How to Manage Your Lifeline Benefit

Lifeline Program
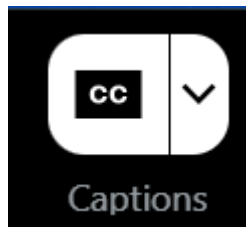
September 9, 2025

Universal Service
Administrative Co.

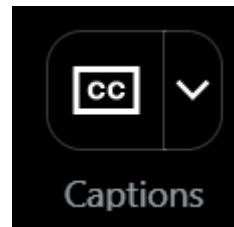# **Housekeeping – Closed Captioning (CC)**
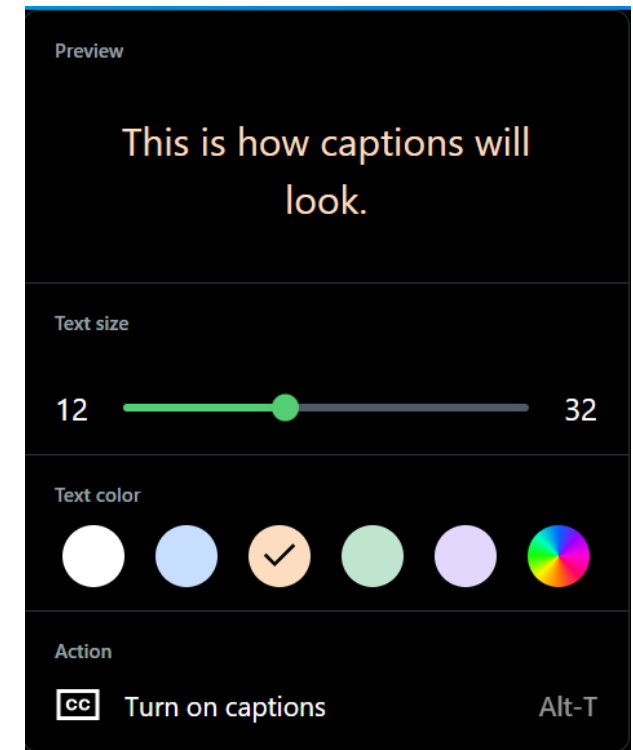
- Attendees control their own captioning
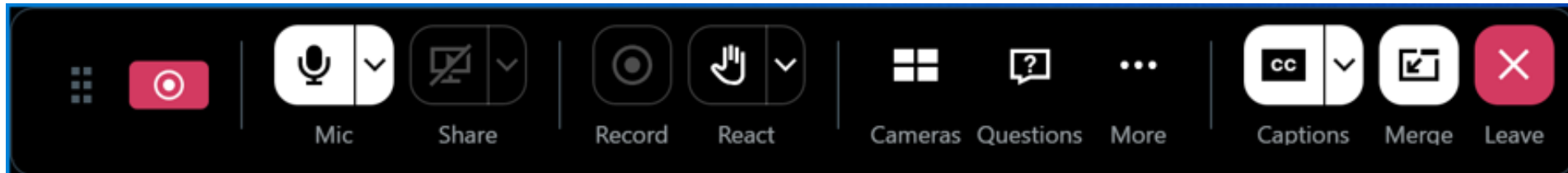
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Captions ON

Captions OFF

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- A copy of the slide deck is in the **Materials** section of the webinar panel

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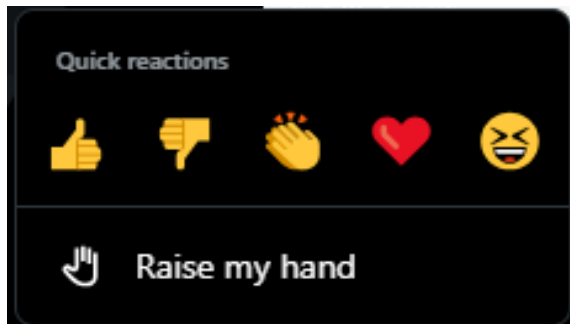- If the slides freeze, restart the webinar

