



Consumer Alert

Lifeline and Link-up Program Update: Seven Wireless Telephone Companies Now Offer Discounts

The Michigan Public Service Commission urges qualifying low-income residents to apply for the Lifeline Telephone Assistance and Link-Up America Programs. These programs make basic local telephone service more affordable for income-eligible families throughout Michigan. Those who qualify could receive discounts for monthly telephone bills and/or initial installation costs of telephone service. **And now, the following seven wireless companies offer a Lifeline discount: AllTel Communications (Verizon Wireless), New Cingular Wireless (AT&T Mobility), SprintCom Wireless/Nextel West, Nexus Communications (Reachout Wireless), Thumb Cellular, TracFone Wireless (prepaid) and Virgin Mobile. ***

What are the benefits?

Lifeline provides discounts for basic local landline telephone service (and wireless service provided by the seven companies above) to eligible low-income customers.

- Eligible low-income customers under age 65 can receive a minimum discount of \$8.25 per month (the current average discount is \$10.00 per month and varies depending on the provider).
- Eligible low-income customers 65 years of age or older can receive a minimum discount of \$12.35 per month.

Link-Up reduces the installation charge for landline phone service by 50%, up to \$30, for those customers meeting income eligibility guidelines. Customers can request a deferred payment schedule for the remaining installation charges.

The rate reductions for both Lifeline and Link-Up cannot be greater than the cost of the basic service.

*Income guidelines for discount wireless service are available at lifeline.gov/lifeline_Consumers.html

How do you apply?

Contact your local landline telephone company to apply. The phone number and information on Lifeline and Link-Up can generally be found in the front of your telephone book. If you are a customer of one of the seven participating wireless companies, contact the company directly. You may be asked to provide documentation to demonstrate your eligibility.

Who is eligible?

To qualify for Lifeline and/or Link-Up, a customer's household income must be at or below the guidelines listed in the chart below, or the customer must 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, or
- The National School Lunch Program's Free Lunch

<u>150% of Poverty Guideline's Maximum Income</u>	
<u># of Household Members</u>	<u>Annual Income</u>
1	\$16,245
2	\$21,855
3	\$27,465
4	\$33,075
5	\$38,685
6	\$44,295
7	\$49,905
8	\$55,515
For each Additional Household Member, add:	\$5,610

Telephone companies may require annual re-enrollment and verification of income eligibility.

