

How to Resolve Application Errors Tribal Training

June 21, 2023



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

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Meet Our Presenter



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Communications Specialist

Winta creates website content and training for consumer advocates, consumers, and service providers.

Agenda

- Program Updates
- Q1 Webinar Refresher
- How to Resolve Application Errors
 - How to Resolve Eligibility Errors
 - How to Resolve Address Errors
- Tribal Resources

Objectives

At the end of the session, you will...



...be trained to:

- support consumers in resolving Lifeline application errors



...be able to:

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

Program Updates

Recertification

- **Recertification** is an annual requirement for Lifeline subscribers. USAC conducts recertification to ensure that active Lifeline subscribers, including those who also participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), are still eligible for the Lifeline benefit.
- On May 1, 2023, USAC initiated automated eligibility database checks to verify the eligibility of **all Lifeline** subscribers due for recertification in 2023.
- Subscribers who **passed** the automated check will complete the 2023 recertification requirement and will not need to take any action for their 2023 recertification.
 - Subscribers who **failed** the automated check will be required to recertify their continued eligibility through a manual process. USAC will conduct outreach to those subscribers.

Recertification

What This Means for Subscribers

- In May, USAC began outreach to subscribers who failed the automated eligibility checks. Subscribers have approximately 60-days to recertify through a manual process.
- If a subscriber receives a letter in the mail from USAC, they must take action to recertify their benefit. Subscribers will need to complete the Lifeline Recertification Form ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)). Some subscribers will need to provide income or eligibility documentation to prove their continued eligibility for the program. USAC will notify subscribers if they need to provide documentation.
- Lifeline Recertification is still underway. Providers can check the Recertification reports daily for more information.

Recertification

What This Means for Service Providers

- Service providers should regularly monitor the “Recertification Subscriber Status Report” in the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) to identify subscribers undergoing recertification. This report will update daily to reflect the results of the automated checks.
- USAC encourages service providers to educate subscribers about USAC, why we are reaching out to them, and our recertification process. However, service providers should not provide or estimate deadlines, as these deadlines are subject to change.
- To learn more about the recertification process, visit the [Recertification](#) webpage or view the [Recertification 101 training](#).

USAC Overview

USAC Overview

- Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC): administers the Lifeline program and educates stakeholders on processes, systems, and rules and requirements
- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC): develops policies and regulations for the Lifeline program and provides guidance to USAC
- The Universal Service Fund (USF): exists to ensure that all people in the United States have access to quality, affordable connectivity service.



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.

USAC Overview

- The FCC designated USAC to administer other programs with similar missions to the universal service programs and supported through appropriate funding.

USAC Broadband Programs



Lifeline Benefit

- All eligible program participants can receive a discount of up to \$9.25 per month
- Program participants who live on qualifying Tribal lands can receive enhanced support of up to \$34.25 per month for broadband service and up to \$30.25 for voice service
- Discount may apply to qualifying fixed **or** mobile services
 - Can be applied to voice, broadband, or bundled services that meet the minimum service standards
- **Link Up:** a Tribal lands one-time benefit up to \$100 for initial set up fees at residences in specific areas



A monthly discount for phone or internet service for eligible low-income consumers

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

- The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) benefit program that helps low-income households pay for broadband service and connected devices
- Households can receive both a Lifeline benefit and an ACP benefit. The benefits can be applied to the same service or different services.
- Eligible Households can receive:



\$30 Standard Discount

Up to \$30/month discount for broadband services



\$75 Tribal Discount

Up to \$75/month discount for broadband services for households on qualifying Tribal lands



Device Discount

A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet (consumer co-pay above \$10 and less than \$50 required)

* To learn more about ACP, visit [AffordableConnectivity.gov](https://www.AffordableConnectivity.gov). Specifically, the Community Resources page has great educational materials around the program and application/enrollment processes.

