March 2023 Monthly Webinar

How to Resolve Application Errors

March 8, 2023

Universal Service
Administrative Co.

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Ask questions here!

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Meet Our Team

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Today's Objectives

- To understand how to support consumers in resolving Lifeline application errors.

- To understand the steps needed to resolve various types of application and eligibility errors.

Agenda

- Announcements

- National Verifier Overview

- How to Resolve Application Errors including:
  - Eligibility Errors
  - Address Errors
  - Identity Errors
  - Errors with Assistance from a Service Provider

Announcements
Lifeline Mailing Address Update

- The mailing address for the Lifeline Customer Support Center (CSC) is changing at the end of March.

- Mail sent to the old mailing address will be forwarded for one year to ensure no interruption in application/document processing.

- Service providers should anticipate updates to their consumer outreach materials including FCC forms that contain the current ACP and Lifeline CSC mail address.

- More information is forthcoming.

National Verifier Overview

National Verifier Overview

Three Ways to Interact with the National Verifier

- Online via nv.fcc.gov/lifeline.

- By mail via paper application.

- Through a service provider – Find a company using the Companies Near Me tool.

National Verifier Overview
Information Submitted for Verification

- During the application process, consumers will submit their:

  - First and last legal name

  - Date of birth

  - Physical address

  - Last four digits of their social security number or Tribal ID

  - How they qualify for Lifeline

- The information above is required for online and mailed applications as well as applications submitted with the assistance of a service provider

National Verifier Overview
Summary

National Verifier Application

Consumer submits application online or through the mail, including any supporting documentation

1

Next Steps

USAC notifies consumer of any application errors (if applicable) and consumer provides necessary information

2

Consumer qualifies for Lifeline and chooses Lifeline company

3

Consumer informs Lifeline company of qualification status to enroll in the program

4

Resolving Application Errors

Resolving Application Errors
Overview

When a consumer's information cannot be verified by <u>checking available databases</u>, USAC notifies the consumer that more information or documentation is needed to resolve the error

- Documentation can be submitted online through the consumer or service provider portal or mailed to the Lifeline Support Center

  - **Service providers can help the consumer** submit required documents directly through the **NV Service Provider Portal, or by mail.**

  - Submitting documentation to resolve application errors initiates a manual review process by agents at the Lifeline CSC.

  - Consumers can **check their application status** or **enrollment status** online through the consumer portal, by contacting the Lifeline Support Center, or by checking with their service provider through whom they initially submitted their application.

Resolving Application Errors
Types of Errors

Error	Information Required
TPIV (identity verification)	Proof of identity
AMS (address validation)	Proof of address
Duplicate address	Household Worksheet
Under 18	Proof of emancipated minor
Eligibility	Proof of program or income
Deceased	Proof of life

 * **Visit our [Resolving Application Errors page](#) for more information on document requirements.**

Resolving Application Errors
How USAC Contacts the Consumer

- USAC will contact the consumer based on how they applied (mail or online)

- The consumer will also provide contact information on the application, which USAC may use to provide application status updates

  - The consumer may provide a mailing address, phone number, and/or email address as well as an alternate email address if they choose to do so

  - The consumer may include someone like a caseworker or family member as their alternate contact

  - The alternate contact will receive any status or application updates that the consumer receives

Resolving Application Errors
Notification and Submission Process

	Online	Mail (Paper Applications)
How does USAC notify the consumer if more information is needed?	A screen will populate asking the consumer to provide additional information to qualify for Lifeline	Consumers will receive a letter in the mail: • Explaining what information is needed to qualify for Lifeline • The cover sheet • A pre-paid envelope
How to submit additional information?	Click the "upload" button on the screen and attach any documentation that meets the requirements or complete the prompts that appear	In the pre-paid envelope the consumer should: • Send copies of the requested documents/complete form if requested • Complete and send the cover sheet
Manual review timeline (conducted by USAC Lifeline Support Center)	Reviewed in order of receipt, typically within minutes if submitted during business hours (9 a.m. – 9 p.m. ET)	Review decision sent via US Mail within 7 – 10 business days

Resolving Application Errors
Submission Requirements

- The consumer must submit all information requested by USAC within 45 days of when they initially applied to fully complete the application

- If the consumer needs to submit documentation to resolve application errors, the consumer should **always submit copies** of the documentation

  - Consumers should never submit original documentation

Questions?

