How to Apply for Lifeline via Mail

Tribal Training

December 7, 2022
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Please indicate if you are a Tribal leader as we will answer Tribal leader questions first.
Meet Our Team

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Winta creates website content and training for consumer advocates, consumers, and service providers.
Objectives

At the end of the session, you will...

...be trained in:
• The basic functions of the Lifeline program
• How to apply to the Lifeline program via mail using the National Verifier

...be able to:
• Assist consumers with applying for the Lifeline program
Agenda

• Program Updates
• Lifeline Program Refresher
• National Verifier Overview
  • Submit a Paper Application
  • Resolving Address Application Errors
• Resources
Program Updates
Program Updates
Voice-Only Phase-Out and Minimum Service Standards

• On July 1, the Bureau extended the waiver pausing both the phase-out of Lifeline support for voice-only services and the increase in Lifeline minimum service standards for mobile broadband data capacity for one additional year, until at least December 1, 2023.
  • The basic Lifeline support of $5.25 remains available to eligible consumers who subscribe to voice-only service until at least December 1, 2023.
  • The minimum service standard for mobile broadband data capacity will remain at 4.5 GB per month until at least December 1, 2023.
Program Updates
COVID-19 Relief for Tribal Subscribers Extended

• On September 30, 2022, WCB released a waiver that further extends the Lifeline recertification and reverification requirements for subscribers residing on Tribal lands through January 31, 2023.
  • This waiver also extends Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) recertification for Tribal subscribers that participate in Lifeline and ACP. ACP recertification will commence for these subscribers after they have had an opportunity to complete the Lifeline recertification process.
USAC Overview

- Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) administers the Lifeline program and educates stakeholders on processes, systems, and rules and requirements.
- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) develops policies and regulations for the Lifeline program and provides guidance to USAC.
- The Universal Service Fund (USF): exists to ensure that all people in the United States have access to quality, affordable connectivity service.
USAC Overview

- The FCC designated USAC to administer other programs with similar missions to the universal service programs and supported through appropriate funding.

USAC Broadband Programs

- Affordable Connectivity Program
- Emergency Connectivity Fund Program
- COVID-19 Telehealth Program
Tribal Partnerships

• Tribal partners include:
  • Tribal governments
  • Tribal agencies
  • Nonprofits serving Tribal communities

• Tribal partners collaborate with USAC to educate consumers about Lifeline and assist eligible consumers with Lifeline program processes.
Lifeline Benefit

• Eligible program participants can receive a discount of up to $9.25 per month, for qualifying fixed or mobile services
  • Can be applied to broadband or bundled voice and broadband services that meet the minimum service standards
• Eligible participants can receive up to $5.25 for voice-only services
• Program participants who live on qualifying Tribal lands can receive enhanced support of up to an additional $25 per month
  • Can receive up to $34.25 per month for broadband service or up to $30.25 for voice-only service
• Link Up: a Tribal lands one-time benefit up to $100 for initial set up fees at residences in specific areas
National Verifier Overview
National Verifier Overview

• The National Verifier is a centralized application system that determines a consumer’s Lifeline program eligibility

• Use of the National Verifier is required in all 56 states and territories (with the exception of the NLAD opt-out states: Texas, Oregon, and California, where the National Verifier leverages the state administrator Lifeline eligibility verification process)

• After qualifying for Lifeline, the consumer’s service provider must enter them in the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) to enroll them in the Lifeline program
Methods to Apply

Consumers may apply through the NV using one of the three options:

**Option 1:** Apply Online
- The consumer visits [https://nv.fcc.gov/lifeline](https://nv.fcc.gov/lifeline)
- Online application is accessible from any computer or mobile device

**Option 2:** Apply by Mail
- The consumer fills out the Lifeline Application Form
  - [English Form](#)
  - [Spanish Form](#)
- The consumer mails the application and supporting documentation to the Lifeline Support Center

**Option 3:** Apply Through a Service Provider or Tribal Partner
- The consumer may apply with the assistance of a service provider or Tribal partner
- Service providers or Tribal partners may submit an online application on the consumer's behalf using the NV service provider portal (also available at [https://nv.fcc.gov/lifeline](https://nv.fcc.gov/lifeline)), or
- Through the [National Verifier Eligibility Check API](#) if the service provider has elected to use that option
Lifeline Program Review

1. Consumer qualifies for Lifeline
2. Consumer signs up with service provider
3. USAC reimburses Lifeline service provider
Application Process

Path 1

Input

Enter consumer data – name, SSN4 or Tribal ID, DOB, address – into the National Verifier; initial certifications

National Verifier searches for consumer in State/Federal databases and NLAD

Result

If consumer eligibility record is found, consumer is approved

Service provider uses the National Verifier’s eligibility approval to enroll the consumer in NLAD
Application Process
Path 2

**Input**

Enter consumer data – name, SSN4 or Tribal ID, DOB, address – into the National Verifier; initial certifications

