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

- Audio is available through your computer’s speakers
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- If your audio or slides freeze, restart the webinar
- A copy of the slide deck is in the “Handouts” section of webinar panel
Today’s Presenters

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1. USAC: Who We Are
2. Lifeline Program Details
3. National Verifier Overview
   • Apply Online
   • Apply with Paper Form
4. COVID-19 Response
5. Resources
   • NEW – Tribal Toolkit
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 the service(s) a consumer receives that meet 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>
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</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>Mobile Voice</th>
<th>Mobile Broadband</th>
<th>Home Broadband</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1000 Minutes</td>
<td>Speed: 3G or better; Usage Allowance: 3 GB</td>
<td>Speed: 20/3 Mbps; Usage Allowance: 1024 GB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Lifeline Program Details

Link Up

- **Link Up** offers Tribal residents eligible for Lifeline support reimbursement to start service at their address
  - Link Up can reimburse the full cost of beginning service with certain phone/Internet companies at a consumer’s primary residence, up to $100
  - If the cost of initiating service is more than $100, the company will provide a no-interest payment plan for up to $200 for up to one year
- Link Up is a **one-time benefit per address**
- Consumers may request Link Up if they move to an address eligible to receive the Link Up reimbursement
- Not all Lifeline carriers offer Link Up; consumers should ask their phone or Internet company
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
Additional Eligibility Information

• **Qualify through a child or dependent:** Consumers can sign up for Lifeline if a child or dependent participates in any of the programs listed above

• **One per household:** Only one Lifeline benefit is allowed per household, which is defined as a group of people that share income and expenses
  - If a consumer lives with other people that receive Lifeline but do not share income and expenses (e.g., nursing home, homeless shelter, roommates), then they may still be eligible
  - Lifeline applicants typically must complete a one-per-household worksheet to self-certify that they do not share income and expenses with another Lifeline subscriber if they share the same address
Lifeline Program Details
Tribal Lands

Lower 48

Legend
- State Outline
- Tribal Lands - Consumers residing in these areas can receive enhanced support and LinkUp, and they can qualify using a Tribal program.

AK and HI

Legend
- Tribal Lands - Consumers residing in these areas can receive enhanced support and LinkUp, and they can qualify using a Tribal program.

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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

• 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

• After the consumer qualifies for Lifeline, the consumer contacts a service provider to enroll

Option 2: Apply by Mail

• 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

• After the consumer qualifies for Lifeline, the consumer contacts a service provider to enroll

Option 3: Apply Through 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

• After the consumer qualifies for Lifeline, the service provider enrolls the consumer
Apply Online
Apply Online

CheckLifeline.org

Returning consumers sign in here

New 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

Sample Town

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
1. At least 8 letters or numbers long
2. At least 1 capital letter
3. At least 1 number (0-9)
4. At least 1 special character (@#$%^&*)

Confirm Password
Type the same password again.
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.
Apply Online

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
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?

- 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 60789

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

I (or my dependent or other person in my household) currently get benefits from the government program(s) listed on this form or my annual household income is 135% or less than the Federal Poverty Guidelines (the amount listed in the Federal Poverty Guidelines table on this form).

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: N38-2U1-2U3

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>
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.
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

• To reduce processing time, all mailed applications should include:
  • A Lifeline Program Cover Sheet
  • Copies of eligibility and identity documents
  • A Lifeline Household Worksheet

• The Lifeline Household Worksheet and information on what documentation is needed to resolve specific errors can be found on LifelineSupport.org
COVID-19 Response
Temporary Program Changes (1/2)

The FCC and USAC suspended certain rules and processes through **November 30** to ensure existing Lifeline subscribers are not involuntarily removed from the program during the pandemic:

- Recertification
- Reverification
- General de-enrollment requirements, except de-enrollment at the user’s request
- Usage requirements
- USAC program integrity reviews
COVID-19 Response
Temporary Program Changes (2/2)

The FCC and USAC adjusted certain documentation requirements through November 30 to make it easier for those hardest hit by the pandemic to apply:

• **Proof of Income**: Consumers who do not have three consecutive months of income documentation may provide other official documentation
  - Notice of unemployment benefit payments
  - Notice of a successfully submitted application for unemployment benefits
• **Proof of Identity**: USAC will accept driver’s licenses or state identification cards that have recently expired when needed to complete a Lifeline application
• **Relief for rural, Tribal consumers**: Consumers living in rural areas on Tribal lands may begin receiving service even if they are still in the process of providing any necessary documentation to confirm their eligibility
  - Consumers who enroll through this waiver process will have **45 days** to provide the required documentation

For more information, visit USAC’s [Lifeline COVID-19 Response](#) page
Resources
Resources

Tribal Toolkit

Additional Support for Tribal Lands

Lifeline customers can receive an additional $25 per month discount, and up to $100 reduction for first-time connection charges.

Enhanced Monthly Support

Lifeline customers can receive up to $25 per month in addition to the standard Lifeline benefit amount if they live on lands designated as Tribal.

Link Up

Link up can reduce the full cost of connecting service and change your primary address. If you are interested in changing your address the services will be connected to your new location. If you are interested in adding a service the new service will be connected to your new location.

Which Tribal Lands?

Visit LifeLine’s Tribal Lands web page: https://www.lifelinesupport.org/additional-support-for-tribal-lands/

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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
Learn More about Lifeline

• 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