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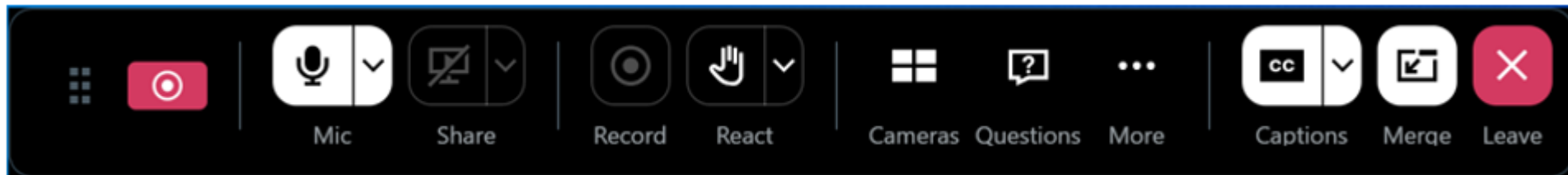
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To accommodate all attendees, real-time closed captions will be present during this presentation. We apologize in advance for any transcription errors or distractions and appreciate your understanding.

Please be aware that this webinar is being recorded.

Meet Our Team

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Oladotun Adio
Communications Specialist

Agenda

- Announcements

- Lifeline Program Overview

- Minimum Service Standards

- Recertification

- Submitting Additional Documents

- Changing Service Providers

- Resources

Announcements

Announcements
Upcoming Dates

- **E-Rate and Tribal**
  - T-LEAP Fall Kick-Off and Info Session – Wednesday, October 1, 2025, 3 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
  - Tribal Teleconference: E-Rate 101 and Pre-Commitment – Wednesday, October 14, 2025, 4 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

- **E-Rate**
  - E-Rate Program Overview – September 18, 2025, 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)
  - Pre-Commitment Process – September 25, 2025, 2 p.m. ET – [Register](#)

- **Lifeline**
  - September Monthly Webinar – How to Apply for Survivors – Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 3 p.m. EDT – [Register](#)

Everyone. Connected.

Who We Are: The Universal Service Administrative Company

- The **Universal Service Administrative Company** (USAC) is an independent, not-for-profit organization designated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

- USAC is responsible for administering the **Universal Service Fund** (USF) and its four programs.

- The USF exists to ensure that all people in the United States have access to quality and affordable connectivity services.

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.

Overview: Who Makes the Rules?

- In the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Congress directed the FCC to establish the universal service programs.

- The FCC sets rules and policies for USF programs and USAC implements those rules and policies as Administrator.

- USAC is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the USF in accordance with FCC requirements.

CONGRESS   FCC   USAC
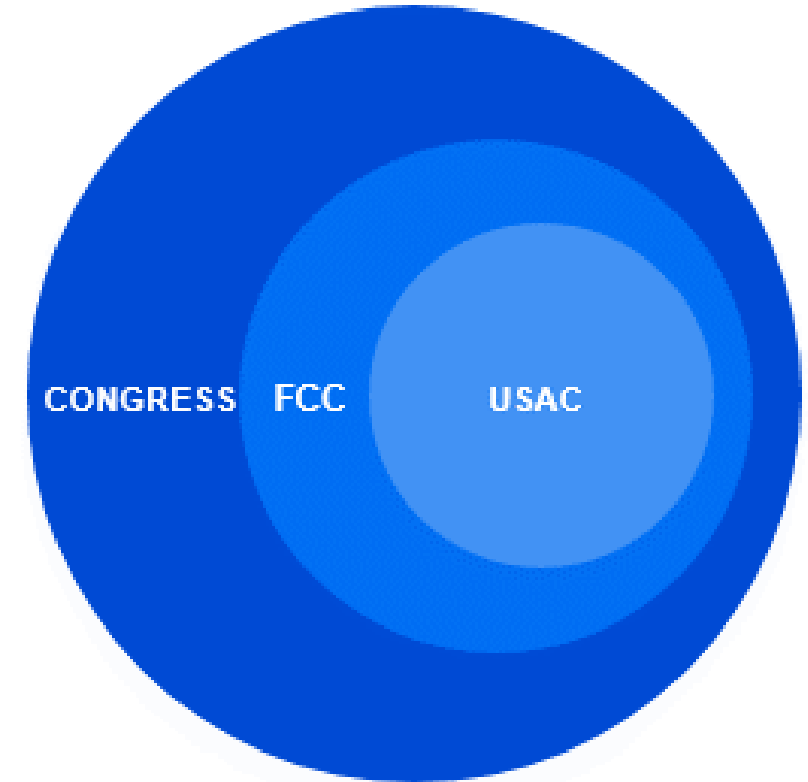
Lifeline Program Overview

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	**$34.25 Tribal Benefit**	**$100 Link Up Benefit**	**$9.25 Survivor 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](#).	Up to $34.25/month discount for households on [qualifying Tribal lands](#).	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.	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

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

- If their <u>household income</u> is at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

- If they participate in certain <u>Tribal assistance programs</u> (only available to households 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 <u>federal assistance programs</u> such as SNAP, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, Federal Housing Assistance, or Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit.

