August 2020 Monthly Webinar: Lifeline Program Updates

August 12, 2020

Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Housekeeping

- Audio is available through your computer's speakers

- The audience will remain on mute

- **Enter questions at any time using the "Questions" box**

- If your audio or slides freeze, restart the webinar

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

Today's Presenters

Leah Sorini

Linnita Hosten

Joe Ho

Agenda

1. Announcements

2. New Recertification Process

3. Upcoming System Enhancements

   • Update Subscriber Address

   • Tribal Error Codes

4. Resources

Announcements
USAC's Secure Web Page Update (1/2)

- USAC's [secure web](#) page was updated on July 31, 2020

- This page may be used by service providers to:

  - Submit reverification documents and

  - Submit RAD documentation to resolve agent RAD registration errors

- Service providers were notified of this update on July 27, 2020

Announcements
USAC's Secure Web Page Update (2/2)

- If you receive the error on the right when attempting to submit documentation using the secure web page, **you need to work with your technical teams to upgrade to TLS1.2 by following the steps outlined by Microsoft**

- More detail can be found on our **Announcements** page

Can't connect securely to this page

This might be because the site uses outdated or unsafe TLS security settings. If this keeps happening, try contacting the website's owner.

Your TLS security settings aren't set to the defaults, which could also be causing this error.

Try this:

- Go back to the last page

Announcements
Reminder: Temporary Lifeline Program Changes Due to COVID-19

In response to the pandemic, the FCC released a series of waivers suspending the following rules and processes through **August 31**:

- Recertification

- Reverification

- General de-enrollment requirements (except de-enrollment at the user's request)

- Usage requirements

- USAC program integrity reviews

- Requirement to submit 3 consecutive months of income documentation

Announcements
Tribal Waiver (1/2)

- The FCC also issued an Order to make it easier for those who reside in rural areas on **Tribal lands** to enroll in the Lifeline Program during the COVID-19 pandemic

- These temporary changes, which are in effect through **August 31, 2020**, include:

  - Allowing Tribal consumers in rural areas to receive service without immediately satisfying the documentation requirements for any errors in their application

  - Allowing service providers to waive a confirmed qualification status before enrolling a consumer (consumers can enroll before they are successfully qualified for the benefit through the National Verifier)

Announcements
Tribal Waiver (2/2)

- Allowing consumers who enroll through this waiver process **45 days** to provide the required documentation after sign up

- Allowing service providers to elect to begin providing Lifeline service to consumers even if the consumer has not yet submitted supporting documentation to confirm their eligibility

- Service providers **cannot** claim reimbursement for these consumers until they have successfully qualified for the benefit through the National Verifier

Announcements
## National Verifier Update: New Database Connections

- USAC is pleased to announce four database connections:

    - **Nevada Department of Health and Human Services**

    - **Puerto Rico Department of the Family**, which oversees the Puerto Rico Nutrition Assistance Program (PAN)

    - **Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS)** and **Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR)**

    - **Washington State Department of Social and Health Services**

- USAC has established 15 other state connections and two nationwide federal connections

