

# Get Connected: Promoting Telephone Subscribership In Indian Country

## FCC Consumer Facts

Do you live on a federally-recognized Indian tribe's reservation, pueblo, colony, or former reservation in Oklahoma, or within an Indian Allotment or an Alaska Native region established by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act? Do you take part in federal or state assistance programs? Is your income at or below 135 percent of the federal Poverty Guidelines?

If you meet any of these requirements, you may be eligible for telephone service and installation discounts under the Lifeline Assistance and Link-Up America programs. The Lifeline Assistance program enables participants living on tribal lands to receive basic monthly telephone service at their primary residence for as little as one dollar a month. The Link-Up America program provides a discount on the initial installation of a traditional, wireline telephone or activation of a wireless telephone for a primary residence.

### Background

It is critical that telecommunications services are available to "all the people" of the United States, including low-income consumers and those in rural, insular, and high-cost areas.

Because American Indian and Alaska Native communities, on average, have the lowest reported telephone subscribership levels in the country, the FCC has adopted enhanced programs, paid for by the Universal Service Fund (USF), to promote using telecommunications services and building telecommunications infrastructure on tribal lands.

### Enhanced Lifeline and Link-Up Support for Tribal Lands

Lifeline Assistance provides discounts on basic monthly service at the primary residence for qualified telephone subscribers. These discounts vary from state to state, depending on whether the state has its own Lifeline program.

### Enhanced Lifeline and Link-Up Support for Tribal Lands (cont'd.)

Lifeline Assistance also includes **Toll Limitation Service**, which enables a telephone subscriber to limit the amount of long distance calls that can be made from a phone.

**Enhanced Lifeline Assistance for tribal lands** provides qualified telephone subscribers living on tribal lands with discounts of up to \$35 per month on basic monthly telephone service. As a result, depending on current rates, qualified subscribers on tribal lands may receive basic local phone service for as little as \$1 a month.

**Enhanced Link-Up Support for tribal lands** provides qualified subscribers with a one-time discount on initial installation or activation of a wireline or wireless telephone for the primary residence. The discount is up to 50 percent of the first \$60 of the installation fee. Qualified subscribers living on tribal lands with installation or activation fees above \$60 receive an additional discount of up to \$70, to cover 100 percent of all charges between \$60 and \$130. For example, a \$70 installation fee may be reduced to \$30 for a qualified subscriber. The Link-Up program also allows subscribers to pay the remaining amount that they owe on a deferred schedule, interest-free.

(More)



## Qualifying for Enhanced Lifeline and Link-Up Support

The Lifeline and Link-Up programs are available to qualified subscribers in every state, territory, and commonwealth. Eligibility criteria vary by state. States that have their own Lifeline program may have their own eligibility criteria. For states that rely solely on the federal Lifeline and Link-Up program eligibility criteria, a subscriber must either have an income that is at or below 135 percent of the federal Poverty Guidelines, or participate in one of the following assistance programs:

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

The qualifying income in all federal default states except Alaska and Hawaii varies from a maximum of \$14,621 for a family of one to a maximum of \$49,964 for a family of eight. For each additional person in the household beyond eight, add \$5,049. To find the specific eligibility requirements for your state, visit the Web site of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) at [www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org). You may also call

## Qualifying for Enhanced Lifeline and Link-Up Support (cont'd.)

a toll-free number – 1-888-641-8722 – to ask general questions about eligibility, but *not* to apply to participate in the Lifeline and Link-Up programs. To find out how to apply, visit the USAC Web site at [www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org), or call your local telephone company.

You can also contact your local telephone company or your state public service commission for more information about these programs and to determine whether or not you qualify for discounts. Contact information for your state public service commission can be found on the Web site of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, [www.naruc.org/commissions.cfm](http://www.naruc.org/commissions.cfm), or in the blue pages or government section of your local telephone directory.

### For More Information

For information about other telecommunications issues, visit the FCC's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau Web site at [www.fcc.gov/cgb](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb), or contact the FCC's Consumer Center by e-mailing [fccinfo@fcc.gov](mailto:fccinfo@fcc.gov); calling 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice or 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY; faxing 1-866-418-0232; or writing to:

Federal Communications Commission  
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau  
Consumer Inquiries and Complaints Division  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554.

You can also view fact sheets on other Universal Service programs on the FCC Web site at:

[www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/universalservice.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/universalservice.html)

[www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/usp\\_Schools.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/usp_Schools.html)

[www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/usp\\_RuralHealthcare.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/usp_RuralHealthcare.html)

[www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/llu.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/llu.html).

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