



Tribal Q1 Webinar

Lifeline Program Overview



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 Q&A box**
- If your audio or slides freeze, restart the webinar

Annotations and Feedback Features



Today's Presenters



Tiffany Brady

Manager of Communications | Lifeline

Tiffany manages all communications for Lifeline, including state and federal partnerships.



Leah Sorini

Communications Specialist | Lifeline

Leah develops external communications, including website content, email campaigns, and training.



Kraynal Alfred

Tribal Liaison | USAC

Kraynal coordinates Tribal outreach across USAC.

TribalLiaison@usac.org

Today's Agenda

1. USAC: Who We Are
2. Introduction to the Lifeline Program
3. COVID-19 Response
4. Lifeline Tribal Resources

Today's Objectives

- An introduction to USAC's Lifeline program so that attendees understand:
 - Each stakeholder's role in the program
 - How the Lifeline program works
 - How consumers qualify for the Lifeline program
 - Temporary program changes made in response to the pandemic
 - Where to go to get more information about the Lifeline program and how to get help with program processes

USAC: Who We Are

The Universal Service Administrative Company

USAC Overview

- The Universal Service Fund exists to ensure that all people in the United States have access to quality, affordable connectivity service
- USAC is an independent, not-for-profit organization designated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as the permanent administrator of the Universal Service Fund and its four programs



Lifeline Program

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



High Cost Program

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



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.

Each Stakeholder Helps Support the Lifeline Program's Objectives

Indirect Stakeholders

Federal Communications
Commission (**FCC**)

- Develops policies and regulations for the Lifeline program and provides guidance to USAC

Universal Service
Administrative Company
(**USAC**)

- Lifeline administrator
- Educates stakeholders on processes, systems, and rules and requirements

Each Stakeholder Helps Support the Lifeline Program's Objectives

Direct Stakeholders

Service Providers

- Provide subscribers with Lifeline-supported services
- Comply with rules and requirements

Lifeline Subscribers

- Receive Lifeline-supported services
- Keep information up to date

Lifeline Eligible Consumers

- Individuals eligible for the benefit
- Not yet completed the application or enrolled in the program

Each Stakeholder Helps Support the Lifeline Program's Objectives

Stakeholders with Shared Consumers

Consumer Advocates

- Nonprofits, shelters, and foodbanks
- Educate consumers about Lifeline

State and Federal Partners

- Public utility commissions and Lifeline-qualifying government programs
- Educate consumers about Lifeline

> Tribal Partners

- Tribal governments, agencies, and nonprofits serving Tribal communities
- Educate consumers about Lifeline

Introduction to the Lifeline Program

Federal Benefit for Phone or Internet Service

What is Lifeline?

- Monthly discount up to **\$9.25**
- Tribal lands, monthly discount up to **\$34.25**
 - Applies to qualifying fixed or mobile services
- **Link Up**: a Tribal lands one-time benefit up to **\$100**

Lifeline Benefit

Minimum Service Standards (MSS)

Mobile Voice	Mobile Broadband	Home Broadband
1000 Minutes	Speed: 3G or better; Usage Allowance: 4.5 GB	Speed: 25/3 Mbps; Usage Allowance: 1024 GB

Service Type

Service Type	Description	Lifeline Support Amount (Effective December 1, 2020)
Voice (mobile or landline)	Voice only service that meets MSS	\$5.25
Broadband (internet)	Broadband only service that meets MSS	\$9.25
Bundled Voice	Voice and broadband service that meets the voice MSS only	\$5.25
Bundled Broadband	Voice and broadband service that meets the broadband MSS only	\$9.25
Bundled Voice and Broadband	Voice and broadband service that meets both the voice and broadband MSS	\$9.25

Eligibility

- Income is at or below **135% of the federal poverty guidelines**
- Participate in at least one of the following **government programs**:
 - Medicaid
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
 - Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit

