Helping Constituents Connect With Lifeline

**WHAT IS LIFELINE?**
Initiated under the Reagan Administration, the FCC’s Lifeline program provides a modest $9.25 monthly subsidy to low-income families to help cover the cost of phone service. The program was expanded to include wireless phone service under George W. Bush’s administration in 2005 and presently helps about 13 million Americans stay in touch with family, contact health care providers, provide contact information for job applications, and reach emergency services. Earlier this year, the FCC voted to modernize the Lifeline program to also include broadband internet service. Beginning December 2, 2016 broadband providers will have the option to provide Lifeline services that meet certain FCC minimum standards.

**WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?**
Individuals can automatically qualify through participation in one of several federal assistance programs: Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit, Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Head Start (on Tribal lands), Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. Households can also qualify if their income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines (vary by state and are adjusted annually)—please visit [http://www.lifelinesupport.org/ls/eligibility/federal-poverty-guidelines.aspx](http://www.lifelinesupport.org/ls/eligibility/federal-poverty-guidelines.aspx) for more details. Certain states may also establish additional automatically-qualifying programs.

**WHAT BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE TO CONSUMERS?**
Eligible households can receive a $9.25 monthly subsidy to offset the cost of phone or broadband plans that meet certain FCC requirements. Minimum requirements for minutes and data vary based on whether the plan is wired at home, wireless, voice-only, or offers broadband. Starting in December 2017, the subsidy amounts for voice-only plans (mobile and wired) will gradually decline until these plans are completely phased out of the Lifeline program in 2021. Discounts are limited to one per household. Additionally, your state may offer supplemental state-sponsored Lifeline discounts on top of the federal subsidy.

**WHERE CAN YOU GET MORE INFO AND SIGN UP?**
Potential applicants must apply directly through their phone or broadband provider. Applicants must submit an application using their Social Security Number or Tribal ID, provide proof of eligibility, and undergo identity verification. In some cases when an identity cannot be verified, applicants may be asked to provide supplemental documentation, such as a driver’s license or birth certificate. Once this process is successfully completed, applicants will be enrolled in the Lifeline program. Applicants can visit the Universal Service Administrative Company’s (USAC) website to see which providers offer Lifeline in their state: [http://www.lifelinesupport.org/ls/companies/companies.aspx](http://www.lifelinesupport.org/ls/companies/companies.aspx).