Resolving Eligibility Errors

Resolving Eligibility Errors
When Eligibility Errors Occur

- A consumer will receive an eligibility error when USAC cannot verify how the consumer qualifies for Lifeline

- The consumer can submit documentation online or by mail to prove participation in a qualifying program or to prove their income meets Lifeline's criteria

Resolving Eligibility Errors
Confirm Program Eligibility

- Documentation for **qualifying programs** must include:

  - The consumer's name, or the name of the consumer's benefit qualifying person (BQP)

  - Name of Lifeline-qualifying program, such as SNAP

  - Name of the government or Tribal agency that issued the document

  - An issue date within the last 12 months or a future expiration date

- Examples of **qualifying program** documentation:

  - Award letter

  - Screenshot of government application or website showing eligibility

  - Benefit or case portal screenshot

Resolving Eligibility Errors
Confirm Income Eligibility

- Documentation for **income** must include:

  - The consumer's name, or the name of the consumer's BQP

  - Cover a full year of income or documentation covering three consecutive months of income within the previous 12 months

- Examples of **income** documentation:

  - Prior year's state, federal, or Tribal tax return

  - Current income statement from an employer or paycheck stub

  - Social Security statement of benefits

  - Veterans Administration statement of benefits

  - Retirement/pension statement of benefits

  - Unemployment/worker's compensation statement of benefits

  - Federal or Tribal notice letter of participation in General Assistance

  - Divorce decree, child support award, or other official document containing income information

Resolving Eligibility Errors
Confirm Eligibility Online

- The consumer will upload documentation to show they qualify based on their participation in a qualifying program or through their income

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Questions?

Resolving Address Errors

Resolving Address Errors
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
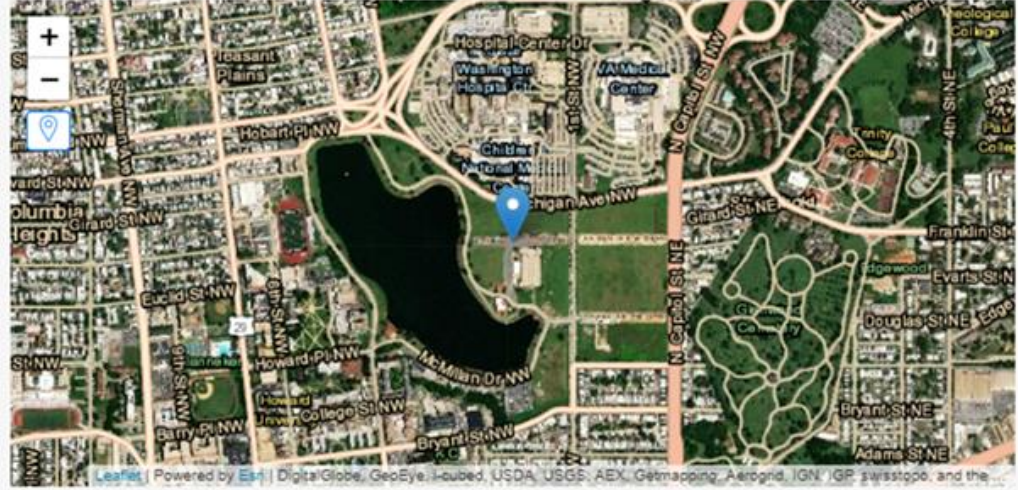
Resolving Address Errors
Confirm Address Online

- The consumer will use the mapping tool

- The map will try to locate the consumer's home

  - The consumer can move the pin around to locate where they live

  - The coordinates automatically populate

    Note: There is an instructional video to demonstrate how to utilize the mapping tool located inside the National Verifier

We need to confirm where you live on the map below. Please double click on the map or use the (+) button on the top left to zoom in on the map. You can drop a pin once you have found your address on the map.

Note: If you have not zoomed in far enough on the map, you will not be able to drop a pin on the map.

Latitude
38.92529

Longitude
-77.01403

Back

Next

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Resolving Address Errors
Confirm Address by Mail (1/3)

- Consumers can submit documentation that includes their name and address

- Examples include:
    - Utility bill
    - Mortgage or lease statement
    - Most recent W-2 or tax return
    - Driver's license or other valid government, state, or Tribal ID

- This option is not recommended for consumers seeking the enhanced Tribal benefit unless the documentation contains latitude and longitude coordinates

Resolving Address Errors
Confirm Address by Mail (2/3)

- Alternatively, consumers may submit one of the documents below to confirm their physical address or location

  - Printed map (such as an image from Google maps)