- Two of the NLAD opt-out states (Texas and Oregon) have automated connections for purposes of determining eligibility for the federal Lifeline Program
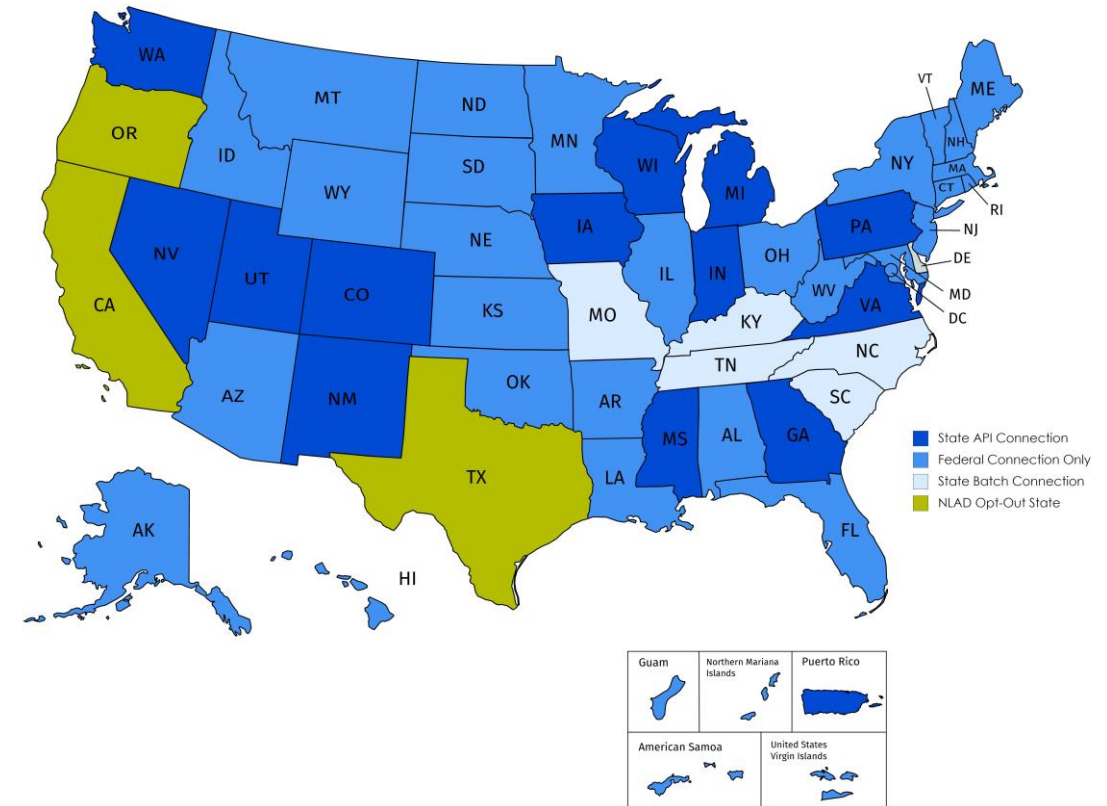
Note: For more information on USAC's database connections, visit the Eligibility Decision Process page

Questions?