Lifeline Program Overview
Additional Things to Know

- You can switch phone or internet providers at any time. To switch, you should contact your new provider to initiate the process.

- If you change address, no longer qualify, or if more than one person in your household gets Lifeline, you should notify your service provider within 30 days.

- If your Lifeline provider does not bill you and collect a fee every month, you must use it at least once every 30 days. If you don't, you will get a 15-day notice to use it, or it will get turned off.

- Every year, USAC or your state (if you live in California, Oregon, or Texas) will check to confirm you still qualify for the benefit. If USAC or your state cannot confirm that you still qualify, you will be asked to recertify and, must do so within 60 days or you will lose your Lifeline benefit.

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**: 1,230 GB/month*

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

* On July 14, 2025, WCB released a Public Notice announcing an increase in fixed broadband usage allowance from 1230 GB to 1280 GB per month starting on December 1, 2025.

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

Every year, USAC or your state (if you live in California, Oregon, and Texas) will check to see if you still qualify for the Lifeline benefit. This process is called recertification.

- If USAC confirms you still qualify, no additional action is needed.

- If USAC cannot confirm you still qualify, you will receive an email or letter with steps on how to recertify.

Recertification

Responding to Recertification Notices

- 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.

- There are three ways to recertify:

Online

Complete the online form

Mail

Complete and send the Recertification Form (Spanish) to the
Lifeline Support Center
PO Box 1000
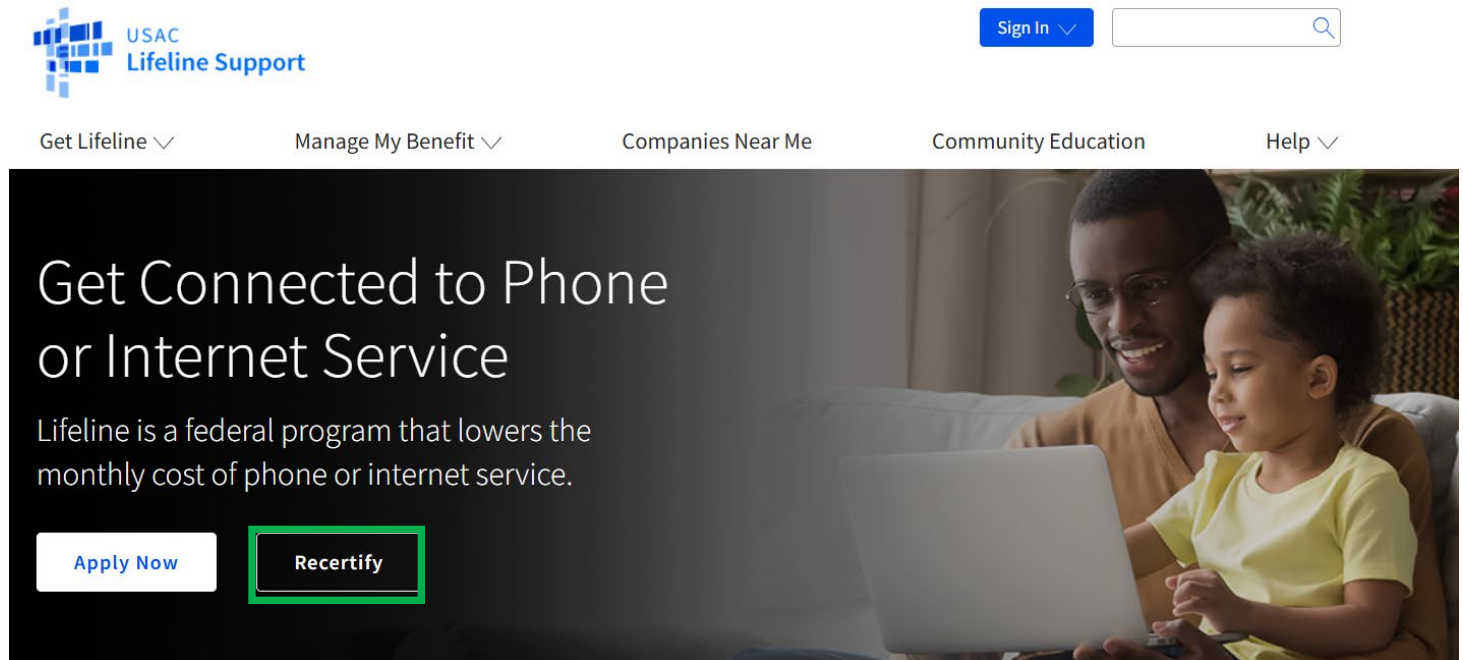Horseheads, NY 14845