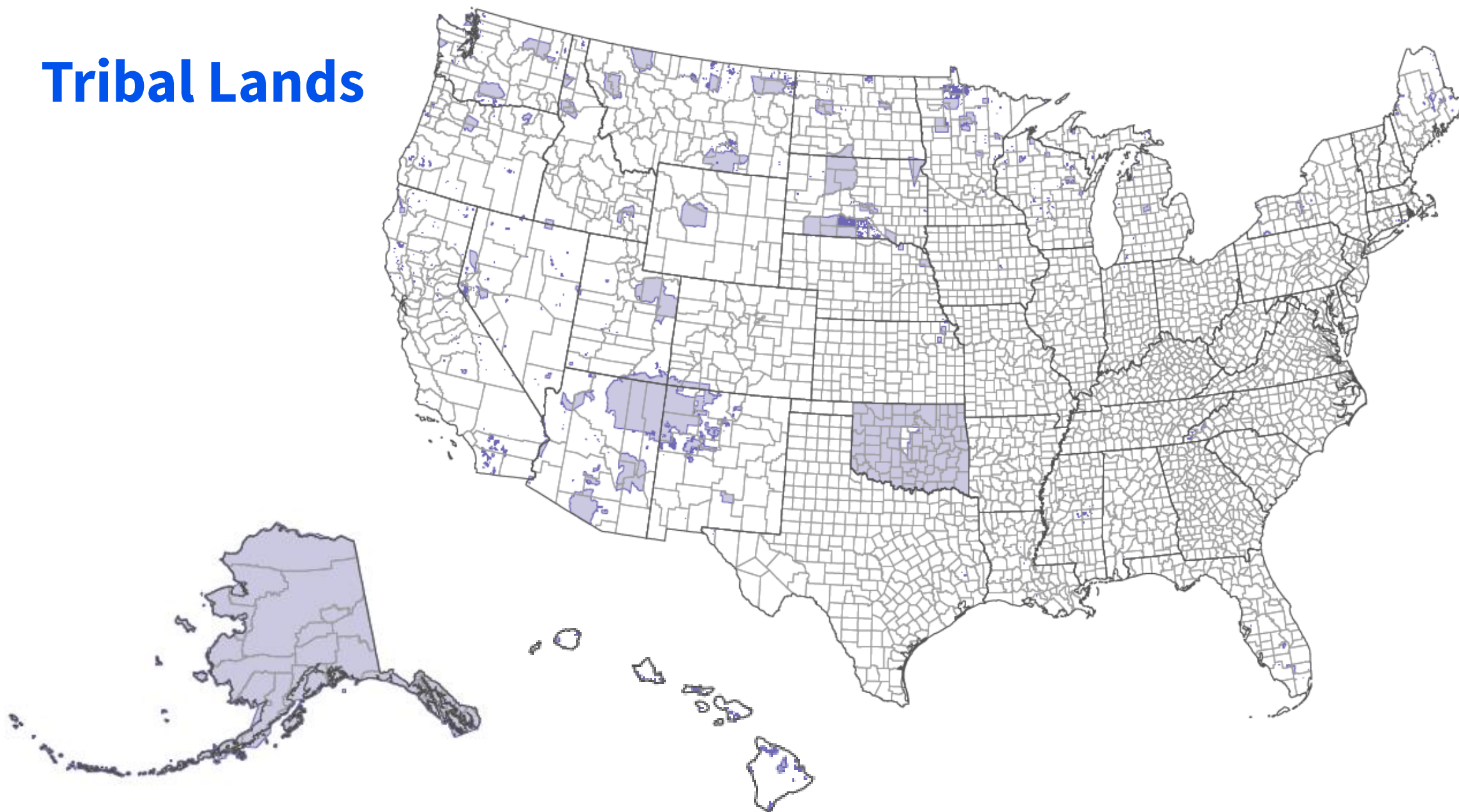
Eligibility: Tribal Lands

- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance (BIA-GA)
- Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TTANF)
- Tribal Head Start (must meet qualifying income standard)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