New Recertification Process
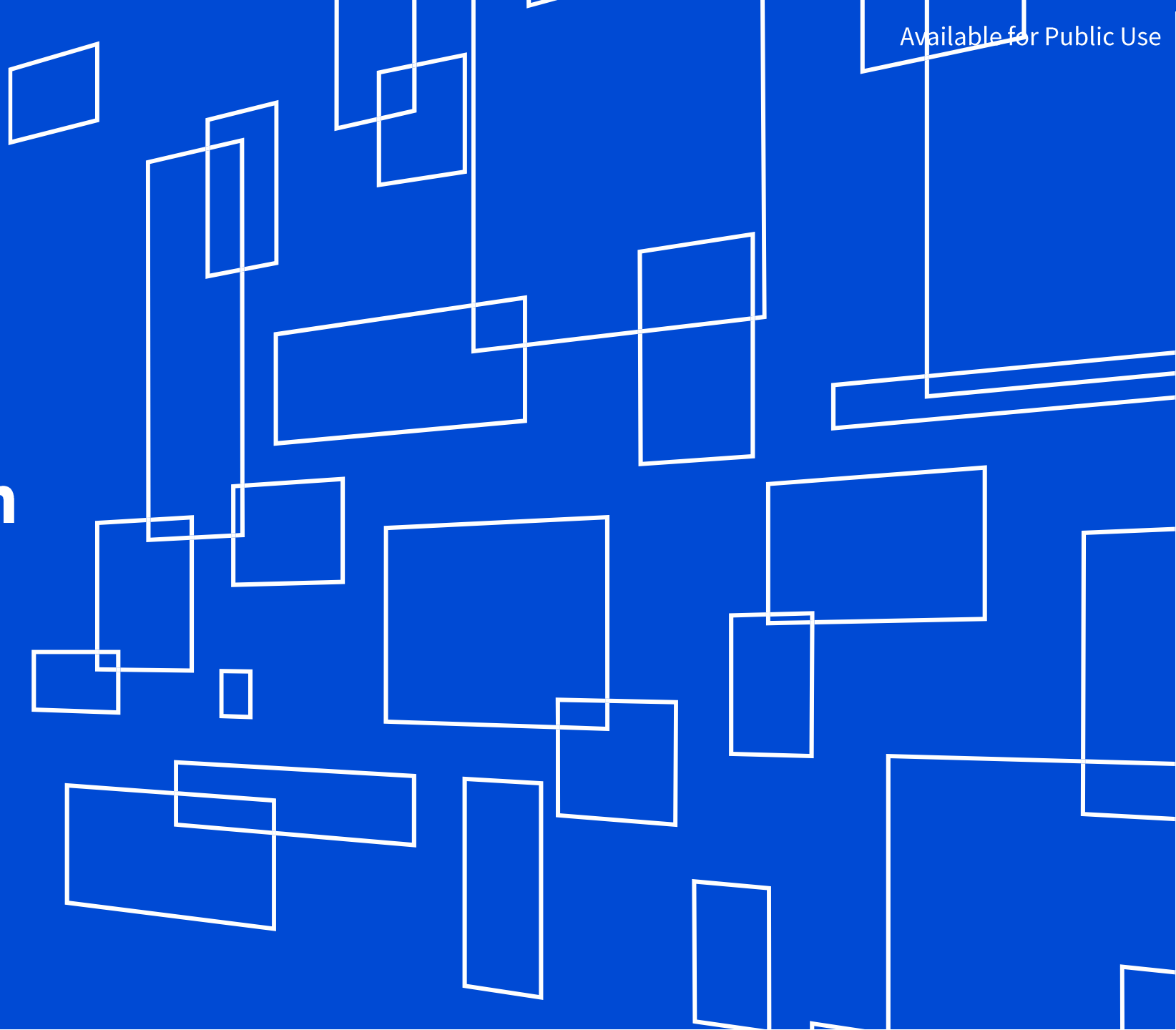
New Recertification Process
Background

- Recertification is an annual requirement for Lifeline subscribers

- This upcoming change to the process helps ensure that Lifeline subscribers are still eligible for the Lifeline benefit

- In the [2019 Lifeline Order](#), the FCC adopted changes to require additional documentation during the annual recertification process in certain situations

New Recertification Process
What is Changing

- **Current process** - an automated eligibility database check is performed
    - If a subscriber fails the automated eligibility check during recertification, they are required to self-certify they are still eligible for Lifeline
    - This is done by the consumer through our [Recertification Form](#) (online or on paper)
   - The consumer can also self-certify through IVR

New Recertification Process
What is Changing

- **Change or new process** - an automated eligibility database check is performed
  - If the subscriber *passes* the eligibility check, no action will be required
  - If a subscriber *fails* the automated eligibility check during recertification, they are required to complete a recertification form, **AND**
  - If the same subscriber *passed* their previous automated eligibility check, they will be required to provide proof of eligibility
- A detailed overview of the new recertification process will be discussed in the September Lifeline Program Webinar

Questions?

