



LIFELINE: Affordable Telephone Service for Income-Eligible Consumers

Lifeline is a government benefit program that provides discounts on monthly telephone service for eligible low-income consumers to help ensure they can connect to the nation's communications networks, find jobs, access health care services, connect with family and their children's schools, and call for help in an emergency.

Lifeline is supported by the federal Universal Service Fund (USF); for more information visit www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/universal-service-fund.

On March 31, 2016, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved rules to modernize Lifeline so that subscribers can also purchase discounted broadband from participating providers. Discounts will apply to stand-alone broadband, bundled voice-broadband packages - either fixed or mobile - and stand-alone voice service.

Who Pays for the Lifeline Program?

All telecommunications service providers and certain other providers of telecommunications must contribute to the federal USF based on a percentage of their end-user telecommunications revenues. These companies include wireline telephone companies, wireless telephone companies, and certain Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) providers. Some consumers may notice a "Universal Service" line item on their telephone bills. This line item appears when a company chooses to recover its USF contributions directly from its customers by billing them this charge. The FCC does not require this charge to be passed on to customers. Each company makes a business decision about whether and how to assess charges to recover its Universal Service costs.

What Benefits Are Available Under the Lifeline Program?

Lifeline provides discounts on monthly telephone service (wireline or wireless) for eligible consumers. These discounts are currently set at \$9.25 per month. Federal rules prohibit eligible low-income consumers from receiving more than ONE Lifeline service per household. That is, eligible low-income consumers may receive a Lifeline discount on either a wireline or a wireless service, but may not receive a Lifeline discount on both services at the same time.

Enhanced benefits are provided to low-income consumers who live on **Hawaiian Homelands** held in trust pursuant to the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920. See the consumer guide on Promoting Telephone Subscribership on Tribal Lands for more information at www.fcc.gov/guides/promoting-telephone-subscribership-tribal-lands-0.

How Do I Qualify for Lifeline Discounts?

The Lifeline program is available to eligible low-income consumers in every state, territory, commonwealth, and on Tribal lands. You must be eligible to enroll. To participate in the program, consumers must either have an income that is at or below 135% of the federal Poverty Guidelines (**see table**) or participate in one of the following assistance programs:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps or SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- National School Lunch Program's Free Lunch Program
- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TTANF)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
- Head Start (if income eligibility criteria are met)
- State assistance programs (if applicable).

2017 Poverty Guidelines for Hawaii	
# of persons in family/household	Income Requirement
1	\$13,860
2	\$18,670
3	\$23,480
4	\$28,290
5	\$33,100
6	\$37,910
7	\$42,720
8	\$47,530
Each additional person add	\$4,810

Can I Get More Than One Discounted Service?

No. Federal rules prohibit eligible low-income consumers from receiving more than ONE Lifeline discount per household. An eligible consumer may receive a discount on either a wireline or wireless service, but not both. If you or any other person in your household is currently receiving more than one monthly Lifeline service, you must select one provider to provide your Lifeline service and you must contact the other provider to de-enroll from their program. Subscribers found to be violating this rule may also be subject to criminal and/or civil penalties. Key provisions of the Lifeline rules include the following:

- Lifeline is available only to eligible consumers.
- Only one Lifeline benefit is permitted per household. Federal rules prohibit consumers from receiving more than one Lifeline service. If a consumer or his or her household currently has more than one Lifeline discounted service, they must select a single provider immediately or be subject to penalties.
- Only low-income consumers with proof of eligibility are qualified to enroll.
- **Subscribers have an obligation to recertify their eligibility every year and should respond to their Lifeline Provider's attempts to recertify eligibility.**

Subscribers must verify that they remain eligible to participate in the Lifeline program once each calendar year. Subscribers who fail to recertify their eligibility will be de-enrolled from the Lifeline Program.

