



How to Apply for and Manage the Lifeline Benefit

Lifeline Program

March 10, 2026

Disclaimer

To accommodate all attendees, real-time closed captions will be present during this presentation. We apologize in advance for any transcription errors or distractions and appreciate your understanding.

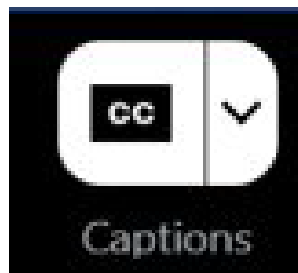
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Housekeeping – Closed Captioning (CC)

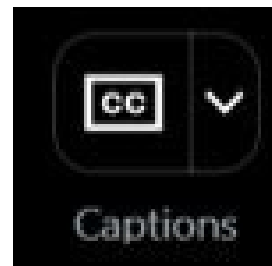
- Attendees control their own captioning.



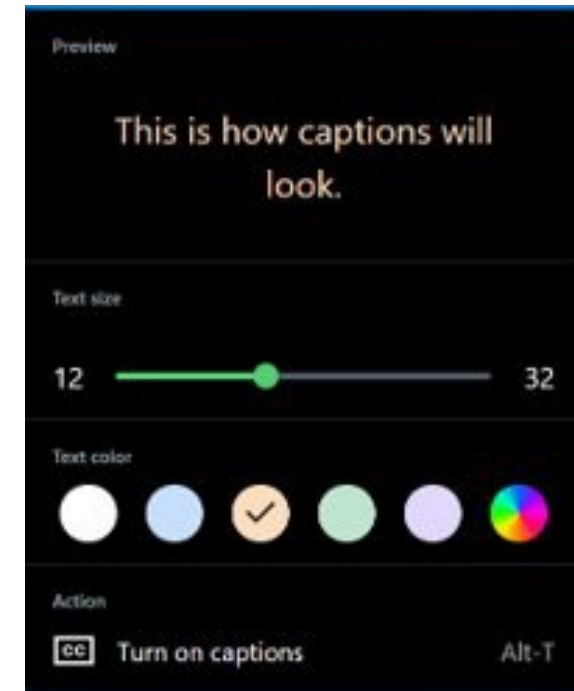
- You control the font size and color on CC.
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Captions ON

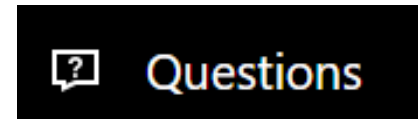
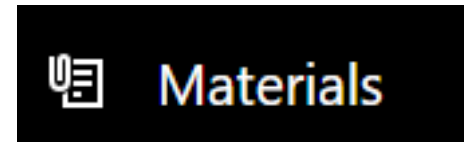


Captions OFF



Housekeeping – Materials and Questions

- A copy of the slide deck is in the **Materials** section of the webinar panel.
- Enter questions at any time using the **Questions** box.
- If the slides freeze, restart the webinar.



Meet Our Team

Jaymie Gustafson

Senior Director of Communications

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Communications Specialist

Upcoming Dates

- Lifeline
 - How to Apply for Lifeline – March 11, 2026, at 3 p.m. ET – [Register](#).
- E-Rate
 - Service Provider Webinar – March 31, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).
- Rural Health Care (RHC)
 - FY2026 HCF Program Funding Request Office Hours #3 – March 11, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).
 - FY2026 Telecom Program Funding Request Office Hours #3 – March 18, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).
- Service Providers
 - New Form 499 ID Basics – March 5, 2026, at 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#).

Agenda

- Announcements
- Lifeline Program Overview
- How to Apply
- Minimum Service Standards
- Recertification
- Changing Service Providers
- Resources

Announcements

Updated Lifeline Income Qualifications for 2026

- USAC has updated its forms, systems, and resources to reflect the 2026 **Federal Poverty Guidelines** which were released by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) last month. These guidelines are used to determine if a consumer can qualify for Lifeline based on their income. Consumers qualify for the Lifeline benefit if their income is at or below 135 percent of the **Federal Poverty Guidelines**.
- Service providers may review the following pages for more information:
 - The [Consumer Eligibility](#) page.
 - The [Do I Qualify](#) page for consumers on LifelineSupport.org.
 - The National Verifier [online application](#) and the updated paper forms ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)).
- **Service providers should update their forms and systems as soon as possible to reflect the new income requirements.**

Lifeline Program Overview

Lifeline Program Overview

- Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) is an independent, not-for-profit organization designated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as the administrator of the Universal Service Fund (USF) and its four programs.
 - The USF aims to ensure that all people in the United States have access to quality, affordable connectivity service.
 - The FCC develops policies and regulations for all four programs and provides guidance to USAC.
 - USAC administers the programs and educates stakeholders on processes, systems, and rules and requirements.