Upcoming System Enhancements
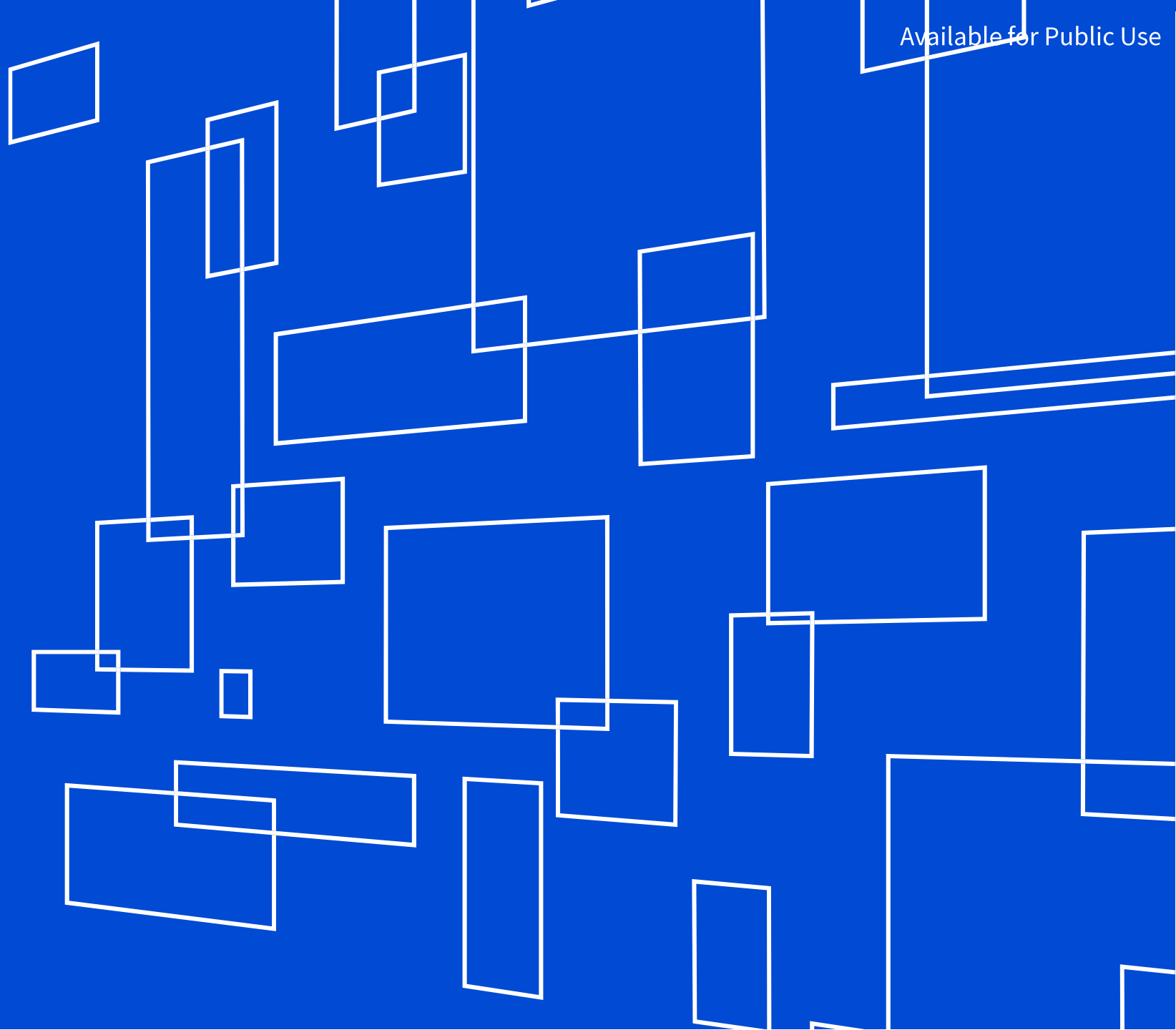
Upcoming System Enhancements

- As part of continual system improvements, USAC plans to release two system enhancements, regarding:

  - Update subscriber address feature

  - Tribal error codes

Update Subscriber Address
Upcoming System Enhancements

Update Subscriber Address
Background

- **Purpose**: Streamline the process of updating a subscriber's address

- **Update subscriber feature**: USAC will release changes to the NLAD "Update Subscriber" feature to:

  - Reduce the burden on service providers and subscribers during the address error resolution process

  - Streamline the process of updating and verifying an existing subscriber's new address

  - Facilitate continued program compliance

Update Subscriber Address
What is Changing

- Address updates will no longer be rejected by **NLAD** for AMS and/or IEH errors

- New addresses which receive an AMS and/or IEH error will automatically be sent to the **National Verifier** for address resolution