USAC Overview

Lifeline Program Stakeholders

- **Service Providers**
 - Provide subscribers with Lifeline-supported services
 - Comply with program rules and requirements
- **Lifeline Subscribers**
 - Receive Lifeline-supported services
 - Keep information up to date and recertify eligibility annually if prompted
- **Lifeline Eligible Consumers**
 - Individuals eligible for the benefit
 - Not yet enrolled in the program

USAC Overview

Lifeline Program Stakeholders

- **Tribal Partners**

- Tribal governments, agencies, and nonprofits serving Tribal communities
- Collaborate with USAC to educate consumers about Lifeline and assist eligible consumers with Lifeline program processes

- **State and Federal Partners**

- Public utility commissions and agencies that provide Lifeline-qualifying government programs
- Educate consumers about Lifeline
- Facilitate data sharing with USAC

- **Consumer Advocates**

- Nonprofits, shelters, and foodbanks
- Educate consumers about Lifeline
- Share feedback with USAC/FCC to further program goals

National Verifier Overview

National Verifier Overview

Centralized Application System

- The National Verifier is a centralized application system that determines a consumer's Lifeline program eligibility
- Use of the National Verifier is required in all 56 states and territories (with the exception of the [NLAD opt-out states](#): Texas, Oregon, and California, where the National Verifier leverages the state administrator's Lifeline eligibility verification process)
- After qualifying for Lifeline, the consumer must find a participating service provider. The consumer can use the [Companies Near Me](#) tool to find providers in their area.
- The selected service provider must enter the consumer's information in the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) to enroll them in the Lifeline program.

National Verifier Overview

Centralized Application System

Consumers may apply using **one** of the three options:

Option 1:

Apply Online

- The consumer visits [LifelineSupport.org](https://www.LifelineSupport.org) and selects Apply Now.
- Online application is accessible from any computer or mobile device

Option 2:

Apply by Mail

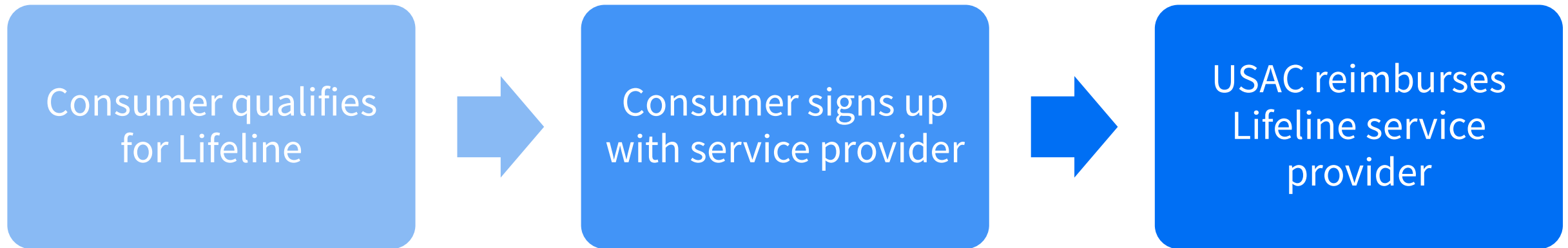
- The consumer fills out the Lifeline Application Form
 - [English Form](#)
 - [Spanish Form](#)
- The consumer mails the application and supporting documentation to the Lifeline Support Center

Option 3:

Apply Through a Service Provider or Tribal Partner

- The consumer may apply with the assistance of a service provider or Tribal partner
- Service providers or Tribal partners may submit an online application on the consumer's behalf using the NV service provider portal (also available at the Sign In button at LifelineSupport.org)
- Through the [National Verifier Eligibility Check API](#) if the service provider has elected to use that option

Lifeline Program Review



Tribal Entity Access

How to Sign Up

- Tribal partners (e.g., Tribal governments and government agencies and nonprofits serving Tribal communities) that can request access to the NV include:
 - Tribal Nation entities and their agents
 - Social service agencies
 - Other authorized third parties that have been approved by USAC for purposes of assisting individuals in applying for Lifeline support
- With a National Verifier account you may be able to:
 - Help consumers submit online applications
 - Upload customer documentation to resolve application errors
 - Track the status of applications

Tribal Entity Access

How to Apply

- Complete the [Tribal Entity Access Form](#)
- Register for a REP ID
- Send the completed Tribal Access Request form and your new representative ID to LifelineProgram@usac.org.
- USAC will review the request, grant access as appropriate, assign the user account, and notify the Tribal user via email once their access has been granted.