Phone

Call (855) 359-4299, provide the application ID number (included in recertification notice), and follow the prompts
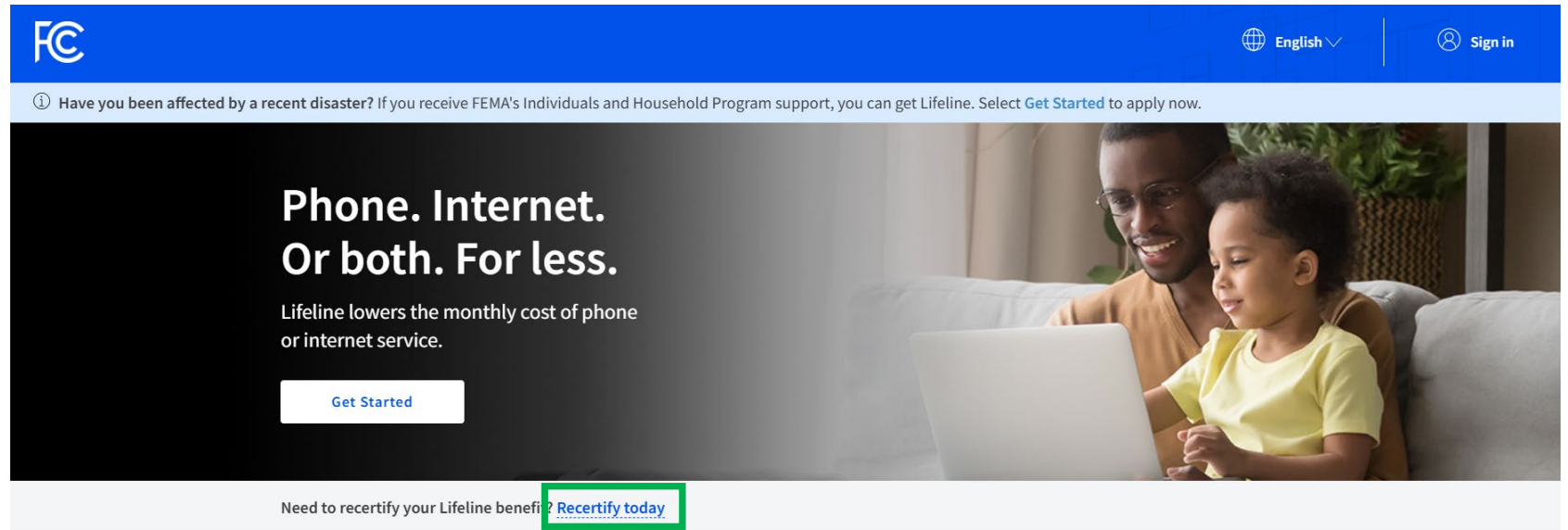
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Recertify Online

Recertify Online

- To complete recertification online, visit LifelineSupport.org and select Recertify from the homepage.

Recertify Online

- Select [Recertify today](#).

Recertify Online
Personal Information

- Enter in the following information:
  - First and last name as it appears on official documentation
  - Date of birth
  - SSN4 or Tribal ID number
  - Home address

Recertify Online
Personal Information

- Select how you qualify for the Lifeline benefit.
  - If you qualify on your own, select **No, I qualify by myself**.
  - If you qualify through a child or dependent, select **Yes, I qualify through my child or dependent**.

- Select **Next** to continue.

Do you qualify for Lifeline through your child or a dependent?
If you do not qualify on your own, you can sign up for Lifeline through your child or dependent if they participate in any of the qualifying programs.

○ No, I qualify by myself.   ○ Yes, I qualify through my child or dependent.

Next

Recertify Online
Child or Dependent's Information

- If you qualify through a child or dependent, you will be asked to provide that person's information.

- Enter the child or dependent's information and then select **Next** to continue.