- To maintain their enrollment status, subscribers will be expected to resolve their address errors in the National Verifier portal or via mail

- **USAC will de-enroll subscribers that fail to resolve errors associated with their address update within 30 days of when USAC sends the notice**

NLAD Address Update

Update Subscriber Address
Process Flow

System	Current Process	New Process
-	The subscriber informs their SP of the address change	The subscriber informs their SP of the address change
NLAD	The SP attempts to update the address in NLAD	The SP attempts to update the address in NLAD
NLAD	• If new address passes AMS and IEH check, update is successful • If new address fails AMS and/or IEH and errors are not resolved in the NV, the new address is rejected by NLAD	• New address is successfully updated in NLAD • SP is informed in real-time if new address fails AMS and/or IEH • If there are failures, the address resolution is initiated in the NV
National Verifier	SP instructs or assists subscriber to resolve address errors in the NV portal or via mail	• USAC sends a notice via mail to subscriber to resolve address errors • Subscriber must resolve errors within 30 days of when USAC sends the notice to avoid de-enrollment
National Verifier	Subscriber successfully resolves address errors in the NV portal/by mail and informs SP	Subscriber successfully resolves address errors in the NV portal or by mail
NLAD	SP updates address in NLAD	Address update resolution process is complete and the subscriber remains enrolled

A detailed overview is provided in the March 2020 monthly webinar

Update Subscriber Address
Error Messages

AMS Error Message

Update Subscriber Address
Error Messages

IEH Error Message

Update Subscriber Address
Error Messages

AMS & IEH Error Message

Update Subscriber Address
Staging Release on August 13
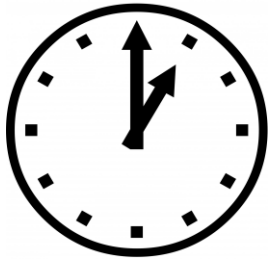
- Address updates will no longer be rejected in the NLAD staging environment for AMS and/or duplicate address errors

  - This release allows service providers to test the new messages associated with the updated workflow

  - This will also enable NLAD API users to make any necessary changes in preparation for the production release

  - Updated NLAD API Specifications available in NLAD staging, under "Reports and Tools"

  - ***Note****: The corresponding address resolution process in the National Verifier will not be available for testing*

Update Subscriber Address
Production Release TBD
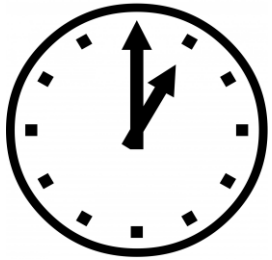
- The production release for the new update subscriber address workflow is contingent upon how the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve

- USAC will notify service providers via bulletin when production release date is finalized

- At the time of the production release, the new update subscriber workflow will be available in NLAD production:

  - Representatives should be prepared to help subscribers complete the address update by notifying them of any address errors they received

  - NLAD API users should have implemented any necessary changes in preparation for this release

Questions?

Tribal Error Codes
Upcoming System Enhancements

Tribal Error Codes
Background

- **Purpose**: USAC is releasing updates to NLAD to enhance system messaging for Tribal enrollment errors

- **Enhanced Tribal benefit**: To receive the enhanced Tribal benefit, residents of federally-recognized Tribal lands must provide sufficient information to the National Verifier to allow USAC to verify they live on Tribal lands

Tribal Error Codes
Background

- USAC determines if a consumer resides on federally-recognized Tribal lands based on the latitude and longitude associated with their residential address

- If USAC cannot verify a consumer's address, then the consumer must provide latitude and longitude coordinates, or information that allows USAC to determine coordinates, to validate their location during the application process

- When it's time for enrollment in NLAD, NLAD uses the address information provided in the National Verifier

- If the information is insufficient or shows the consumer's address is not on Tribal lands, the representative performing the transaction will receive an error

Tribal Error Codes
What is Changing

- **Currently**: Service providers receive a single NLAD Tribal Benefit flag error if additional steps are needed for USAC to verify that a consumer lives on Tribal lands