    - Contains a pin and latitude and longitude coordinates

  - A map that makes the consumer's address identifiable to USAC

    - The consumer must circle their home

    - If coordinates are known, the consumer should write them on the map

Resolving Address Errors
Confirm Address by Mail (3/3)

- A hand-drawn document that identifies the consumer's address

  - This map should include cross roads, identifiable landmarks, and distances

  - If coordinates are known, the consumer should write them on the map
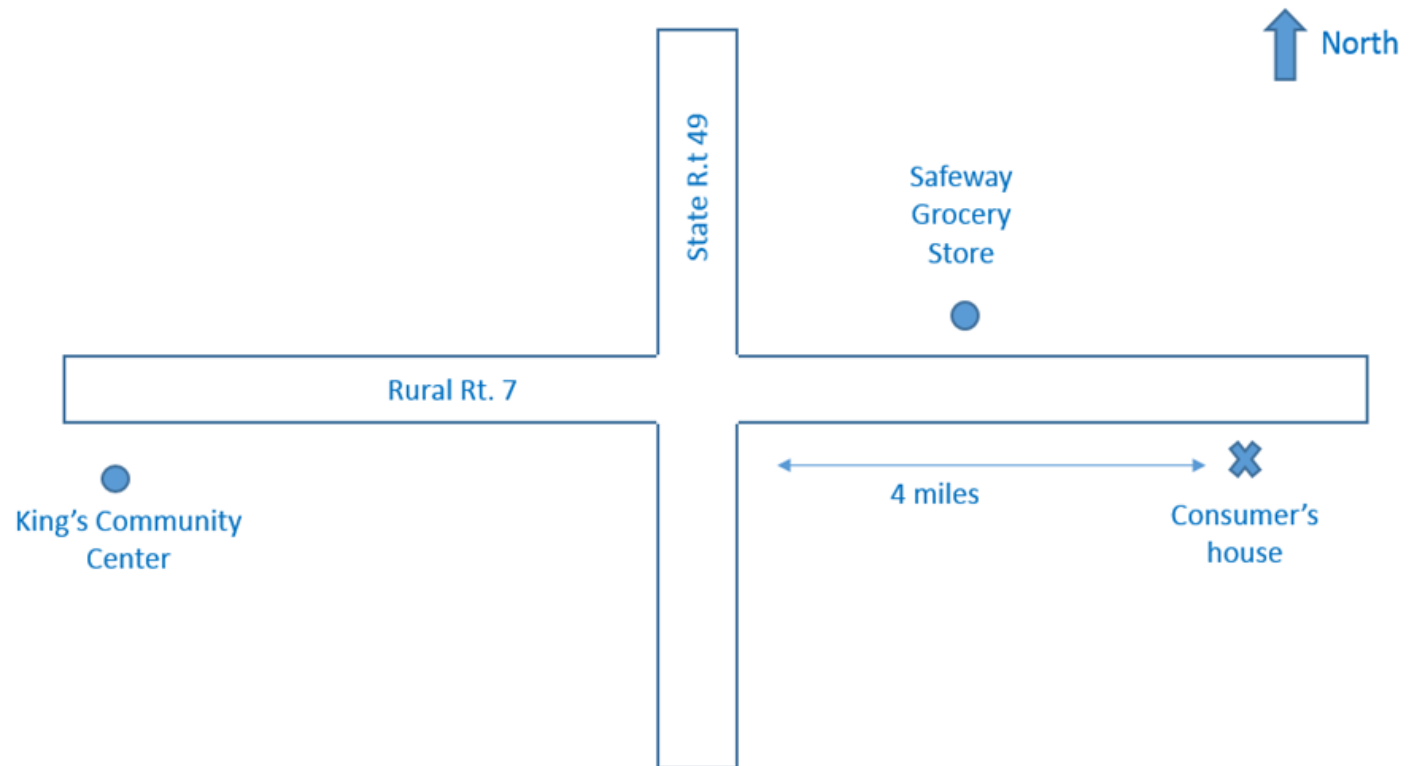
Resolving Address Errors
When Duplicate Address Errors Occur

⚠

- A consumer will receive a duplicate address error when someone else at their address is already receiving a Lifeline benefit
  - Consumers are only allowed one Lifeline benefit per household, not per person
  - A household is a group of people who live together and share income and expenses (even if they are not related to each other)

- The consumer can submit information that confirms if their <mark>household</mark> qualifies for more than one Lifeline benefit

Resolving Address Errors
Confirm Household Eligibility Online

- The consumer will submit information about their household to determine if it qualifies for more than one Lifeline benefit

If the consumer chooses "**No**", they will be able to apply for Lifeline. They will receive this message below and must initial the agreement.

