

Published on *SeniorNavigator* (<https://seniornavigator.org>)

## **Lifeline Support for Affordable Communications**

[Español](#)

**Lifeline: Overcoming the digital divide and opening doors to opportunity.**

Lifeline is an FCC program that helps make communications services more affordable for low-income consumers. Lifeline provides subscribers a discount on qualifying monthly telephone service, broadband Internet service, or bundled voice-broadband packages purchased from participating wireline or wireless providers. The discount helps ensure that low-income consumers can afford 21<sup>st</sup> century broadband and the access it provides to jobs, healthcare, and educational resources.

### **Lifeline During Coronavirus Pandemic**

To help keep Americans connected during the coronavirus pandemic, the FCC has temporarily waived recertification and reverification requirements for subscribers residing on Tribal lands, and has extended those waivers until September 30, 2022. The latest [FCC waiver order was released June 30, 2022](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-22-691A1.pdf) (download PDF: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-22-691A1.pdf>) and it will help ensure that Lifeline subscribers are not involuntarily removed from the Lifeline program during this time of national crisis. All other Lifeline waivers previously in place as a result of the coronavirus pandemic have ended.

If you're looking for more information about the Affordable Connectivity Program [go here](#).

### **How Lifeline Works**

Lifeline provides up to a \$9.25 monthly discount on service for eligible low-income subscribers and up to \$34.25 per month for those on Tribal lands. Subscribers may receive a Lifeline discount on either a wireline or a wireless service, but they may not receive a discount on both services at the same time. Lifeline also supports

broadband Internet service and broadband-voice bundles. FCC rules prohibit more than one Lifeline service per household.

Lifeline is available to eligible low-income consumers in every state, commonwealth, territory, and on Tribal lands. The Lifeline program is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). USAC is responsible for helping consumers apply for the program, understand eligibility requirements, and keep their benefit current through an annual recertification process. [USAC's website](#) provides additional information regarding the program, including program requirements.

To participate in the Lifeline program, consumers must either have an income that is at or below 135% of the [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#) or participate in certain federal assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental Security Income, the Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit, or certain Tribal Programs. You can see if you are eligible by reviewing the information available at [lifelinesupport.org](https://lifelinesupport.org) (click "Do I Qualify?").

### **National Verifier for Lifeline Eligibility**

To apply for Lifeline, a consumer must generally use the [National Verifier application system](#). The National Verifier is a centralized system established by the FCC and operated by USAC that verifies Lifeline applicants' eligibility and recertifies subscriber eligibility annually. Consumers who would like assistance from a service provider when applying can use the "[Companies Near Me](#)" tool to locate a Lifeline program service provider in their area.

Please note that consumers in California (except broadband-only consumers), Texas, and Oregon will continue to apply for the federal Lifeline benefit through the state's existing application process as they do today. For broadband-only consumers in California, consumers will need to apply through the National Verifier application system and the National Verifier will check the consumer's eligibility. For specific directions on how to apply for Lifeline in all three states, visit the [National Verifier](#) and select the relevant state from the drop-down menu and press "Get Started."

If you have questions about your application, or would like an application mailed to you, contact Lifeline at (800) 234-9473 or [LifelineSupport@usac.org](mailto:LifelineSupport@usac.org).

### **Program Rules**

Key rules include the following:

- Lifeline is available only to subscribers whose eligibility can be verified by checking a program eligibility database or by submitting documentation demonstrating their eligibility.
- Only one Lifeline benefit is permitted per household. Federal rules prohibit subscribers from receiving more than one Lifeline service. If a subscriber or his or her household currently has more than one Lifeline-discounted service, they must de-enroll from other Lifeline services immediately or be subject to penalties.
- Only low-income subscribers who have been found to be eligible are qualified to enroll.
- Subscribers must recertify their eligibility every year and should respond to any requests from the National Verifier's or state Lifeline administrator to recertify eligibility. Subscribers who fail to recertify their eligibility will be de-enrolled from the Lifeline program. Please note that, pursuant to a waiver approved by the FCC, recertification requirements for those subscribers living on Tribal lands has been suspended until September 30, 2022.

### **For More Information**

⇒ [Lifeline FAQs](#)

⇒ [Lifeline Support for Affordable Communities](#) (pdf)

Article Source

Federal Trade Commission

Source URL

<https://www.fcc.gov>

Last Reviewed

Saturday, October 1, 2022