- **At the time of the release**: To enable service providers to better assist consumers with the enrollment process, USAC is introducing three new, more specific error messages related to the Lifeline Tribal Benefit flag

  - Each error message explains, with the information USAC has available, why the consumer is unable to receive the enhanced Tribal benefit

Tribal Error Codes
New Error Messages (1/2)

Error Message	Description	Resolution Process
TRIBAL_BENEFIT_FLAG_NONTRIBAL_NLAD_LOCATION: Tribal Benefit Flag cannot be applied for this location. The location was verified by USAC and does not qualify for Tribal.	The consumer does not live on federally-recognized Tribal lands and is not eligible for the enhanced benefit	The consumer must be enrolled without the Tribal lands flag to receive Lifeline-supported service
TRIBAL_BENEFIT_FLAG_DEFICIENT_CONSUMER_INFO: Tribal Benefit Flag cannot be applied for this location. The location cannot be verified by USAC and the consumer has provided insufficient information in the National Verifier.	The consumer does not yet have a qualified application in the National Verifier for this transaction	• If it is an **enrollment/transfer**, the consumer must finish qualifying • If it is an **update**, the consumer must complete an address update in the National Verifier portal, or the service provider should assist the consumer to start a new application and resolve the address errors *

At the time of the new update subscriber address workflow production release (date currently TBD), the guidance to resolve the error in update transactions will change

Tribal Error Codes
New Error Messages (2/2)

| Error Message	Description	Resolution Process
TRIBAL_BENEFIT_FLAG_NONTRIBAL_CONSUMER_LOCATION : Tribal Benefit Flag cannot be applied for this location. The location cannot be verified by USAC and the information provided by the consumer in National Verifier confirms the location is non-Tribal or is invalid.	• The consumer has a qualified application in the National Verifier, but • The latitude and longitude provided indicate they do not reside on Tribal lands, **or** • The lat/long provided are not in the same state as the subscriber's residential address	If the service provider believes the consumer's address should be on Tribal lands, they can contact USAC at LifelineProgram@usac.org to request additional information and to provide more accurate information if applicable

Tribal Error Codes
Staging Release on August 13
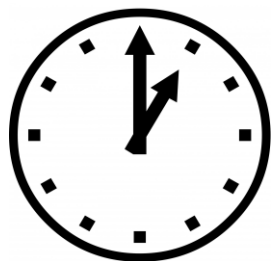
- New error messages available in NLAD staging:

  - This release allows service providers to test the three new error codes

  - This will also enable NLAD API users to make any necessary changes in preparation for the production release

  - Updated NLAD API Specifications available in NLAD staging, under "Reports and Tools"