Fill out your child or dependent's information

We'll use this information to see if you are eligible through your child or dependent.

What is their full legal name?
The name you use on official documents, like your Social Security Card or State ID. Not a nickname.

First Name

Middle Name (Optional)

Last Name(s)
If they have multiple last names put them all into the box below.

What is their date of birth?

Month | **Day** | **Year**
MM | DD | YYYY

How do you want us to check their identity?
We'll use this information to see if they're eligible. It won't affect their credit status.

- ⦿ **Social Security Number (SSN)**
  This is the fastest option if you know the last 4 digits of their SSN.

  Enter last 4 digits of their SSN

  XXX - XX -

  This is required if you're applying for Lifeline.

- ◯ **Other government identification**
  A photo of their Driver's License, passport, consular ID, birth certificate, or other government ID issued by the United States or another country.

- ◯ **Number on Tribal ID**
  Look for this number on their card or documentation.

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Recertify Online
Qualifying Program

- You must restate how you qualify by selecting all the programs you participate in.

- If you do not participate in any of the listed programs, you can also qualify [based on income](#) or through your child or dependent.

- Select **Next** to continue.

Confirm your program participation

Which of the following programs do you participate in?

Check all that apply.

- [ ] SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or Food Stamps ⓘ
- [ ] Medicaid
- [ ] Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- [ ] Federal Housing Assistance ⓘ
- [ ] Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Programs
- [ ] Tribal Specific Program (only choose if you live on Tribal lands)
- [ ] I don't think I participate in any of these programs, show me more programs available to me as a **survivor**.
- [ ] I don't think I participate in any of these programs, I may qualify through my **income**.
- [ ] I don't participate in any of these, but I have a **child or dependent** who may. ⓘ

Additional programs available to you as a survivor (Check all that apply.)

- [ ] Federal Pell Grant
- [ ] Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch or Breakfast Program
- [ ] USDA Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) School
- [ ] Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

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Recertify Online
Review Information

- Next, review the information you entered. (You can make corrections by selecting **Edit**)

- Be sure to review the consent statement and check the box to confirm the information provided.

- This information will be used to reconfirm your eligibility.

- Then select **Submit**.

Review Your Information

Before we check if you qualify for Lifeline, make sure your information is right.

Double check the information below.

Full Legal Name:
Date of Birth:
Last 4 Numbers of SSN:

[Edit]

The information you gave us will be used to check if you qualify for Lifeline. Please confirm that it is okay.

☐ By checking this box you are consenting that all of the information you are providing may be collected, used, shared, and retained for the purposes of applying for and/or receiving Lifeline.

Back   Submit

Recertify Online
Agreement Page

- You must initial each box and consent to the agreement by signing electronically with your first and last name.

- The application will be complete when you select **Submit**.

Agreement

You are almost done qualifying. Please initial next to each statement and sign this form to finish the process.

I agree, under penalty of perjury, to the following statements:

Initial — I (or my dependent or other person in my household) currently get benefits from the government program(s) listed on this form or my annual household income is 135% or less than the Federal Poverty Guidelines (the amount listed in the Federal Poverty Guidelines table on this form).

Initial — I agree that **if I move I will give my service provider my new address** within 30 days.

Initial — I understand that I have to tell my service provider within 30 days if I do not qualify for Lifeline anymore, including:
1. I, or the person in my household that qualifies, do not qualify through a government program or income anymore.
2. Either I or someone in my household gets more than one Lifeline benefit (including, more than one Lifeline broadband internet service, more than one Lifeline telephone service, or both Lifeline telephone and Lifeline broadband internet services).

Initial — **I know that my household can only get one Lifeline benefit** and, to the best of my knowledge, my household is not getting more than one Lifeline benefit. ⓘ

Initial — I agree that all of the information I provide on this form may be collected, used, shared, and retained for the purposes of applying for and /or receiving the Lifeline Program benefit. I understand that if this information is not provided to the Lifeline Program Administrator, I will not be able to get Lifeline benefits. If the laws of my state or Tribal government require it, I agree that the state or Tribal government may share information about my benefits for a qualifying program with the Lifeline Program Administrator. The information shared by the state or Tribal government will be used only to help find out if I can get a Lifeline Program benefit.

Initial — All the answers and agreements that **I provided on this form are true and correct** to the best of my knowledge.

Initial — **I know that willingly giving false or fraudulent information to get Lifeline Program benefits is punishable by law** and can result in fines, jail time, de-enrollment, or being barred from the program.

