

# Issue Brief

## Lifeline

### 1. What is the Lifeline program?

Low-income customers may be eligible for a discount on residential basic local exchange (landline) service through the Michigan Lifeline program or may be eligible for a discount on voice and/or broadband service through the federal Lifeline program. These programs make these services more affordable for income-eligible families. However, customers may not receive multiple Lifeline discounts for multiple services.

### 2. Have there been any recent changes to the Lifeline program?

Yes, [Public Act 34 of 2020](#) amended Section 316 of the Michigan Telecommunications Act which aligned Michigan's Lifeline program eligibility criteria with the federal Lifeline program. Also, in 2016, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a [Lifeline Modernization order](#) which changed the federal Lifeline eligibility requirements.

### 3. What is the impact of the federal Lifeline Modernization order on the current Michigan Lifeline discount, and will Michigan customers' state discount be impacted?

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) issued an order in December 2018 in Case No. [U-20335](#) which found that despite the changes being made to the federal Lifeline program, residential basic local exchange (landline) providers shall continue to offer a Lifeline discount of \$8.25 per month to low-income customers and \$12.35 to low-income senior customers consistent with Section 316 of the [Michigan Telecommunications Act](#) (MTA).

### 4. What is the role of the MPSC with respect to Michigan's Lifeline program?

Under Section 316 of the MTA, the MPSC ensures that each provider of basic local exchange (landline) service offers service at discounted rates to qualifying low-income customers.

### 5. What are the eligibility requirements for the Michigan Lifeline program?

The Michigan Lifeline program offers a discount to qualifying low-income Michigan customers for landline service only. To qualify, a customer's annual household income must be at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines or the customer must participate in one of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Tribal Eligibility Programs (and living on federally recognized Tribal lands)
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension Program

### 6. Which telecommunications providers offer the Michigan Lifeline discount?

All residential basic local exchange (landline) providers operating in Michigan are required to offer discounted Lifeline service to their customers.

### 7. How long can a qualifying customer be enrolled in the Michigan Lifeline program?

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

## 8. What are the eligibility requirements for the federal Lifeline program?

The federal Lifeline program includes a federal benefit for landline, wireless or broadband service from your provider. To qualify for the federal lifeline benefit, a customer's annual household income must be at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines or the customer must participate in one of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Tribal Eligibility Programs (and living on federally recognized Tribal lands)
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension Program

Additional information regarding the federal Lifeline program and benefits that are offered may be found at [www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org).

## 9. How do eligible customers apply for the Lifeline program?

Eligible customers should contact their provider. In addition, customers may also contact Universal Service Administrative Company [online](#) or by calling (800) 234-9473 to obtain information about Lifeline providers in Michigan.

## 10. Is more information available regarding the Lifeline programs?

See the MPSC [Michigan Lifeline Program](#) and [Federal Lifeline Program](#) consumer tip sheets for additional information regarding the Lifeline programs.

For more information, visit:

[MPSC Website](#)

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