certain rules to ensure consumers are not involuntarily de-enrolled from the Lifeline Program during the pandemic.

- **More flexibility**: The FCC temporarily adjusted income eligibility documentation requirements to allow people who are recently unemployed to prove Lifeline eligibility.

- **Additional support**: USAC is temporarily accepting driver’s licenses or state identification cards that have recently expired when needed to complete a Lifeline application.

- **Relief for rural, Tribal consumers**: The FCC temporarily waived its rules so that Lifeline providers may begin providing Lifeline service to consumers living in rural areas on Tribal lands even if those consumers have not yet submitted certain supporting documentation to complete their Lifeline application.
  - Consumers who enroll through this waiver process will have 45 days to provide the required documentation.
COVID-19 Relief
Continued Service

- **De-enrollments**: involuntary de-enrollments of existing subscribers (e.g., related to non-usage or USAC program integrity reviews) are paused until August 31
- **Recertification**: Recertification is on hold for the anniversary dates between April 14, 2020 and November 29, 2020
- **Reverification**: Reverification activity is on hold through August 31
COVID-19 Relief
More Flexibility

• One way a consumer who qualifies for Lifeline based on their income can prove eligibility is to provide three consecutive months of income documentation.

• Due to the pandemic, and recent unemployment, there may be eligible consumers who are unable to meet this requirement.

• Through **August 31**, consumers who do not have three consecutive months of income documentation may provide an official document that confirms their current income information.

• This may include a notice of unemployment benefit payments or a notice of a successfully submitted application for unemployment benefits.
COVID-19 Relief
More Flexibility

To prove a consumer’s current household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines, as an alternative to acceptable documentation already allowed by the rules, consumers may submit an official document that, at a minimum, includes:

- The consumer’s name, or the name of consumer’s benefit qualifying person (BQP)
- The current income information
- A date within the last 3 months
Resources
Resources

Lifeline Support Center

- (800) 234-9473
- LifelineSupport@usac.org
- 9 a.m.–9 p.m. ET, 7 days a week

LifelineSupport.org

- Videos on the application process
- Information on how to resolve errors and specific information for Tribal residents (including information on Tribal Link Up)
- Tribal Flyer
- Companies Near Me
  - Search for companies that serve a specific area by zip code or city and state
Thank You!

• Thank you for joining us!
• Keep watching the consumer web page for more updates
  • www.LifelineSupport.org
• Want to stay up to date on Lifeline?
  • Sign up for the Lifeline newsletter
• Need help? Contact us!
  • LifelineProgram@usac.org