National Verifier searches for consumer in State/Federal databases and NLAD

If consumer eligibility record is not found, documentation is required

National Verifier agent reviews documents

Upload requested documentation

If documentation is acceptable, consumer is approved

**Result**

Service provider uses the National Verifier’s eligibility approval to enroll the consumer in NLAD
Poll
Questions?
How To Apply for Lifeline via Mail
Obtaining the Paper Application

• Visit LifelineSupport.org to download and print a copy; or

• Contact USAC’s Lifeline Support Center to request a paper application in the mail
  • Email: LifelineSupport@usac.org
  • Call: (800) 234-9473
Completing Paper Application

- Consumers must complete all sections of the application (excluding page 7)
- Write clearly, using black ink and capital letters
- Consumers enter the same information they would include on the online application
Paper Application: Page One

- Page one is informational and contains:
  - An overview of the Lifeline program and Lifeline program rules
  - More about the application process

1. About Lifeline
   Lifeline is a federal benefit that lowers the monthly cost of phone or internet service.

Rules
- If you qualify, your household can get Lifeline for phone or internet service, but not both.
  - If you get Lifeline for phone service, you can get the benefit for one mobile phone or one home phone, but not both.
  - If you get Lifeline for internet service, you can get the benefit for your mobile phone or your home connection, but not both.
  - If you get Lifeline for bundled phone and internet service, you can get the benefit for your mobile phone or bundled service on your home bundled service, but not both.

Your household cannot get Lifeline from more than one phone or internet company.

What is a household?
A household is a group of people who live together and share income and expenses (even if they are not related to each other).

Do not give your benefit to another person
Lifeline is non-transferable. You cannot give your Lifeline benefit to another person, even if they qualify.

Be honest on this form
You must give accurate and true information on this form and on all Lifeline-related forms or questionnaires. If you give false or fraudulent information, you will lose your Lifeline benefit (i.e., disqualification or being barred from the program) and the United States government can take legal actions against you. This may include (but is not limited to) fines or imprisonment.

You may need to show other documents
If the Lifeline Program Administrator is not able to validate that you or someone in your household qualify using this form and electronic databases, you may need to provide an official document from one of the government to verify your program or documentation that proves your income. You can submit a copy of your official documents with this application or work with the Lifeline Program Administrator to help you.

Visit btdelassupport.org to see all acceptable document guidelines.

Apply
To apply for a Lifeline benefit, fill out the required sections of this form, initial every agreement statement, and sign page 8.
Paper Application: Page Two

• Page two asks for:
  • First and last legal name
  • Phone number (if available)
  • Date of birth
  • Email address (if available)
  • The last four digits of the Social Security Number or Tribal Identification Number
  • Method consumer wants USAC to contact them
Paper Application: Page Three

- Page three asks for:
  - Home address (physical address)
  - If the home address is temporary
  - If the consumer lives on Tribal lands
  - Mailing address (if it’s different than the home address)
Paper Application: Page Four

- Page four asks for:
  - Dependent’s information if the consumer qualifies for Lifeline through a dependent
  - If qualifying through themselves, the consumer can leave page four blank
• Page five asks for:
  • Page five asks how the consumer qualifies for Lifeline:
  • Either through participation in government programs or through income
  • Check all that apply
Paper Application: Page Six

- Page six asks consumers to:
  - Read each statement carefully
  - Write their first and last initial next to each statement
  - Cannot use checkmarks or X’s here
  - Sign and date the application
Paper Application: Page Seven and Eight

• Consumers may leave page seven blank if completing the application by themselves.
• Lifeline companies are required to fill out page seven if they are helping the consumer complete the application.

• Page eight includes information about the federal application.
Submit Documentation to Streamline

- USAC recommends that consumer submit copies of the following documentation along with their application to reduce processing time:
  - Lifeline Household Worksheet
  - Proof of eligibility, identity, or address
Examples of Program Eligibility Documentation

• Documentation to verify the consumer’s eligibility through a government program must include:
  • Their name, or the name of the benefit qualifying person
  • The name of the Lifeline-qualifying program, such as SNAP
  • The name of the government or Tribal agency that issued the document
  • An issue date within the last 12 months or a future expiration date that aligns with the benefit period
• The documentation typically cannot be expired or from a period in the past
Examples of Income Eligibility Documentation

- Documentation to verify the consumer’s **eligibility through income** must typically:
  - Cover a full year of income or
  - The consumer must submit the same type of documentation covering three consecutive months of income within the previous 12 months
- USAC recommends that consumers include their **household size**
Examples of Identity Documentation

- Documentation to verify the consumer’s **identity** should include:
  - A copy of an official, unexpired document with their first name, last name, and last four digits of the Social Security Number or Tribal Identification Number (e.g., tax document, Social Security card, or Tribal Identification document)
  - A copy of an official, unexpired document with their first name, last name, and date of birth (e.g., birth certificate, driver’s license, state or Tribal ID)
Examples of Address Documentation