Tribal Entity Access

The Form

- Fill Out a Tribal Entity Access Form
- Select “Tribal-NV” as the User Type

Tribal Agency User

Tribal Agency Name:			
User Name:		Title:	
Street Address:			
	City:	State:	Zip Code:
Phone Number:		Email:	
User Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Tribal - NV		
	I have read this Tribal Access Request Form and understand my obligations.		
User Signature:		Date:	

Authorized Tribal Agency Leader

Leader Name:		Title:	
Street Address:			
	City:	State:	Zip Code:
Phone Number:		Email:	
	I have read this Tribal Access Request Form and understand my obligations.		
Leader Signature:		Date:	

Poll

Questions?

Resolving Application Errors

Resolving Application Errors

Required Information



- During the application process, consumers will submit their:
 - First and last legal name,
 - Date of birth,
 - Physical address,
 - Tribal ID or last four digits of their social security number, and
 - How they qualify for Lifeline
- The information above is required for online and mailed applications as well as applications submitted with assistance of a service provider

Resolving Application Errors

Summary

When a consumer's information cannot be verified by [checking available databases](#), 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 Support Center



- 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


Error Codes

Error	Document Required
TPIV (Identity Verification Error)	Proof of identity
AMS (Address Verification Error)	Proof of residential address
Duplicate Address	Household Worksheet
Under 18	Proof of emancipated minor
Program Eligibility	Proof of program/income
Deceased Subscriber	Proof of life

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

Resolving Application Errors

Contacting the Consumer

- 
- USAC will contact the consumer based on how they applied (mail or online)
 - 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) when applying
 - 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send copies of the requested documents/complete form if requested and • 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

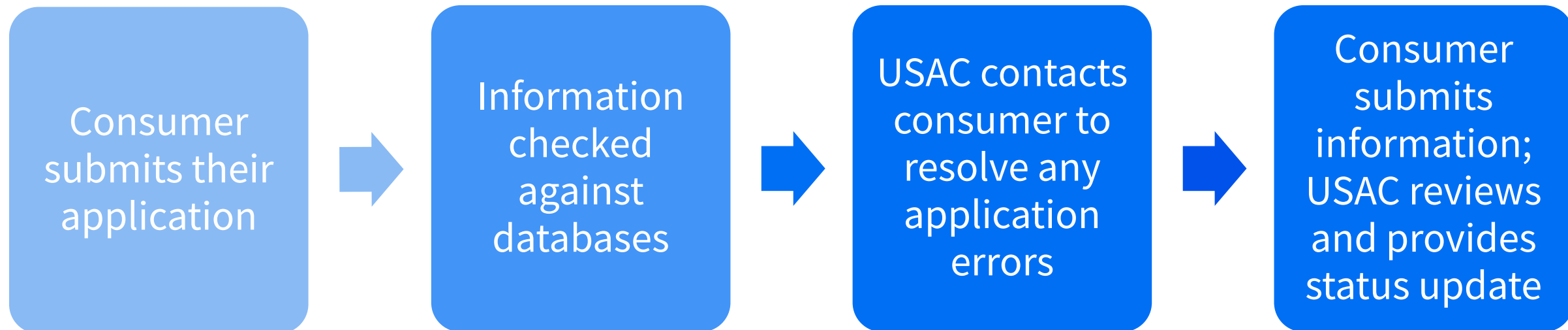
Additional Submission Requirements



- 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

Resolving Application Errors

Additional Submission Requirements



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, and
 - 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 consumer's name, or the name of the consumer's BQP, and
 - Cover a full year of income or documentation covering three consecutive months of income within the previous 12 months

Resolving Eligibility Errors

Confirm Income Eligibility

- 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 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
- ❖ Review the [AMS Resolution Guide](#) for more details on the error resolution process outlined in the upcoming slides.

Resolving Address Errors

Examples of Descriptive Address

- Consumers may enter a **descriptive address** or the intersection near where they reside if they don't have a street number and/or name

What is your home address?
The address where you will get service. Do not use a P.O. Box.