Consumers will be required to make certain certifications upon signing up for Lifeline and each year after that, including:

- The subscriber or a member of the subscriber's household, participates in a qualifying federal program or meets the income qualifications for Lifeline

- The consumer's household receives only single Lifeline service
- The subscriber provided proof of eligibility, if required to do so
- The number of individuals in the subscriber's household if applying for Lifeline based on income
- The information contained in the Lifeline application is true and correct to the best of the subscriber's knowledge and that providing false or fraudulent information to receive Lifeline benefits is punishable by law;
- The subscriber resides on Federally-recognized Tribal lands if applying for Tribal Lands Lifeline support
- The subscriber must acknowledge that he or she may be required to re-certify continued eligibility for Lifeline, and if the subscriber could lose the Lifeline service if he or she fails to recertify.
- The subscriber will also be required to provide certain information to the phone company or a state agency (depending how subscribers in their state sign up for Lifeline), including:
 - Name and address information - Consumers who do not have a permanent residential address must provide a temporary address, which cannot be a P.O. Box. If a consumer resides at a temporary address, the telephone service provider or state agency may require confirmation of the address
 - Date of birth and the last 4 digits of the consumer's Social Security Number
 - Consumers participating in the Lifeline program must notify the telephone service provider within 30 days if the consumer moves
 - Consumers participating in the Lifeline program must notify the telephone service provider within 30 days if the consumer is no longer eligible for Lifeline.

Frequently Asked Questions About the Lifeline Program

Am I eligible? Use the Lifeline Eligibility Pre-Screening tool on the Universal Service Administrative (USAC) website at www.lifelinesupport.org.

How do I enroll? Apply for Lifeline through a Lifeline Program provider in your state or designated state agency. To locate a Lifeline provider in your state go to www.lifelinesupport.org or call USAC's toll-free number (1-888-641-8722).

What documentation do I need to provide at enrollment? Acceptable documentation for Lifeline program eligibility verification includes: Current or prior year's statement of benefits from a qualifying program; notice letter of participation in qualifying program; program participation documents (or copy); or another official document of a qualifying program.

Acceptable documentation for income eligibility verification includes: The 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 or pension statement of benefits; Unemployment or Workers' Compensation statement of benefits; federal or Tribal notice letter of participation in General Assistance; or divorce decree, child support award, or other official document containing income information. The subscriber must present the same type of documentation covering 3 consecutive months within the previous 12 months, if the documentation does not cover a full year of income.

Does the phone service have to be in the name of the person receiving the program benefit? The phone service does not need to be in the name of the person receiving the benefit; however the person who qualifies for Lifeline must be a member of the same household as the subscriber.

How is Household defined for purposes of the Lifeline Program? "Household" is defined as any individual or group of individuals who live together at the same address as one economic unit. An "economic unit" is

defined as "all adult individuals contributing to and sharing in the income and expenses of a household." However, Lifeline support is available to eligible low-income subscribers living in group living facilities. Lifeline applicants may demonstrate when initially enrolling in the program that any other Lifeline recipients residing at their residential address are part of a separate household by completing the one-per-household worksheet.

What do I do if I am receiving more than one Lifeline service? Households with duplicate Lifeline services must select a single provider and de-enroll from other Lifeline programs. Consumers violating the one per household rule may be subject to criminal and/or civil penalties.

Do I need to verify my eligibility? Yes, every year. Once you are enrolled in Lifeline, you must recertify your continued eligibility on an annual basis. If you become ineligible for the benefit, either because your income has increased, you no longer qualify for a federal benefit program, or someone else in your household gets a Lifeline service, you must contact your provider immediately to de-enroll from the program otherwise you may be subject to penalties.

What if I have free Lifeline? If you receive Lifeline for free, you must use your service every 60 days in order to maintain the benefit.

Can I report Lifeline fraud? Yes. The FCC's Enforcement Bureau maintains a dedicated Lifeline Fraud Tip Line. Call **1-855-4LL-TIPS (or 1-855-455-8477)**, or email Lifelinetips@fcc.gov if you suspect Lifeline fraud. Callers are encouraged to provide as much detail as possible, including the name and contact information of the individuals involved and the companies they are using to receive Lifeline-supported phone service.

For More Information To find more information about eligibility and how to apply for Lifeline benefits, visit www.lifelinesupport.org, call USAC's toll-free number (1-888-641-8722), call the FCC's toll-free customer service number (1-888-CALL-FCC), or contact a Lifeline Program provider in Hawaii:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Service Type</u>
American Broadband and Telecommunications Company (American Assistance)	877-266-7212	Wireless
Blue Jay Wireless	855-425-8529	Wireless
Boomerang Wireless, LLC (enTouch Wireless)	866-488-8719	Wireless
Budget Mobile	888-777-4007	Wireless
Hawaiian Telecom, Inc.	808-643-3456	Wireline
Safe Link Wireless (TracFone)	800-723-3546	Wireless
Tempo Telecom, LLC	877-822-8501	Wireline