

What is the Lifeline Program?

The purpose of the Lifeline program is to help low-income Americans access affordable phone service.

Discounts from state and federal funds help make telephone service more affordable.

Minnesota ranked
1st in percentage of
households with
telephone service
in 2010

Am I eligible?

1. Telephone service must be in your name
2. You must participate in at least one of the qualifying programs listed on the back of this brochure

OR

prove your income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines

You are only eligible for discounts for ONE LINE, one phone number per household.

You cannot receive a discount on both landline and cell phone service.

What discounts are available to me?

INSTALLATION DISCOUNTS:

LINK-UP - Provides a discount for installing new telephone service, including some cell phone service. (federally-funded)

Link-Up discounts half the installation charge up to \$30. Link-Up also lets consumers borrow up to \$200 of set-up fees, interest-free, for up to one year.

Link-Up is not available to pay old bills, purchase a phone or wire your home for service.

MONTHLY DISCOUNTS:

LIFELINE - Provides a monthly discount on your local telephone service, including some cell phone service. (federally-funded) Lifeline is offered by many (but not all) phone companies. Discounts usually range from \$8-10.00 and may change without notice. Check with your phone company to see what they offer.

TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PLAN (TAP) - Provides a monthly discount of \$2.50 on your local telephone service and may change without notice. (state-funded)

When can I expect my discounts?

It can take up to two months for the discounts to show up on a bill. You must pay the phone bill until that time. Discounts will not be applied to past due amounts.

What if I have bad credit?

DEPOSITS - If you have credit problems, you may be required to pay a deposit before setting up telephone service. Consumers who are eligible for the Link-Up, Lifeline and TAP program discounts do not have to pay a deposit if they agree to block long distance service.

LONG DISTANCE BLOCKING - This is called "toll limitation" or "toll blocking." Customers using this service can still use pre-paid calling cards or dial-around services to place long-distance calls.

If your phone company is threatening to disconnect your service because of late or nonpayment of bills, you can ask your company to apply "toll limitation" or "toll blocking" to restrict your phone calls to local numbers only.

Have more questions?

Minnesota Public Utilities
Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
Saint Paul, MN 55101-2147

Consumer Assistance
651.296.0406
Toll Free: 1.800.657.3782
Fax: 651.297.7073

E-mail: consumer.puc@state.mn.us

QUALIFYING PROGRAMS

- Medicaid/Medical Assistance
- Food Support (food stamps)
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
- National School Free Lunch Program (the phone must be in an adult's name)

ADDITIONAL QUALIFYING PROGRAMS FOR PERSONS LIVING ON A RESERVATION

- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribally-administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Head Start (only those meeting its income qualifying standard)
- Tribal National School Free Lunch Program

OR INCOME IS AT OR BELOW 135% OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES

If none of the above programs apply, please provide one of the following documents for proof of income level.

- Last year's State, Federal or Tribal Tax Return
- Social Security Benefits Statement
- Current annual income statement from employer
- Retirement/Pension Benefits Statement
- Three consecutive months of most recent paycheck stubs
- Divorce Decree
- Child Support Document
- Veterans Administration Benefits Statement
- Unemployment/Workmen's Compensation Statement of Benefits

Send your application and proof of income directly to your telephone company.

- One application form may be used to apply for one, two or all three programs.
- Contact your phone company for an application form. Forms may also be downloaded at <http://www.puc.state.mn.us/consumer/assist/tsdapp05.pdf>
- Program participants are randomly sampled each year to verify eligibility. Those selected must provide proof of eligibility to the telephone company. If you do not respond, the phone company is required to stop the discounts.
- If your discounts are stopped for failure to respond, you can reapply for the discounts at any time by providing proof of eligibility.
- If you do not submit proof you must wait one year before reapplying with the same carrier.

Find more information about the federal telephone assistance programs Lifeline and Link-Up at www.lifeline.gov.

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e. large print or audio) by calling 651.296.0406 (voice). Citizens with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through Minnesota Relay at 1.800.627.3529 or by dialing 711.

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Minnesota Telephone Service Discount Programs



Is the cost of installation preventing you from getting a phone?

Interested in paying less for basic service?

**Why wait?
Apply to get your discounts today!**