Note: The benefit recipient must be the one to initial with their initials, even when applying with a Benefit Qualifying Person (BQP)

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Resolving Application Errors
Confirm Household Eligibility by Mail

- Consumer completes a <u>Lifeline Household Worksheet</u> (FCC Form 5631)

  - This worksheet is used to determine if a household is eligible to receive more than one Lifeline benefit

- Consumers must mail the completed Household Worksheet and cover sheet (<u>English</u> and <u>Spanish</u>) to USAC's Lifeline Support Center within 45 days of initially submitting their application

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Questions?

Resolving Identity Errors

Resolving Identity Errors
When Identity Errors Occur

- A consumer will receive an identity error when USAC cannot verify information related to their identity

- Examples of **identity errors** include:
    - Date of Birth (DOB) – requires proof of name and DOB
    - Social Security Number– requires proof of name and last 4 digits of SSN (SSN4)
    - Identity - requires proof of name, DOB, and SSN4
    - Deceased – requires proof of life and identity
    - Subscriber under 18 – requires proof that consumer is an emancipated minor

- The consumer can submit documentation to resolve the error(s) related to their identity

Resolving Identity Errors
Confirm Identity – DOB

- Documentation for **date of birth** must include:

  - The consumer's first and last name

  - Date of birth

- Document Examples:

  - Government, military, state, or Tribal ID

  - Birth Certificate

  - Driver's license

  - Government assistance program document

  - Certificate of U.S. Citizenship or Naturalization

  - Permanent Resident Card or Green Card

Resolving Identity Errors
Confirm Identity – SSN4

- Documentation for **social security number or Tribal ID** must include:
  - The consumer's first and last name
  - Last 4 digits of their Social Security Number (SSN4)

- Document Examples:
  - Social Security Card
  - Most recent W-2 or tax return
  - Government, military, state, or Tribal ID
  - Government assistance program document
  - Military discharge documentation
  - Unemployment/Workers' compensation benefits

Resolving Identity Errors
Confirm Identity

- Documentation for **identity** must include:
  - The consumer's first and last name
  - Date of birth
  - Last 4 digits of their Social Security Number (SSN4)

- Document Examples:
  - Government, military, state
  - Government assistance program document
  - Birth Certificate
  - Social Security Card
  - Prior year's tax return or W-2

- Consumers can provide a combination of documents to meet the required criteria

Resolving Identity Errors
Confirm Identity Online

- The consumer will upload documentation to confirm their identity

Resolving Identity Errors
Confirm Life

- Consumers identified as deceased must submit **proof of identity** and **proof of life** documents

- Documentation for **identity** must include:
  - The consumer's first and last name
  - Date of birth
  - Last 4 digits of their Social Security Number (SSN4)

- Document Examples:
  - Government, military, state, or Tribal ID
  - Government assistance program document
  - Birth Certificate
  - Social Security Card
  - Prior year's tax return or W-2

- Documentation for **life** must include:
  - The consumer's first and last name
  - Shows life activity within the last 3 months

- Document Examples:
  - Government assistance program document
  - Current utility bill
  - Current income statement, such as a paystub
  - Current mortgage or lease statement

Resolving Identity Errors
Confirm Life Online

- The consumer should confirm their information was entered in correctly

- In cases where a consumer is identified as deceased, they will upload proof of life and proof of identity documentation

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Resolving Identity Errors
Confirm Age – Emancipated Minor

- Consumers must be 18 years old to qualify for Lifeline, unless they are an emancipated minor

- Documentation for **emancipated minors** must include:
  - The consumer's first and last name
  - Confirmation of emancipated minor status

- Document Examples:
  - Court Document
  - Certificate

Resolving Identity Errors
Confirm Age Online

- The consumer should check to see if they entered in their date of birth correctly

- In cases where a consumer is an emancipated minor, they will upload documentation to confirm they are an emancipated minor

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Questions?

Resolving Errors with Assistance from a Service Provider

Resolving Errors with Assistance from a Service Provider
Process Overview

- A service provider representative can help a consumer submit documentation through the NV Service Provider Portal, using the steps below:

① A service provider representative will help a consumer **submit an application. The system will display errors** associated with the application

② A service provider representative will help the consumer **upload appropriate documents corresponding to the error types** to supplement the application form

③ The Lifeline Support Center will access the documents and **prepare for manual review**

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Resolving Errors with Assistance from a Service Provider
Process Overview Cont.