Initial — My service provider may have to check whether I still qualify at any time. **If I need to recertify my Lifeline benefit, I understand that I have to respond by the deadline** or I will be removed from the Lifeline Program and my Lifeline benefit will stop.

Initial — If I am seeking to qualify for Lifeline as an eligible resident of Tribal lands, I live on Tribal lands, as defined in 54.400(e) of the Lifeline rules. ⓘ

Your Signature
Type your full legal name below

Strong Survivor

[   ]

☐ I understand this is a digital signature, and is the same as if I signed my name with a pen.

Submit

Recertify Online
Application Status

- If you still qualify for Lifeline, USAC will inform you that you remain eligible, and no further action is required.

You Still Qualify for Lifeline

You have recertified for the Lifeline Program.

You do not need to do anything else. We will let your phone or internet company know and your service will continue.

If something changes and you do not qualify for Lifeline anymore, please tell your internet or phone company within 30 days.

You may be asked to recertify for Lifeline again each year. To learn more about Lifeline, visit lifelinesupport.org.

Recertify by Mail

Recertify by Mail

- To complete recertification via mail, you should fill out the English or Spanish form and mail it to:

  - Lifeline Support Center
    PO Box 1000
    Horseheads, NY 14845

- Be sure to include copies of proof documentation (if required).

  - **Do not** send original copies of your documents.

  - Review the **Acceptable Documentation Guide** (English and Spanish) to help you decide which documents you'll need to provide if we ask you to share proof of your eligibility, identity or address.

Recertify by Phone

Recertify by Phone

- This option is only available if you **DO NOT** have to provide proof documentation.

- To recertify by phone, call (855) 359-4299, enter in the application ID number included in the recertification letter, and follow the prompts.

- **Tribal Consumers** may recertify using a Tribal ID number by calling (800) 234-9437 and pressing 1 to talk to a live agent.

Questions?

Submitting Additional Information

Submitting Additional Information

- If USAC is unable to verify that you still qualify for the Lifeline benefit, you will receive specific information on what could not be confirmed and what additional documentation you will need to provide.

- When asked to recertify, you must complete the form within **60 days**, or you will lose your Lifeline benefit.

- Documents can be submitted online or via mail.

Submitting Additional Information
Proof of Address (Online)

- If your address cannot be confirmed, the mapping tool is available in the Lifeline consumer portal to assist you.

- To use the mapping tool, click on the map and move the pin to the address.

- The latitude and longitude coordinates will automatically populate once the pin is placed.

Find their address on the map below

We couldn't find their address, please show us where they live on the map.

- Their address
  123 NOWHERE ST
  FALL, AK 11111

How to find their address on the map

To show us where you live, click on the map to move the pin to your address. The pin will automatically fill in the longitude and latitude coordinates of your address.

To move the map, click on the map, hold down, and move it until you find their area.

Click on the zoom buttons to zoom in and out.

When you find where they live on the map, click the spot on the map to place the pin.

To move the pin, click a new spot on the map.

Latitude

39.0112236714813

Longitude

-111.23342821264

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Submitting Additional Information
Proof of Address (Mail)

- To submit address-related documentation via mail, send in the following:

  - A map that shows your physical address or location, including latitude and longitude coordinates (coordinates are required for Tribal lands)

  - A driver's license or other valid government, state, or Tribal ID

  - A utility bill (excluding internet/phone service)

  - A mortgage or lease statement

  - Most recent W-2 or tax return

Submitting Additional Information
Proof of SSN

- If your Social Security Number (SSN) cannot be confirmed, provide a **copy** of an official document to verify your SSN.

  - A Social Security card

  - A Social Security Benefit Statement (SSA-1099)

  - A W-2 from the last 2 years

  - A prior year's state or federal tax return

- Documents uploaded or mailed must include:

  - Your first and last name

  - The last 4 digits of your SSN

Share proof of your Social Security number (SSN)

Your document must include:

- Your first and last name:
  Amy Star
- The last four digits of your Social Security number:
  xxx-xx-1111

Here are common examples:

- A Social Security Card
- A Social Security Benefit Statement (SSA-1099)
- A W-2 from the last 2 years
- A prior year's state, federal, or Tribal tax return

How to add your photo or scanned copy

Please attach a picture or scanned copy of your document. Files must be less than 10 MB and one of the following file types: jpg, jpeg, png, pdf, or gif.