Lifeline Program

Discounted phone and internet service to eligible low-income consumers.



E-Rate Program

Funding for broadband services to eligible schools and libraries.



Rural Health Care Program

Funding for telecom and broadband services for eligible rural health care providers.



High Cost Program

Reduced rates for telecom and broadband services in eligible high-cost areas.

Lifeline Program Overview

Lifeline Benefit

The Lifeline program is a federal benefit program that helps low-income households pay for phone or internet service.

- Eligible households can receive:

\$9.25 Standard Benefit

Up to \$9.25/month discount for internet or bundled services or up to \$5.25/month for phone service that meets the [minimum service standards](#).

\$34.25 Tribal Benefit

Up to \$34.25/month discount for households on [qualifying Tribal lands](#).

\$100 Link Up Benefit

A one-time discount of up to \$100 off the initial setup fees at addresses on qualifying Tribal lands receiving voice service from certain service providers.

\$9.25 Survivor Benefit

A \$9.25/month discount for phone, internet, or bundled services for up to 6 months for [survivors who qualify](#).

- The Lifeline benefit is limited to one monthly service discount per household.

Lifeline Program Overview

How to Qualify 1/2

Households can qualify for the standard Lifeline benefit in **three ways**:

- If their [household income](#) is at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.
- If they participate in certain [Tribal assistance programs](#) (only available to consumers that live on Tribal lands) such as:
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance,
 - Head Start,
 - Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF),
 - or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.
- If they participate in certain [federal assistance programs](#) such as SNAP, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, Federal Housing Assistance, or Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit.

Lifeline Program Overview

How to Qualify 2/2

- There are several ways a survivor can qualify for the **Survivor Benefit**. Survivors experiencing financial hardship who attempt a line separation request can:
 - Confirm their financial hardship to participate in Lifeline by meeting [existing Lifeline criteria](#) or through the **expanded qualification criteria** below:
 - Household income at or below [200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines](#).
 - Enrollment in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).
 - Enrollment in the Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch or Breakfast program, including enrollment at a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school or school district.
 - Received a Federal Pell Grant in the current award year.
- **Note:** Survivors must include proof of an attempted line separation request from their mobile phone company.

How to Apply

How to Apply

Three Methods

Option 1: Apply Online

- Visit LifelineSupport.org from any computer or mobile device to complete the online application and upload any required documentation.
- If approved, contact a participating service provider to enroll in Lifeline.
- Online [Application Instructions](#) are available in 10 languages.

Option 2: Apply by Mail

- Fill out and sign the [Lifeline Application Form \(Spanish\)](#).
- Mail the application and supporting documentation to the Lifeline Support Center.
- Service providers may assist consumers with the paper application and mail it on the consumer's behalf.

Option 3: Apply With a Service Provider

- Service providers may submit an online application on the consumer's behalf (with the consumer's consent) using the National Verifier [service provider portal](#).
 - This is an in-person interaction, where the service provider asks the consumer questions in an interview-style approach.
 - The consumer must sign and certify the application.
 - Enrollment representatives must register with USAC.
- Consumers may also apply through the service provider's website if the provider has elected to use the [National Verifier API](#).

Questions?

Consumer Rights

Consumer Rights

Lifeline subscribers are entitled to the following:

- Mobile and broadband service that meets the minimum service standards on Lifeline-supported services.
- The choice of a hotspot-enabled device.
- The ability to choose to apply the Lifeline benefit to voice, internet, or bundled service.
- The ability to [change companies](#) at any time.
- The ability to [get help](#) with questions about Lifeline.

Consumer Rights

Additional Reminders

- **Keep Your Company Up-to-Date:** If you change your address, no longer qualify for Lifeline, or if more than one person in your household receives Lifeline, you must notify your company within 30 days.
- **Use It or Lose It:** If you do not receive and pay a bill directly from your own funds (i.e. not from a “digital wallet”) on a monthly basis for your Lifeline service, you must use it at least once every 30 days. If you don’t, you will receive a 15-day notice to use it, or it will be turned off.

