



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU PROVIDES GUIDANCE ON UNIVERSAL FORMS FOR THE LIFELINE PROGRAM

WC Docket No. 11-42

In this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) provides guidance regarding the new universal forms for the Lifeline program that consumers and eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) must use to verify and recertify subscriber eligibility for the federal Lifeline benefit beginning on July 1, 2018. In the *2016 Lifeline Order*, the Commission delegated to the Bureau the objective of creating uniform, standardized Lifeline forms for all subscribers receiving Lifeline benefits, if the Bureau “believes that doing so will aid program administration.”¹ Implementing universal forms will foster greater consistency in the Lifeline eligibility determination and recertification processes, thereby aiding in program administration and reducing improper payments due to errors in application and recertification forms.

The Bureau has worked closely with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) to develop user-friendly, plain language forms that will be used to apply for and recertify eligibility for Lifeline program benefits. These forms are intended for use in all states and territories, regardless of whether the National Verifier has been rolled out in that state or territory. The three universal forms will be made available on USAC’s website.² The forms will be available in both English and Spanish language versions on USAC’s website.

If state law, state regulations, or a state agency requires ETCs to use a pre-existing universal enrollment or recertification form for Lifeline subscribers in that state, ETCs may continue to use those forms instead of the corresponding forms identified in this Public Notice. If a state or ETC requires additional information from Lifeline applicants beyond the information collected in the FCC’s universal Lifeline forms, an ETC may include additional questions in their online forms or include an attachment with paper copies of the FCC’s universal Lifeline forms.

Beginning on July 1, 2018, ETCs using paper enrollment forms must use the FCC’s universal Lifeline forms. ETCs enrolling Lifeline applicants with an electronic form must use exactly the same language used in the FCC’s universal Lifeline forms. A Spanish language version of the form will be available on USAC’s website, and ETCs should use that version for Spanish-speaking consumers. For other languages, direct translations of the FCC’s universal Lifeline forms into other languages are acceptable. ETCs that claim Lifeline reimbursement for a subscriber whose enrollment or 60-day

¹ *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization et al.*, Third Report and Order, Further Report and Order, and Order on Reconsideration, 31 FCC Rcd 3962, 4006, para. 126 (2016) (*2016 Lifeline Order*).

² See USAC, Lifeline Forms (last visited February 13, 2018), <http://www.usac.org/li/tools/forms/default.aspx>.

recertification notice period³ began on or after July 1, 2018 using noncompliant forms will be subject to repayments to the Fund and potential enforcement actions. For ETCs that elect USAC to conduct recertification on their behalf, we expect that USAC will incorporate the universal recertification form as it updates its processes in launching the National Verifier, and USAC may continue to use its existing compliant recertification forms until that point. ETCs may continue to claim those subscribers whose eligibility is recertified through USAC.

FCC Form 5629 – The Lifeline Program Application Form

FCC Form 5629 will be used in all states and territories to obtain the information necessary to evaluate whether a consumer is eligible to receive Lifeline service and to obtain the consumer's certifications, as required by 47 CFR § 54.410.

FCC Form 5630 – The Lifeline Program Annual Recertification Form

FCC Form 5630 will be used in all states and territories to recertify the eligibility subscribers who are receiving Lifeline service. Lifeline recipients must recertify their eligibility on an annual basis to comply with 47 CFR § 54.410(f).

FCC Form 5631 – The Lifeline Program Household Worksheet

FCC Form 5631 will be used in all states and territories to obtain information necessary to confirm whether a consumer is eligible for Lifeline service in instances where the consumer shares an address with another Lifeline recipient, as required by 47 CFR § 54.410(g).

For further information, please contact Allison Jones, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau, at (202) 418-1571, or at allison.jones@fcc.gov.

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³ See 47 CFR § 54.405(e)(4).