Street Number and Name	Apt, Unit, etc.	
<input type="text" value="Red House in the Middle Of Town"/>	<input type="text"/>	
City	State	Zip Code
<input type="text" value="Sample Town"/>	<input type="text" value="WA"/> ✓	<input type="text" value="12345"/>

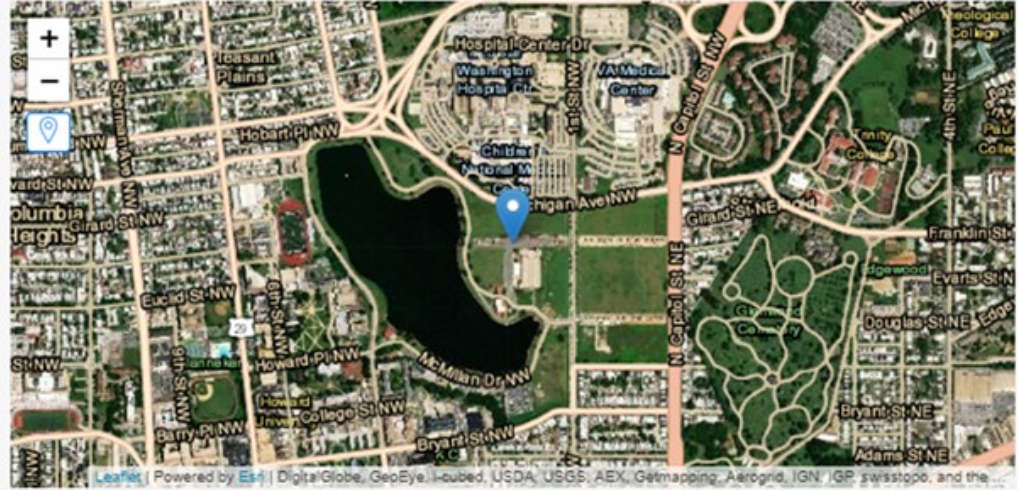
[Clear All](#) [Next >](#)

Resolving Address Errors

Verify Address Online

- The consumer can use the mapping tool
- The map can try to locate the consumer's home
 - The consumer can move the pin around to locate where they live
 - The coordinates automatically populate

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	Longitude
<input type="text" value="38.92529"/>	<input type="text" value="-77.01403"/>

[Back](#) [Next](#)

Resolving Address Errors

Verify Address by Mail

- **Option 1:** If a consumer has access to the internet but does not want to submit an online application, USAC recommends that they use a mapping tool (e.g., Google maps) to drop a pin where they live
 - Take a screenshot of the mapping tool (include the dropped pin and the consumer's coordinates) and print it
- Consumers must mail this information to USAC's Lifeline Support Center and the completed cover sheet within 45 days of initially submitting their application