Minimum Service Standards

Minimum Service Standards

- Service providers are required to provide the following current [Minimum Service Standards](#) (MSS) for Lifeline-supported services:



Mobile Voice	Mobile Broadband	Home (Fixed) Broadband
1000 Minutes/month	Speed: 3G or better Usage Allowance: 4.5 GB/month	Speed: 25/3 Mbps Usage Allowance: 1,280 GB/month*

Note: These standards are evaluated annually to ensure consumers have access to continued robust broadband connectivity.

Minimum Service Standards

Service Types and Support Amount

Service Type	Description	Lifeline Support Amount
Voice (mobile or landline)	Voice only that meets MSS	\$5.25
Broadband (internet)	Broadband only that meets MSS	\$9.25
Bundled Voice	Voice and broadband that meets the voice MSS only	\$5.25
Bundled Broadband	Voice and broadband that meets the broadband MSS only	\$9.25
Bundled Voice and Broadband	Voice and broadband that meets both service type MSS	\$9.25

Note: The basic Lifeline support of \$5.25 remains available to eligible consumers who subscribe to voice-only service through November 30, 2026.

Recertification

Recertification

Annual Requirement

- [Recertification](#) is an annual requirement for Lifeline subscribers conducted to ensure that active subscribers are still eligible for the Lifeline benefit.
- 2026 recertification began on Monday, February 16, 2026.
 - Subscribers who pass the check will not need to take any further action.
 - Subscribers who fail the check are required to complete the Recertification Form.
 - Subscribers who fail the check, but their eligibility was previously confirmed through an eligibility database during enrollment or a prior recertification and the subscriber is no longer included in any eligibility database, are required to complete the Recertification Form and provide proof of eligibility.
- If you fail the check:
 - You will receive recertification reminders by email, mail, or phone.
 - When asked to recertify, you must complete recertification within **60 days**, or you will lose your Lifeline benefit.

Recertification

Methods to Recertify

- There are three ways to recertify:



Online

Complete the [online form](#).



Mail

Complete and send the [Recertification Form \(Spanish Version\)](#) to the
Lifeline Support Center
PO Box 1000
Horseheads, NY 14845.



Phone

If recertification was completed via Application ID, Call (855) 359-4299, provide the application ID number (included in recertification notice), and follow the prompts.

If recertification was completed via Tribal ID, Call (800) 234-9473) and follow the prompts.

Note: View the [How to Manage the Lifeline Benefit](#) training for more details on the recertification process.

Note: Available to subscribers that only must complete the recertification form.

Questions?