Tribal Lands

- Definition for “Tribal lands” used by Lifeline program ([47 CFR 54.400\(e\)](#)):
 - “For purposes of this subpart, ‘Tribal lands’ include any federally recognized Indian tribe’s reservation, pueblo, or colony, including former reservations in Oklahoma;
 - Alaska Native regions established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (85 Stat. 688); Indian allotments;
 - Hawaiian Home Lands – areas held in trust for Native Hawaiians by the state of Hawaii, pursuant to the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920 July 9, 1921, 42 Stat. 108, seq., as amended;
 - **And any land designated as such by the Commission for purposes of this subpart pursuant to the designation process in § 54.412.”**

Tribal Lands



Additional Qualification Requirement



- **One Lifeline benefit** allowed **per** "independent economic household" (**household**)
 - Group of people who live together and share money (even if they are not related to each other)

National Verifier: Centralized Application System



Online – Apply at CheckLifeline.org

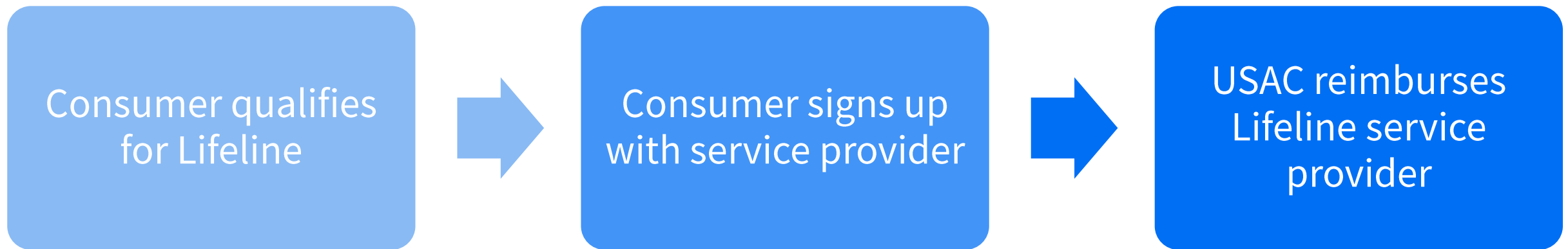


By Mail – Print [application](#)



Through a Service Provider – Find a company using the [Companies Near Me](#) tool

Lifeline Program Review



COVID-19 Response

Temporary Program Changes

COVID-19 Response

- FCC and USAC released a series of waivers to ensure that consumers have access to the connectivity services they need during the pandemic
- Most of these temporary changes, with the exception of the waiver of the FCC's non-usage rule, are now set to expire on **June 30, 2021**
 - The FCC has limited the waiver extension timeframe associated with the non-usage requirement so that it does not extend beyond May 1, 2021
- More information on USAC's [Lifeline COVID-19 Response](#) webpage

COVID-19 Response

- **More flexibility** for consumers



- Adjusted the income and identification documentation requirements to allow individuals recently unemployed or social distancing due to the pandemic to more easily complete their Lifeline application

COVID-19 Response

- **Continued service** for consumers



- Lifeline recertification, reverification, and general de-enrollment requirements paused through June 30, 2021, to ensure Lifeline subscribers are not involuntarily de-enrolled from the program
- ***Reminder:*** Non-usage waiver requirement expires May 1, 2021


COVID-19 Response

- **State agency access** to the National Verifier



- Expanded access to the National Verifier to enable state agencies to assist consumers with the Lifeline application process during the pandemic, much like Lifeline service providers do today

COVID-19 Response

- 
- More flexibility for consumers **residing in rural areas on Tribal lands**
 - FCC temporarily waived its rules to allow Lifeline providers to begin providing service to eligible consumers residing in rural areas on Tribal lands even if those consumers have not yet submitted certain supporting documentation to complete their Lifeline application
 - The consumer will then have 45 days to submit their documentation to maintain their Lifeline benefit