• Documentation to verify the consumer’s **address** should include:
  • A map that shows the consumer’s physical address or location, including latitude and longitude coordinates - which is an important option for applicants living in areas with addressing obstacles
  • Official document that shows the consumer’s first name, last name, and address such as a Driver’s License, valid government, state, or Tribal ID, utility bill excluding wireless phone bills (within last 30 days), W-2 or tax return, or mortgage or lease

**NOTE:** To qualify for the enhanced Lifeline benefit (of up to $25), the consumer’s address must be confirmed to be located on Tribal lands
Examples of Address Documentation

• Mail completed applications and proof documentation to:

  USAC Lifeline Support Center
  P.O. Box 7081
  London, KY 40742
Application Timeline and Contact from USAC

• After USAC’s Lifeline Support Center reviews the application, the consumer will receive a letter from USAC letting them know the status of their application
  • Consumers should receive eligibility decisions within 7 and 10 business days
  • Consumers can call the Lifeline Support Center to check their application status at (800) 234-9473
  • If an error is discovered or additional information is required while processing the application, we will notify the consumer by mail
Sign Up with a Lifeline Company

- Once the consumer receives a letter from USAC letting them know that they qualify for the Lifeline program, they should contact a Lifeline company to get signed up.

- Find Lifeline companies using Lifeline’s Companies Near Me tool available from LifelineSupport.org.
Companies Near Me Tool

- Consumers can type in their zip code or city and state to find a list of Lifeline companies
- They must sign up with a Lifeline company within **90 days** of completing the application
Poll
Questions?
Resolving Address Application Errors via Mail
When Address Errors Occur

- A consumer will receive an address error when USAC cannot verify the consumer’s address against USPS's Address Matching System (AMS)
  - This often occurs because a consumer submits a descriptive address or lives at an address that is not yet recognized by the USPS
  - The consumer can submit information that verifies where they live
Examples of Descriptive Address

- Consumers may enter a descriptive address or the intersection near where they reside if they don’t have a street number and/or name.
Verify Address via Mail

- **Option 1:** If a consumer has access to the internet but does not want to submit an online application, USAC recommends that they use a mapping tool (e.g., Google maps) to drop a pin where they live
  - Take a screenshot of the mapping tool (include the dropped pin and the consumer’s coordinates) and print it
- Consumers must mail this information to USAC’s Lifeline Support Center and the completed cover sheet within 45 days of initially submitting their application
Verify Address via Mail

- **Option 2**: Consumer uses a map from their community (e.g., from a gas station, phone or internet company, or Tribal government)
  - The consumer must circle their home
  - If coordinates are known, the consumer should write them on the map
- Consumers must mail this information to USAC’s Lifeline Support Center and the completed cover sheet within 45 days of initially submitting their application
Verify Address via Mail

- **Option 3**: Consumer draws a map
- This map should include cross roads, identifiable landmarks, and distances
- If coordinates are known, the consumer should write them on the map
- Consumers must mail this information to USAC’s Lifeline Support Center and the completed cover sheet within 45 days of initially submitting their application
Tips to Confirm Address through Mail

- USAC needs a way to obtain the consumer’s coordinates to verify they are eligible for the enhanced Tribal benefit
  - Options 1 – 3 allow USAC to do so, even if the consumer does not include the coordinates on their submission
  - If the consumer does not include coordinates, it may take longer for USAC to verify the consumer’s address
- If a consumer applies through the mail with a descriptive address, they should include one of these options with the application submission to reduce processing time
Resources
Lifeline Tribal Webinars

• Review 2022 Tribal training slides:
  • Tribal Q1 Webinar: Lifeline Overview and Open Forum
  • Tribal Q2 Webinar: Resolving Application Errors
Educational Material

- Additional educational materials include:
  - Tribal Resources
    - [Tribal Lifeline Flyer](#) - handout for consumer living on Tribal lands on how to apply and manage benefits
    - [Tribal Toolkit](#) - contains educational resources for Tribal partners to adapt
  - General Resources
    - [How to Apply](#) - One-Pager for communities outside of Tribal lands
    - [Manage your Benefit](#) - One-Pager for communities outside of Tribal lands
  - Instructional Videos
    - [How to Apply Online](#)
    - [How to Apply by Mail](#)
    - [How to Submit Documentation by Mail](#)
Lifeline Websites

- Lifeline offers two websites:
  - Lifeline’s consumer website available at LifelineSupport.org
  - USAC’s service provider website available at USAC.org/Lifeline
Lifeline Support Center

- Email: LifelineSupport@usac.org
- Call: (800) 234-9473
Lifeline Support Center

- **Hours:** seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET
- **Support:**
  - Consumers with disabilities who need help submitting a Lifeline application may contact the support center for assistance
  - The Lifeline Support Center can assist consumers in 200 different languages (in addition to English and Spanish)
Take Our Survey

- We want to hear about your webinar experience
- Expect an email with a unique survey link in 1-2 business days
- We appreciate your feedback