

The Lifeline Program: Tribal Toolkit

A Federal Discount for Eligible Consumers' Phone or Internet
Service

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Background and Audience

What is the enhanced Lifeline discount for Tribal consumers?

Lifeline is a federal program dedicated to making phone and Internet service more affordable to low-income households, and low-income households on Tribal lands. This benefit generally provides eligible consumers with a monthly discount of up to \$9.25. Tribal consumers living on Tribal lands¹ are eligible for an enhanced discount of up to \$34.25 per month.

What is Link Up?

Link Up is a one-time benefit per Tribal address. Subscribers can request Link Up once for each change of their primary residential (home) address.

Link Up assistance provides a 100% reduction (up to \$100) of the charge for starting service at a Tribal Lifeline subscriber's primary residence. For service initiation charges of up to \$200, Link Up also provides a deferred, no-interest payment plan to the subscriber for up to one year.

The Link Up benefit is available to subscribers who reside on Tribal lands and use an eligible company.² Consumers can check with their Lifeline provider to see if they offer Link Up.

How do I use the Tribal Toolkit?

The purpose of this Tribal toolkit is to provide Tribal communities with the Lifeline resources they need to educate the stakeholders listed below about the program. The content included may be used as templates for informational material or posted directly as is.

Tribes are encouraged to translate the following information to their communities' indigenous languages to share more widely.

Who is this information for?

Low-income individuals who reside on Tribal lands, including individuals who:

- Have income at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines;
- Participate in SNAP, Medicaid, SSI, FPHA, Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit; or

¹ Lifeline's Tribal lands is defined in [47 CFR §54.400 \(e\)](#).

² Link Up is available through facilities-based phone or Internet companies that receive High Cost Program Support. Go to usac.org for more information.

- Participate in Tribal programs like Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance or TTANF.

Those who serve Tribal clients, such as:

- Case workers
- Caregivers and senior advocates
- Federal government agencies
- Health and social service agency staff
- Service providers (carriers)
- Tribal college student support centers
- Tribal community centers
- Tribal government departments or divisions
- Tribal housing authorities
- Tribal leadership
- Veteran groups

Lifeline Resources

Lifeline Article for Blog or e-Newsletter

Use: Standard information for a Lifeline program article to educate consumers and stakeholders about the program.

Title: Get Discounted Phone or Internet Service with Lifeline

Access to affordable voice and Internet service is vital to stay connected **in today's world**. People need these services to connect with healthcare providers, potential employers, educational programs, and loved ones. Yet affordable service remains a challenge for low-income consumers living on Tribal lands. The federal Lifeline program helps close the gap for these consumers by offering a monthly discount of up to \$34.25 off a qualified **household's** phone or Internet bill.

A household is a group of people who share income and expenses. Consumers who live with another person already receiving the Lifeline benefit, but do not share income and expenses, may still be eligible for the discount.

Consumers may qualify for Lifeline through their income or if they can provide proof of enrollment in one of the nine Tribal or federal Lifeline qualifying government programs.

Households with income at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines are eligible for Lifeline. Consumers enrolled in one of the following government programs qualify for Lifeline as well:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP),

- Medicaid,
- Federal Public Housing Assistance,
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or
- Veterans Pensions Survivors Benefits.

Consumers living on Tribal lands may also qualify if they take part in one of the following Tribal government programs:

- Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF),
- Tribal Head Start,
- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, or
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

Consumers have several options to apply. They may visit a Lifeline phone or Internet company in their area. Lifeline's [Companies Near Me](#) tools allows consumers to search for Lifeline companies in their area by typing in their zip code or city and state. Consumers also have the option to submit an [online application](#) or mail in a [paper application](#) to the Lifeline Support Center.

USAC's Lifeline Support Center serves as a resource for prospective and current Lifeline participants. Consumers may submit questions via [email](#), or by calling (800) 234-9473. More information is available on the [Lifeline Support](#) website.

The Lifeline program is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), under the oversight of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Lifeline Radio/Public Service Script

Use: Standard language for Lifeline program radio script or other public service announcements.

Title: Tribal Land Residents May Qualify for a Federal Discount off Phone or Internet Service

30 Seconds - 68 Words

The federal Lifeline program makes voice and Internet service more affordable for low-income households.

Consumers living on Tribal lands may qualify for a monthly discount of up to thirty four dollars and twenty five cents off their phone or Internet bill if they meet income guidelines or participate in one of nine Tribal or federal programs.

Visit Lifeline Support [dot] org for more information or call 800 234-9473.

One minute - About 170 Words

Have you heard of Lifeline? The federal program provides up to thirty four dollars and twenty five cents off a Tribal lands resident's phone or Internet bill every month.

We at [enter radio station or organization] believe access to affordable voice and Internet service is vital for our people here on [enter Tribal land]. Lifeline can help you afford phone or Internet service to stay connected to your family, emergency services, and the workforce.

Here is what you need to know about the program:

- Qualify by showing you are in one of the nine eligible programs such as Tribal TANF, SNAP, or Medicaid.
- Reside on Tribal lands to receive the enhanced benefit, or **if you don't reside on Tribal lands** you may still be eligible to receive a discount of up to nine dollars and twenty-five cents a month.
- You can apply online, in-person, or mail in your application directly to the Lifeline Support Center.

Visit Lifeline Support [dot] org for more information or call 800 234-9473.

Lifeline Social Media Posts

Use: Standard language for Lifeline social media posts.

1. Do you live on Tribal lands? Eligible, low-income consumers can qualify for up to a \$34.25 monthly discount off their phone or Internet bill through the federal Lifeline program. Lifeline also provides a one-time reimbursement for the cost to set up phone or Internet service with a qualifying Lifeline provider, known as Link Up.

Learn more: <https://www.lifelinesupport.org/additional-support-for-tribal-lands/>

Apply today: CheckLifeline.org

2. Lifeline is a federal program that will help make your phone or Internet services more affordable. Visit Lifelinesupport.org to learn more about this monthly discount.

Learn more here: LifelineSupport.org

3. Access to affordable voice and Internet service is a vital resource to make sure YOU can stay connected to your loved ones, health care clinics, and workforce

opportunities. The federal Lifeline program's goal is to increase access to these services for Tribal consumers by offering a monthly discount of up to \$34.25 off your phone or Internet service bill. For more information on the program and how to sign up, visit [Lifelinesupport.org](https://lifelinesupport.org).

4. Have you heard about Link Up for residents of Tribal lands? Ask your phone or Internet company! You may qualify for reimbursement of up to \$100 on the cost of setting up phone/Internet service at your home through certain companies that participate in the federal Lifeline program. Find out what companies near you provide Lifeline service by clicking the link below.

Link: <https://data.usac.org/publicreports/CompaniesNearMe/Download/Report>

5. You, a family member, or friend may be eligible for a federal discount off your monthly phone or Internet bill. Learn more about the Lifeline program at [LifelineSupport.org](https://lifelinesupport.org)!

Additional Information for Service Providers

Service providers can only claim reimbursement through Link Up for the difference between the customary connection/interest charge and the actual charge.

Before providing Link Up to the subscriber, check the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) to confirm whether they have previously received a Link Up benefit at their address.