

Since 1985, the federal Lifeline Program has provided a discount on phone service for qualifying low-income consumers to ensure that all people across the United States have the opportunities and security that phone service brings, including being able to connect to jobs, family, health care, and emergency services. This benefit is available to eligible low-income consumers in every state, territory, commonwealth, and on Tribal/Native lands.

In today's digital environment, there are still over 60 million people without a connection to the internet. The FCC enacted changes to the Lifeline Program to include broadband internet access as a Lifeline service to keep pace with ever-evolving technology and help narrow the digital divide.

How it works

- A discount of \$9.25 per month is provided to eligible low-income subscribers, or up to \$34.25 to those living on Tribal/Native lands
- Subscribers may receive a discount on either:
 - Fixed voice (home phone)
 - Mobile voice (cell phone)
 - Fixed broadband
 - Mobile broadband
 - Broadband-voice bundle
- Consumer selects a participating [Lifeline carrier in their state](#) and applies for the Lifeline Program
- Carrier supports consumer through the application process and verifies their eligibility
- Once enrolled, the carrier begins delivering discounted services on a monthly basis
- Carrier files for reimbursement from USAC for discounted services provided

Program Rules

- Lifeline is available only to subscribers who can document their eligibility
- Only one Lifeline benefit is permitted per household
- Subscribers are required to recertify their eligibility every year

In addition to the \$9.25 per month benefit, Lifeline subscribers are exempt from being assessed the monthly federal Universal Service charge (up to \$2.50 per month, depending on their carrier).

Eligibility

You are eligible for a Lifeline benefit if you are currently enrolled in one of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or Food Stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit
- Reside on Tribal lands **and** participate in one of the federal or state assistance programs listed above or one of the following Tribal-specific programs:
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
 - Head Start- those meeting the income standard
 - Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF)
 - Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- Income-based eligibility (at or below 135% of the [federal poverty guidelines](#))

Participation in LIHEAP, NSLP, and TANF no longer qualify consumers for a Lifeline benefit as of December 2, 2016.

2016 Lifeline Modernization Order

Among the changes adopted in the [2016 Lifeline Modernization Order](#) is the creation of the National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier. The National Verifier will act as a centralized, neutral third-party eligibility verification tool which will remove the burden of conducting eligibility checks from Lifeline service providers, while facilitating consumer choice and improving the enrollment experience for all subscribers.

Questions? Email LifelineProgram@USAC.org

For more information, please visit our website, <http://www.lifelinesupport.org/lis/>