- A service provider representative can help a consumer submit documentation through the NV Service Provider Portal, using the steps below:

4

The **Lifeline Support Center will process the manual review**. If any of the initial documentation was insufficient, the service provider representative will be notified

5

The Lifeline Support Center will **log the outcome of the manual review into the NV Web Portal**

6

The **service provider representative will be able to see the consumer's updated eligibility status** on the NV Service Provider Portal

Note: Ask the customer to initial and e-sign the online application themselves (service providers cannot initial or e-sign on behalf of a customer and cannot accept applications by phone).

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Resolving Errors with Assistance from a Service Provider
Start New Application/Review Application Status

- Once logged into the NV, the service provider representative will be redirected to the NV Service Provider Portal home page.

- Service provider representatives can use the **search function** to find a consumer's application. They can search by entering a consumer's First Name, Last Name, or Application ID

- If the consumer's application had an error that requires submitting documentation, the service provider representative will see a "**More Documentation Needed**" status corresponding to the consumer's name

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Resolving Errors with Assistance from a Service Provider
Submitting Documentation via NV Service Provider Portal

- Service provider representatives should be mindful of **document file restrictions**

Accepted file types:
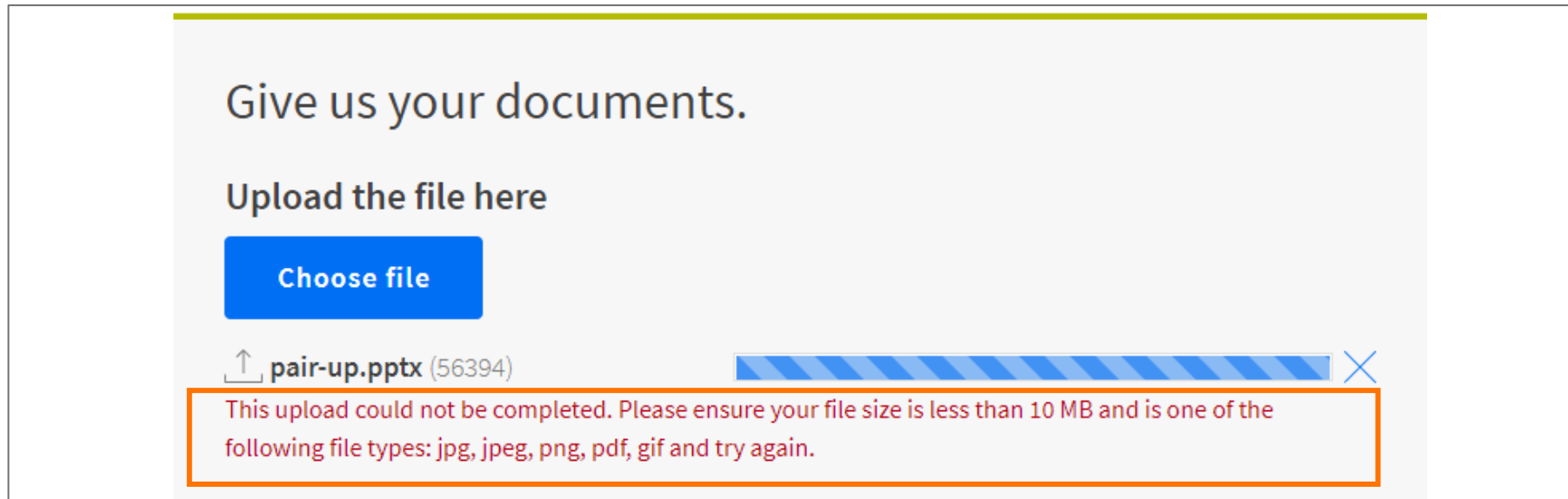
- JPG
- PDF
- JPEG
- GIF
- PNG

File Size:

Files must also be 10MB or smaller in size.

Resolving Errors with Assistance from a Service Provider
Submitting Documentation via NV Service Provider Portal

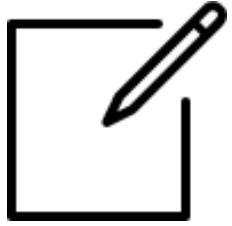- If a document is not of an acceptable file type or size, **the system will display an error message**

Questions?

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    - General inquiries: LifelineProgram@usac.org

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Thank You!