

# LIFELINE INFORMATION – NORTHEAST FLORIDA TELEPHONE COMPANY

## Lifeline Service

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The Lifeline Program is a federal program that provides a credit of \$9.25 monthly on your communications services bill to eligible low-income households. The Federal Lifeline Credit can be applied to either wireless or landline telephone, home internet or a cell phone data plan. In areas where Broadband speeds are not at or above minimum standards for Lifeline-supported services, you must be offered at least 4/1 download/upload.

Lifeline customers are required to remain with their service provider for a minimum of 60 days for voice service and 12 months for broadband services. Bundled service offerings where both voice and broadband meet the minimum service standards will be subject to the default 12-month port freeze. At the end of a subscriber's port freeze, the subscriber may continue receiving the Lifeline benefit on a month-to-month basis or transfer to another provider. If you chose to switch carriers, a new benefit port freeze period will begin with the new carrier. The Port Freeze will be eliminated on March 19, 2018.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Am I Eligible?

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There are two ways to qualify for the Lifeline Program.

#### One: Income-Based Eligibility

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If your household's income is at or below 135 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, you may be eligible for a Lifeline Program discount. To determine if your household meets the criteria, use our [federal poverty guidelines eligibility chart](#). This chart is updated each year.

Find the total number of members of your household in the left column and your household location and if your household is at or below the listed household income, your household may be eligible for a Lifeline Program discount.

#### Two: Program-Based Eligibility

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If you, or someone in your household, participate in one of the following federal or state assistance programs, you may be eligible for a Lifeline Program discount.

- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA) or Section 8;
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps;
- Medicaid;
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
- Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit; and
- Income Poverty Level – at or below 135%

### Are there any Restrictions?

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Only one Lifeline Program discount (either wireless or landline telephone, home internet or a cell phone data plan) is allowed per household. The definition of a "household" is anyone living at an address (including children, relatives, people not related to you, etc.) who share income(s) and household expenses.

We will use a Household Worksheet to determine if more than one household resides at your address. The worksheet must be completed when any new applicant applies for a Lifeline Program discount at an address where a discount is already being received.

### How do I apply for Lifeline?

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If you are eligible for a Lifeline Program discount, you must complete a Lifeline Program application and provide proof of your eligibility. You may stop by our office or apply online at [www.nefcom.net](http://www.nefcom.net).

### What proof of eligibility do I need to provide?

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#### Program-Based Eligibility Documentation

If you are applying based on federal program-based eligibility, you will be required to provide a copy of a document showing proof of your participation in the qualifying program. For example, if you are eligible for the Lifeline Program because you participate in the Medicaid program, you will need to submit a copy of your Medicaid benefit card with your application.

#### Income-Based Eligibility Documentation

If you are applying based on your household's income being at or below 135 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, you must provide your service provider with income documentation. Acceptable documentation includes:

- Current income statement from an employer
- Prior year's state, federal or Tribal tax return
- A Social Security statement of benefits
- A Veterans Administration statement of benefits
- A retirement or pension statement of benefits
- An Unemployment or Workers' Compensation statement of benefits
- A federal or Tribal notice letter of participation in General Assistance
- A divorce decree
- A child support award
- Other official document containing income information

## Is my information verified?

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Once you submit your completed application and proof of eligibility we will enter your application information into USAC's database that will verify your identity and check to make sure your household is not already receiving a Lifeline Program discount. To check your identity, USAC will work with your service provider to complete a Third Party Identity Verification (TPIV). In most cases, the information provided will be verified and you will be enrolled in the Lifeline Program and eligible to receive your discount soon thereafter.

There are some instances where an identity is unable to be verified. In these cases, we will contact you to let you know of the issue, called a TPIV failure, and may ask for further documentation verifying your identity. You will be required to submit copies of the required documentation as soon as possible.

Following are some examples of documents that we may ask for to help prove your identity:

- Driver's license (unexpired)
- Birth certificate
- W-2
- Prior year's state, federal, or Tribal tax return
- Social Security card
- Certificate of Naturalization
- Certificate of U. S. Citizenship
- Permanent resident card (unexpired)
- Permanent resident alien card (unexpired)
- U.S. government, military, state, or Tribal issued ID (unexpired)
- Passport (unexpired)
- Military discharge documentation
- Weapons permit (unexpired)
- Government assistance program document (that includes proof of identity)
- Statement of benefits from a qualifying program (that includes proof of identity)
- Unemployment or Worker's compensation statement of benefits

If your identity is able to be verified using this additional documentation, you will be enrolled to receive a Lifeline Program discount. If USAC is unable to verify your identity, you will be denied a Lifeline Program discount.

## How do I continue to receive Lifeline benefits?

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If you receive a Lifeline Program discount, you must certify each year that 1) you are still eligible to receive the Lifeline Program discount and that 2) no one else in your household is receiving a Lifeline Program discount.

Each year, you will receive a notice that reminds you to recertify your eligibility for the Lifeline Program and gives you instructions on how to do it. You must complete this recertification process by the deadline given to you or you will lose your Lifeline Program discount. If you fail to complete your recertification by the deadline, you will no longer receive a Lifeline Program discount.

If you are no longer eligible for the Lifeline Program, you must let us know within 30 days of receiving the recertification letter. Once you let us know that you are no longer eligible for the Lifeline Program, we will discontinue your Lifeline Program discount.