Resolving Address Errors

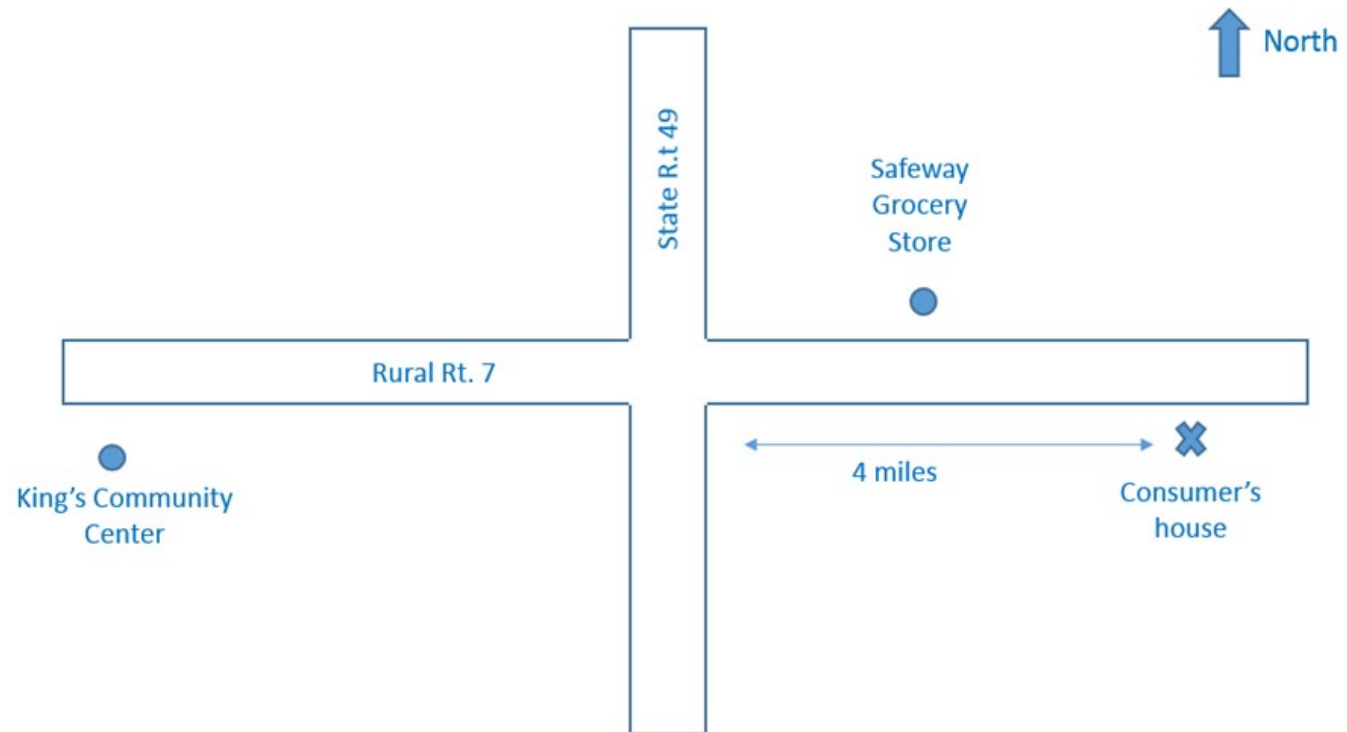
Verify Address by Mail

- **Option 2:** Consumer uses a map from their community (e.g., from a gas station, phone or internet company, or Tribal government)
 - The consumer must circle their home
 - If coordinates are known, the consumer should write them on the map
- Consumers must mail this information to USAC's Lifeline Support Center and the completed cover sheet within 45 days of initially submitting their application

Resolving Address Errors


Verify Address by Mail

- **Option 3:** Consumer draws a map
- This map should include cross roads, identifiable landmarks, and distances
- If coordinates are known, the consumer should write them on the map
- Consumers must mail this information to USAC's Lifeline Support Center and the completed cover sheet within 45 days of initially submitting their application



Resolving Address Errors

Tips to Confirm Address through Mail

-  USAC needs a way to obtain the consumer's coordinates to verify they are eligible for the enhanced Tribal benefit
 - Options 1 – 3 allow USAC to do so, even if the consumer does not include the coordinates on their submission
 - If the consumer does not include coordinates, it may take longer for USAC to verify the consumer's address
- If a consumer applies through the mail with a descriptive address, they should include one of these options with the application submission to reduce processing time

Poll

Questions?

Resources

Lifeline Tribal Webinars



- Review previous Tribal training slides:
 - [Tribal Q1 2023 Webinar: Lifeline 101](#)
 - [Tribal Q4 Webinar: How to Apply for Lifeline via Mail](#)

Resources

USAC's Websites

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

Resources

Consumer Educational Material



How to Apply – [Click to View](#)

How to Apply [Spanish] – [Click to View](#)



Manage Your Benefit – [Click to View](#)

Manage Your Benefit [Spanish] – [Click to View](#)

Resources

Consumer Educational Material



Tribal Flyer – [Click to View](#)



Tribal Toolkit – [Click to View](#)

Resources

Lifeline Support Center



- **Email:** LifelineSupport@usac.org



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

Resources

Lifeline Support Center

- **Hours:** 7 days a week, from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET
- **Support:**
 - Consumers with disabilities who need help submitting a Lifeline application may contact the support center for assistance
 - Consumer support representatives are able to provide assistance in English and Spanish
 - USAC offers a translation services vendor to provide assistance in up to an additional 200 languages in instances where the service is needed

Resources

Lifeline Program Team

- Service providers, state and federal partners, consumer advocates, and Tribal partners who need assistance outside of helping consumers with the application process should **email** LifelineProgram@usac.org to connect with a program analyst about:
 - **Technical issues** or system questions
 - **Processes, rules, and requirements.**

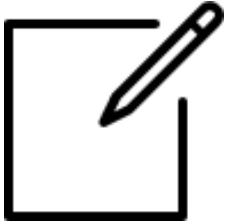
Resources

USAC Tribal Liaison

For Tribal Partners

- If you do not know where to direct your inquiry for any USAC program
 - The [USAC Tribal Liaison](#) can help guide you to public resources, call centers, or program teams.

Take Our Survey



- We want to hear about your webinar experience
- Expect an email with a unique survey link in 1-2 business days
- We appreciate your feedback

Thank You!