Tribal Error Codes
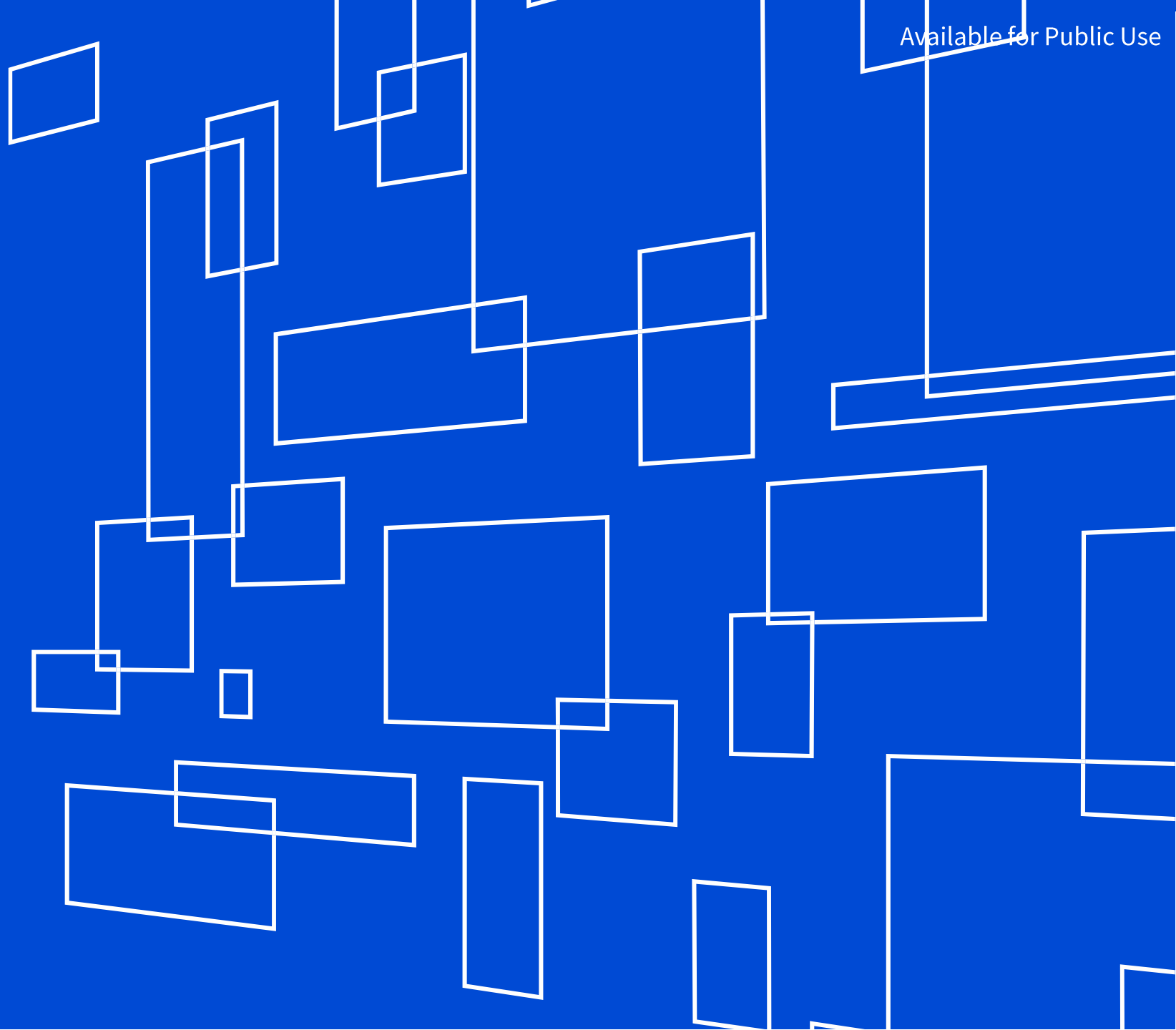## Production Release on September 15
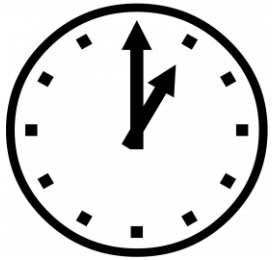
- New error messages available in NLAD production:

  - All NLAD users should be prepared to address the three new error messages

  - NLAD API users should have implemented any necessary changes in preparation for this release

Questions?

Resources

Resources

- Visit [Lifeline's COVID-19 Response](#) page on the USAC website

- View [past trainings](#) on the USAC website

- Watch [videos](#) about Lifeline systems

Resources
Lifeline Support

The Lifeline Support team continues to operate and provide support. We will communicate with you as soon as possible if anything affects our operations.

- **Service provider inquiries, email**: LifelineProgram@usac.org

- **Consumer inquiries, email**: LifelineSupport@usac.org

By phone:

- 1 (800) 234-9473

- Agents available 7 Days a Week, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET

By mail:

Lifeline Support Center

PO Box 7081

London, KY 40742

Questions?

Learn More about Lifeline

- Sign up for Lifeline Program email updates and upcoming events

  - Visit usac.org and click "subscribe" in the upper-right corner

- Need help? Contact us!

  - General: LifelineProgram@usac.org

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