



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Lifeline

FCC and USAC Release Additional Waiver in Response to COVID-19

June 1, 2020

FCC Eases Documentation Requirements in Response to COVID-19

The FCC issued an [order](#) to make it easier for those who reside in rural areas on Tribal lands to enroll in the Lifeline Program during the COVID-19 pandemic. In times of social distancing, access to affordable communications services for low-income households is more important than ever.

Temporary Changes Allow Tribal Consumers Who Must Submit Extra Documentation to Receive Service Immediately

Typically, during the Lifeline application process, the National Verifier must provide a qualification prior to receiving the Lifeline benefit, but with the waiver consumers may enroll and receive the benefit before they are officially accepted.

On Monday, June 1, 2020, the FCC temporarily waived through August 31, 2020 the requirement that consumers residing in rural areas on Tribal lands must finish submitting any necessary documentation prior to receiving their Lifeline service.

Lifeline providers serving consumers who reside in rural areas on Tribal lands may now choose to begin providing Lifeline service to consumers even if the consumer has not yet submitted supporting documentation to confirm their eligibility. The consumer will then have 45 days to submit their documentation to qualify for the benefit.

While the service provider may begin providing Lifeline service immediately after the consumer submits an application and for 45 days thereafter notwithstanding any unresolved eligibility check failures, the service provider may not claim that subscriber for reimbursement until the subscriber has completed their application and received a positive eligibility result.

USAC will be reaching out to service providers who serve rural Tribal consumers to provide training on this process.

Program Integrity, Recertification, and Reverification Waivers Extended

Additionally, the order extended the FCC's prior pandemic-related waivers of the Lifeline Program rules and processes, including: Recertification; Reverification; General de-enrollment; Usage requirements; and Three-month documentation requirements for income verification.

This action extended the current waivers through **August 31, 2020**. This waiver extension helps ensure that no Lifeline subscribers are involuntarily de-enrolled from the Lifeline Program during this time.

The Lifeline Program remains dedicated to serving Lifeline consumers during this time. These temporary adjustments help make that possible.

Need Help? Contact Us!

For questions about the Lifeline Program, call (800) 234-9473 or email LifelineProgram@usac.org.