Changing Service Providers

Changing Service Providers

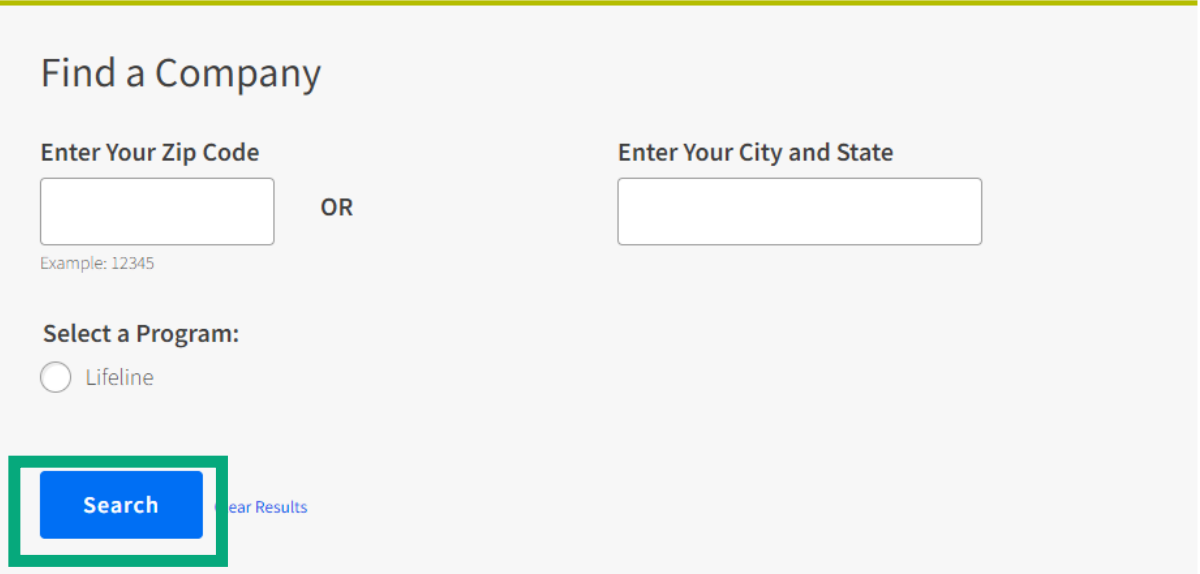
Finding a Provider

- Not all service providers offer the Lifeline benefit.
- Use the [Companies Near Me](#) tool to find a phone or internet company that participates in Lifeline.
- To find a company,
 - Enter your zip code or city and state
 - Under Select a Program, select Lifeline
 - Select **Search** to view a list of your local providers

Companies Near Me

This tool can help you find companies in your area that offer [Lifeline](#), which can reduce the cost of your phone or internet service by providing a monthly discount.

If you previously received the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) benefit, you should check to see if you qualify for [Lifeline](#). Due to a lack of additional funding from Congress, the ACP stopped accepting new applications as of February 7, 2024. The last fully funded month of the ACP was April 2024, and the program has ended for now.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Find a Company". It has two input fields: "Enter Your Zip Code" and "Enter Your City and State". Below the zip code field is the text "Example: 12345". Between the two fields is the word "OR". Below the city and state field is a radio button labeled "Lifeline". At the bottom left is a blue "Search" button, which is highlighted with a green border. To the right of the button is the text "Near Results".

Changing Service Providers


Finding a Provider

- Select **see the list of companies in (your selected state)** to view the full list of providers in your state, including those that do not operate in your zip code or state.
 - You can also download the search results by selecting the icon that appears next to **Download List**.
- The search results may not include every nearby company.
 - Some companies may still offer Lifeline even if they do not appear on the list. Be sure to ask providers if they offer Lifeline.
- Some companies may only offer service in part of your state.

Companies near 02190

The order of these companies are random and may be different the next time you search.

Showing 3 of 3 companies

Download List: 

Company Name	Phone	Type of Service
TruConnect Communications, Inc	800-430-0443	Mobile Service
SafeLink, Straight Talk, Total Wireless, Simple Mobile, Walmart Family Mobile, TracFone	833-333-9227	Mobile Service
Assurance Wireless	888-321-5880	Mobile Service

If you want to see more companies [see the list of companies in MA.](#)

Changing Service Providers

Transferring the Benefit

- Contact a company that offers Lifeline and ask them to transfer your Lifeline benefit. You may need to reapply before your company can transfer you.
- When your new company is ready to transfer you, they will need the following information to process the request:
 - Your full name
 - Date of birth
 - Tribal ID number (Last four digits of your Social Security number)
 - Home address
 - Phone number
- You must give your consent (verbal or written) to the new company before they can transfer you.

Questions?

Resources

Resources

- Visit [LifelineSupport.org](https://www.LifelineSupport.org) for general information on Lifeline and to apply.
- View [Tribal Benefit](#) page for Tribal resources.
- View the following print and video resources:
 - [Application Instructions](#) (available in 10 languages)
 - [Tribal Info Flyer](#)
 - [Survivor Benefit Flyer](#)
 - [Manage Your Benefit Flyer](#)

Resources

- For questions, assistance, and general application inquiries, email LifelineSupport@usac.org and cc our Tribal Liaison at TribalLiaison@usac.org.
 - The Lifeline Customer Support Center can also be reached at (800) 234-9473 and is available seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET.

Lifeline Monthly Newsletter

- [Subscribe](#) to the Lifeline monthly newsletter for program updates, reminders, and announcements.

Subscribe

Fill out and submit the form below to sign up for one or several of our newsletters and/or listservs, or [manage your subscriptions](#).

Your Information

First Name

Last Name

Email

Choose Program

E-Rate

News Brief

Tribal Stakeholders

Tribal Nation Newsletter

High Cost

Detailed HUBB Updates

Program Updates

Lifeline

Program Newsletter

NLAD Bulletin

Consumer Advocates

Rural Health Care (RHC) Program

Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program (Consortia)

Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) Program (Individual HCPs)

Telecom Program

Service Providers

FCC Form 499 (Contributors)

Subscribe

Reset

Thank You!





**Universal Service
Administrative Co.**