- Make sure your image is not blurry
- Make sure your document is not cut off and we can see all four sides
- Make sure you have good lighting

Choose a file

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Submitting Additional Information
Proof of Eligibility

- If you elect to show your participation in an assistance program, select the qualifying program and provide a document demonstrating program participation.

- You can also select the **I may qualify through my income** option.

Share proof of your program participation

Which program do you, your child or dependent take part in?
You must provide proof of participation for the program you choose.

- ○ SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or Food Stamps ⓘ
- ○ Medicaid
- ○ Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- ○ Federal Housing Assistance ⓘ
- ○ Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Programs
- ○ Tribal Specific Program (only choose if you live on Tribal lands)
- ○ I don't think I (or my child or dependent) participate in any of these programs. Show me more programs available to **survivors**.
- ○ I don't think I (or my child or dependent) participate in any of these programs, but I may qualify through my **income**.

You will have until 9/6/2024 to provide more documents so we can determine whether you qualify for Lifeline. If we don't receive this information by then, you will need to come back to this site and fill this form out again.

Back   Next

Share proof of your program participation

Please answer these questions to submit new documents.
You must provide proof of participation for the program you choose.

- ○ Federal Pell Grant
- ○ Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch or Breakfast Program
- ○ USDA Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) School
- ○ Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- ○ I participate (or my child or dependent) in one of these programs, but I can not provide proof at this time.
- ○ I don't think I (or my child or dependent) participate in any of these programs, but I may qualify through my **income.**

You will have until 9/6/2024 to complete this section so we can determine whether you qualify for Lifeline. If you do not complete this by then, you will need to come back to this site and fill this form out again.

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Submitting Additional Information
Proof of Eligibility

- There are two options (online and via mail) that can be used to verify your eligibility:

  - Provide income documentation (e.g., three consecutive months of pay stubs, last year's tax return, or a Social Security statement)

  - Provide a document showing participation in a qualifying program (e.g., SNAP, Medicaid)

Share more information to see if you qualify

With your help, we can confirm you qualify in a few more steps.

Do you have a document that shows your income?

🔵 Yes. I have a document such as pay stubs, last year's tax return, or a social security statement.

◯ No. But I have a document that shows I (or my child or dependent) participate in a program such as SNAP or Medicaid.

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Submitting Additional Information

Proof of Eligibility (Program)

- Documents demonstrating program participation must include:
  - Your name, or your child/dependent's name
  - The name of the program, such as TANF or SNAP
  - The name of the issuing agency (Tribal entity, government, program administrator)
  - An issue date within the last 12 months or a future expiration date

Show That They Are in SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) used to be called Food Stamps.

Their state might use a different name for SNAP. Look it up on this list of SNAP names by state.

We need to see proof of SNAP participation such as an award letter or a benefit statement.

SNAP eligibility documents should include the **consumer's full legal name** (or the BQP's legal name), the **program name** and must be **issued within the past 12 months** (or have an expiration date in the future).

More information about acceptable SNAP eligibility documents can be found on USAC's website.

NOTE: All eligibility documents must be issued by the state, federal or local government, Tribal organization or their authorized agent.

How to add your photo or scanned copy

Please attach a picture or scanned copy of your document. Files must be less than 10 MB and one of the following file types: jpg, jpeg, png, pdf, or gif.

- Make sure your image is not blurry
- Make sure your document is not cut off and we can see all four sides
- Make sure you have good lighting

Choose file

Back   Save   **Next**

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Submitting Additional Information

Proof of Date of Birth

- If your date of birth cannot be confirmed, an official document will be needed to verify your date of birth.

  - Birth certificate

  - Valid passport

  - Valid Tribal, U.S. government, military, state issued ID

- These documents can be submitted online or via mail and must include your:

  - First and last name

  - Date of birth

Share proof of their date of birth

Their document must include:

- Their first and last name
  Artificial Subscriber
- Their date of birth:
  09/24/2000

Here are common examples:

- A Driver's license that is not expired
- A Passport that is not expired
- A birth certificate
- A U.S. governement, military, state or Tribal issued ID that includes your date of birth and is not expired
- A Certificate of Naturalization, Certificate of U.S. Citizenship, or Consular Matricular ID

How to add your photo or scanned copy

Please attach a picture or scanned copy of your document. Files must be less than 10 MB and one of the following file types: jpg, jpeg, png, pdf, or gif.

