

**LIFELINE SERVICES****A. Description**

Lifeline Services are telecommunications service assistance programs designed to provide eligible residential customers with a reduction in the price of basic local telephone service.

Lifeline service includes: single party service, voice grade access to the public switch telephone network, DTMF or its functional equivalent, access to emergency service, access to operator services, access to interexchange service, and access to directory assistance. Toll limitation services may also be provided as a part of Lifeline Service. Pursuant to paragraph 383 of FCC Final Report and Order in CC96-45, Toll limitation services include both toll blocking, which prevents the placement of all long distance calls for which the subscriber will be charged, and toll control which limits the toll charges a subscriber can incur during a billing period to a preset amount.<sup>/1/</sup>

Lifeline basic terms and conditions are in compliance with FCC rules and regulations including the Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization Third Report And Order, Further Report And Order, and Order on Reconsideration, WC Docket No. 11-42(rel. April 27, 2016) ("Lifeline Reform and Modernization Order") and implementation of a National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier. (C)

**B. Regulations**

1. Lifeline Service benefits are applicable only to the primary line at the customer's principal residence.
2. Lifeline customers who have met the eligibility criteria will remain eligible for a period of twelve months from the date of certification. Proof of eligibility will be required for all initial applicants and all applicants will be required to re-certify periodically consistent with federal requirements in 47 C.F.R. 54.
3. Lifeline support is limited to a single subscription per household where household is defined to be any individual or group of individuals who are living together at the same address as one economic unit. For purposes of this rule, an economic unit consists of all adult individuals contributing to or sharing in the income and expenses of a household.
4. The Company will provide, at no charge, Toll Blocking to qualified Lifeline customers upon customer request.
5. Lifeline service customers may not be denied service for previously unpaid toll charges. And, Lifeline service customers may not be disconnected for non-payment of toll charges.

/1/ Docket No. 97-326-U designated SWBT as an ETC and granted a waiver from the FCC's requirement to provide the toll control feature of toll limitation.

**LIFELINE SERVICES (cont'd)**

**B. Regulations (cont'd)**

- 6. Service deposit requirements do not apply to Lifeline service customers who voluntarily elect to receive toll blocking.
- 7. Partial payments received from Lifeline customers will first be applied to local service charges and then to outstanding toll charges.
- 8. Applicants may subscribe to flat rate service or measured service<sup>/1/</sup> at discounted rates. (C)

(D)  
(D)

**C. Eligibility Requirements**

An applicant may qualify for Lifeline Service by satisfying either 1 or 2 as follows:<sup>/2/</sup>

/3/

- 1. Current recipient of any of the following low income assistance programs: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Federal Public Housing Assistance or Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit. Proof of eligibility will be required for all initial applicants and all applicants will be required to re-certify periodically consistent with federal requirements in 47 C.F.R. 54.
- 2. Customer's income, as defined in 47 CFR Section 54.400(f), is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Proof of eligibility will be required for all initial applicants and all applicants will be required to re-certify periodically consistent with federal requirements in 47 C.F.R. 54.

(C)

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/3/(D)

/1/ This service is obsolete for residence customers, except for existing installations at existing locations for existing residence customers who subscribed to the service prior to July 3, 2013. (C)

/2/ Effective December 2, 2016, in compliance with the FCC "Lifeline Reform and Modernization Order", Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), National School Lunch Program's free lunch program and Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) are no longer criteria for the federal Lifeline program. Existing Lifeline subscribers qualified under these programs prior to December 2, 2016, and who remain qualified for these programs, may retain the Lifeline discount until such time as they must re-certify under current FCC rules and criteria. /3/ (C)

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(N)

/3/ Material formerly appeared on Sheet 3.

**LIFELINE SERVICES (cont'd)**

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**D. Eligibility Determination, Certification, and Re-Certification**

(N)

Effective January 22, 2020, the Company will no longer be responsible for determining Lifeline eligibility. At this time, the National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier (National Verifier) will determine subscriber eligibility, conduct annual recertification, and populate the Lifeline Eligibility Database. The National Verifier will collect the customer's application, determine eligibility, and give an approval or denial for a Lifeline discount. Once approved, the National Verifier will retain the approval for 90 days, during which time the Company may use the eligibility to provide a Lifeline discount. The Lifeline credit will not be established until the customer's eligibility has been determined by the National Verifier and the customer contacts the Company to apply the Lifeline credit.

(N)

(N)

**E. Lifeline Measured Service<sup>/1/</sup>**

(C)

1. Applicants must meet eligibility requirements as set forth in C. *Eligibility Requirements*, preceding.
2. For Lifeline Measured Residence Service the first 40 direct dial local messages are included as part of the basic access line rate.

The applicable rate for Lifeline Measured Service is specified in Part 4, Section 2 of this Guidebook. This service is provided pursuant to Part 4, Section 2, C., *Measured Service*, in this Guidebook. Usage charges specified in C.3., *Rates*, apply for all messages beyond the 40-call allowance.

/2/

/1/ This service is obsolete for residence customers, except for existing installations at existing locations for existing residence customers who subscribed to the service prior to July 3, 2013.

/2/ (C)

/2/ Material now appears on Sheet 2.

(N)