

**TARIFF DISTRIBUTION**

FILE PACKAGE NO.: SC-19-0055

DATE: December 1, 2019

STATE: SOUTH CAROLINA

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/01/2019

TYPE OF DISTRIBUTION: Approved

PURPOSE: This update reflects a reduction in the federal lifeline discount from \$9.25 to \$7.25, resulting in a lifeline rate increase

| <b><u>TARIFF SECTION</u></b> | <b><u>PAGE NUMBER</u></b> | <b><u>PAGE REVISION</u></b> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| G003                         | 48                        | 0014                        |
| G003                         | 49                        | 0012                        |
| G003                         | 49.1                      | 0002                        |

---

## A3. BASIC LOCAL EXCHANGE SERVICE

### A3.31 Lifeline

#### A3.31.1 Description of Service

- A. Effective October 12, 2017, Lifeline service is available only to qualifying subscribers who reside in Connect America Fund II (CAF II) Funded Census Blocks, shown in the Petition of AT&T South Carolina for Order Confirming Relinquishment of Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Designation In Specified Areas, Exhibit B: AT&T Carolina's Retained ETC Service Area, Docket No. 2017-109-C, Order No. 2017-276, dated May 3, 2017.
- B. The Lifeline program is designed to increase the availability of telecommunications services to low income subscribers by providing a credit to monthly recurring local service to qualifying residential subscribers. Basic terms and conditions are in compliance with FCC rules and regulations including the FCC Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in WC Docket No. 11-42, adopted January 31, 2012, and 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").
- C. Lifeline is supported by the federal universal service support mechanism.
- D. Federal uniform support of *seven* dollars and twenty five cents (\$7.25) is available for each Lifeline service and is passed through to an eligible customer via a monthly Federal Lifeline credit. An additional three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) credit is provided by the state. The total Lifeline credit available to an eligible customer in South Carolina is *ten* dollars and seventy-five cents (\$10.75). The amount of credit will not exceed the charge for local service. (C)

#### A3.31.2 Terms and Conditions

- A. General
  1. One low income credit is available per household and is applicable to the primary residential connection only. 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 the purposes of this rule, an economic unit consists of all adult individuals contributing to and sharing in the income and expenses of a household.
  2. A Lifeline customer may subscribe to any local service offering available to other residence customers.
  3. Toll blocking, if elected, will be provided at no charge to the Lifeline subscriber.
  4. No deposit will be required of a Lifeline customer who subscribes to toll blocking. If a Lifeline customer removes toll blocking prior to establishing an acceptable credit history, a deposit may be required. When applicable, advance payments will not exceed the connection and local service charges for one month.
  5. Neither the Federal Universal Service Charge nor the South Carolina Intrastate Universal Service Surcharge will be billed to Lifeline customers.
  6. A Lifeline subscriber's local service will not be disconnected for non-payment of toll charges. Local service may be denied for non-payment of local calls in accordance with A2. Access to toll service may be denied for non-payment of toll charges. A Lifeline subscriber's request for reconnection of local service will not be denied if the service was previously denied for non-payment of toll charges.
  7. Lifeline is not available for resale.

---

### A3. BASIC LOCAL EXCHANGE SERVICE

#### A3.31 Lifeline (Cont'd)

##### A3.31.2 Terms and Conditions (Cont'd)

###### B. Eligibility

1. To be eligible for Lifeline, a customer must be a current recipient of any one of the following low income assistance programs:<sup>1</sup>
  - a. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (T)
  - b. Medicaid (T)
  - c. Federal Public Housing Assistance (T)
  - d. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (T)
  - e. Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit (T)
2. All applications for service are subject to verification with the state agency responsible for administration of the qualifying program.
3. Additionally, a customer with total net annual income that does not exceed one hundred thirty five percent (135%) of the Federal Poverty Guidelines qualifies for Lifeline.

###### C. Certification

1. Proof of eligibility in any of the qualifying low income assistance programs should be provided to the Company at the time of application for service. The Lifeline credit will not be established until proof of eligibility has been received by the Company. If the customer requests installation prior to the Company's receipt of proof of eligibility, the requested service will be provided without the Lifeline credit. When eligibility documentation is provided subsequent to installation, the Lifeline credit will be provided on a going forward basis. Re-certification is required periodically consistent with the federal requirements in 47 C.F.R 54.
2. The Company reserves the right to periodically audit its records, working in conjunction with the appropriate state agencies, for the purpose of determining continuing eligibility. Information obtained during such audit will be treated as confidential information to the extent required under State and Federal laws. The use or disclosure of information concerning enrollees will be limited to purposes directly connected with the administration of the Lifeline plan.
3. When a customer is determined to be ineligible as a result of an audit, the Company will contact the customer. If the customer cannot provide eligibility documentation, the Lifeline credit will be discontinued.

**Note 1:** 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) and National School Lunch Program's free lunch program 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. Effective October 12, 2017, Lifeline discounts noted in this paragraph apply only to Lifeline subscribers who reside in CAF II Funded Census Blocks, as noted in A3.31.1.A.

### A3. BASIC LOCAL EXCHANGE SERVICE

#### A3.31 Lifeline (Cont'd)

##### A3.31.3 Rates and Charges

- A. General
  - 1. Lifeline is provided as a monthly credit on the eligible residential subscriber's access line bill for local service.
  - 2. Service Charges in Section A4 are applicable for installing or changing Lifeline service.
  - 3. The Secondary Service Charge in Section A4 is not applicable when existing service is converted intact to Lifeline.
- B. The total Lifeline credit consists of one Federal credit plus one State credit
  - 1. Federal credit<sup>1</sup>

|    |   | <b>Monthly<br/>Credit</b> |     |
|----|---|---------------------------|-----|
|    | (a) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)          | \$7.25                    | (C) |
|    | (b) Medicaid  | 7.25                      | (C) |
|    | (c) Income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines | 7.25                      | (C) |
|    | (d) Federal Public Housing Assistance                         | 7.25                      | (C) |
|    | (e) Supplemental Security Income (SSI)                        | 7.25                      | (C) |
|    | (f) Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit                    | 7.25                      | (C) |
| 2. | State credit  |                           |     |
|    | (a) All programs, one per Lifeline service                    | <b>3.50</b>               |     |

**Note 1:** 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) and National School Lunch Program's free lunch program 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. Effective October 12, 2017, Lifeline discounts noted in this paragraph apply only to Lifeline subscribers who reside in CAF II Funded Census Blocks, as noted in A3.31.1.A.