- Make sure your image is not blurry
- Make sure your document is not cut off and we can see all four sides
- Make sure you have good lighting

Choose a file

Attached Files

DummyDoc.pdf (32033) ✕

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Submitting Additional Information
Proof of Life

- You may be asked to upload or mail documents to confirm you are alive.

- Documentation must include the following:

  - Your first and last name

  - An issue date within the last three months

Share proof of life

Their document must include:

- Their first and last name:
  Artificial Subscriber
- An issue date within the last three months

Here are common examples:

- A current utility bill
- A paystub
- A mortgage or lease statement
- A retirement or pension statement of benefits
- A notarized letter that confirms their identity and that they are alive

How to add your photo or scanned copy

Please attach a picture or scanned copy of your document. Files must be less than 10 MB and one of the following file types: jpg, jpeg, png, pdf, or gif.

- Make sure your image is not blurry
- Make sure your document is not cut off and we can see all four sides
- Make sure you have good lighting

Choose file

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Submitting Additional Information
Document Review (Online)

- After submitting the required documentation online, you will receive a status update confirming that your documents are under review.

- You can also check the status of your application at LifelineSupport.org.

We are reviewing their documents

It generally takes about 15 minutes, but could be up to 2 days.

We'll email them when our review is complete. You can check the status of their application at any time on your account homepage.

Submitting Additional Information
Document Review (Mail)

- If you submit documents via mail, you will receive a status update via mail confirming the review of your documents.

- You can also call the Lifeline Support Center at (800) 234-9473 to receive status updates.
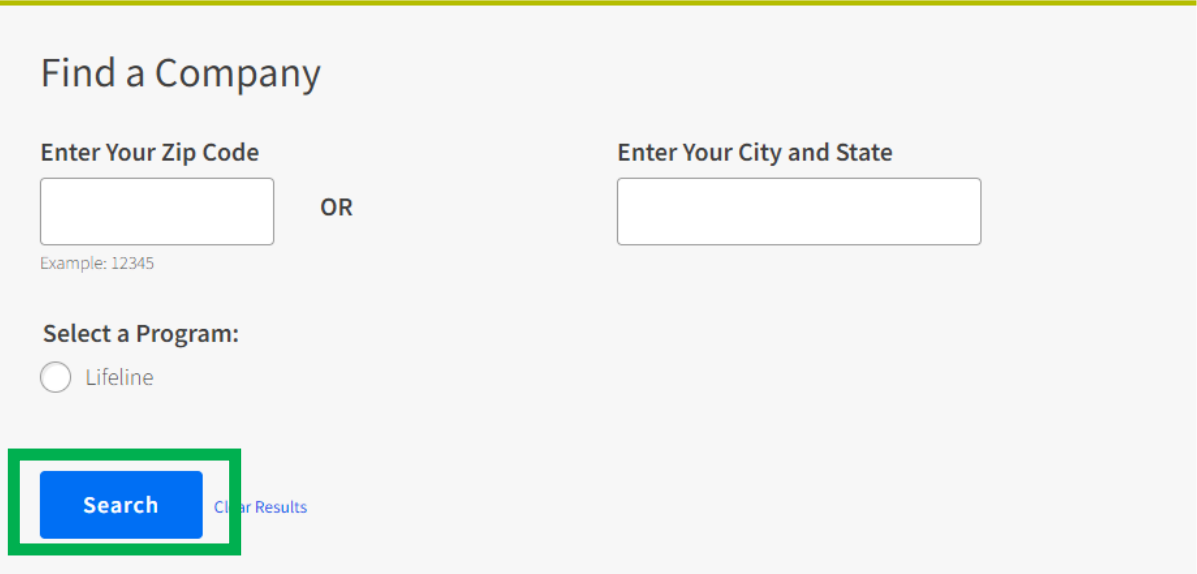
Changing Service Providers

Changing Service Providers

- 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.

Find a Company

Enter Your Zip Code

OR

Enter Your City and State

Example: 12345

Select a Program:

◯ Lifeline

Search   Clear Results

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Changing Service Providers

- Select **see the list of companies in (your selected state)** to view the full list of providers.

    - 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: 📄csv

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.

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Resources

Resources

- Visit LifelineSupport.org for general information on Lifeline and to apply.

  - View the Manage Your Benefit flyer for an overview of how to recertify for Lifeline.

  - Review the Tribal Benefit page.

- 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.

Thank You!