Lifeline Tribal Resources

Support

USAC's Websites

- USAC has two websites available:



- Lifeline's consumer website available: LifelineSupport.org
- USAC's Lifeline website for service providers, state and federal partners, and Tribal partners: usac.org/lifeline

USAC's Websites

- Tribal specific content for [consumers](#)
- Tribal specific content for [service provider, state and federal partners, and Tribal partners](#)

Educational Resources for Tribal Consumers



- Lifeline's [Tribal Flyer](#)
 - How consumers apply
 - Action consumers may need to take to manage their benefit

Educational Resources for Tribal Consumers



- Lifeline's [Tribal Toolkit](#)
 - Compilation of educational resources
 - Use the material as templates to distribute information about the Lifeline program or share directly as is
 - Includes newsletter article, radio script, social media posts, and more

Upcoming Quarterly Tribal Webinars

- All webinars from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET



- [Lifeline Tribal Webinar – Q2](#) on **Wednesday, June 2, 2021**
- [Lifeline Tribal Webinar – Q3](#) on **Wednesday, September 1, 2021**
- [Lifeline Tribal Webinar – Q4](#) on **Wednesday, December 1, 2021**

Lifeline Team

Contact the Lifeline Support Center



Email: LifelineSupport@usac.org



Call: (800) 234-9473 (*press 1 for English; press 2 for Spanish*)

The Lifeline Support Center serves consumers and those supporting consumers,
and is available **7 days a week, from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET.**

USAC Tribal Liaison

Email the USAC Tribal Liaison

- Email USAC's Tribal Liaison at TribalLiaison@usac.org
 - If you need help connecting to a Lifeline program analyst
 - If you have feedback
 - If you have questions about any of the USAC programs
 - If you want to say hi

Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB Program)

Quick Introduction

Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB Program)



Broadband and device benefit for low-income consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eligible consumers can receive:

- Up to \$50/month discount for broadband services
- Up to \$75/month discount for broadband services for households on qualifying Tribal lands;
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet supplied through a participating provider (consumer co-pay of more than \$10 and less than \$50 required)

The Emergency Broadband Benefit is limited to one monthly service discount and one device discount per eligible household

Program is temporary and expires when funds are exhausted or six months after the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) declares the end of the COVID-19 health emergency

Eligibility Criteria

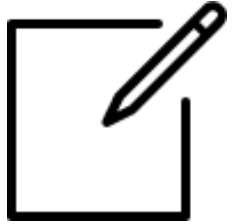
Households can qualify for the EBB Program by showing that at least one member of their household meets one of the following criteria:

1. Qualifies for the FCC's [Lifeline program](#), including those who are on Medicaid or receive SNAP benefits,
2. Approved for the free or reduced-price school breakfast/lunch program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision,
3. Experienced substantial documented loss of income since February 29, 2020 and the household had a total income in 2020 below \$99,000 for single filers and \$198,000 for joint filers,
4. Received a federal Pell Grant in the current award year, or
5. Qualifies for a participating provider's existing low-income or COVID-19 relief program, subject to FCC approval of that provider's eligibility process.

EBB Program Requirements

- Broadband service plans that were available as of December 1, 2020 are eligible for reimbursement.
- Broadband providers, including those that have not been designated as eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs), can participate in the EBB Program after filing an Election Notice with USAC. Non-ETCs must receive FCC approval to participate in the program prior to filing their Election Notice.
- EBB Program service providers will use the Lifeline National Eligibility Verifier (National Verifier) to check consumer eligibility and will use National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) and Lifeline Claims System to enroll subscribers and submit reimbursement requests. Providers with existing low income or COVID-19 programs can seek FCC approval to use an alternative eligibility verification process.
- The FCC expects the Emergency Broadband Benefit program to be open to eligible households before the end of April 2021. Please check the FCC's website, www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit, regularly for the latest information.

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- We appreciate your feedback



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