

Aurora Housing Authority

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The Aurora Housing Authority supports the reform of Lifeline Program to allow for the use of the service to include broadband as a part of the program. We believe that the Lifeline program has been an essential support program for the residents we serve and has led to a more full and inclusive living experience for those individuals utilizing the program. We feel that an expansion of the program to include broadband access is essential to continuing the relevance and usefulness of the Lifeline program.

The Aurora Housing Authority (AHA) is a public housing authority that serves nearly 2,000 families and approximately 6,000 individuals in the City of Aurora, IL, which is a suburb of the City of Chicago and the second largest city in the state of Illinois. The residents that we serve all have incomes under 80% of the area median income (AMI) for the region, and most have incomes below 60% of the AMI. Due to the limited financial means of the residents that we serve, programs such as the Lifeline Program are increasingly vital to our residents and their ability to have access to technology that enables them to communicate effectively with the outside world. Removing or limiting access to this technology essentially incarcerates entire families in poverty.

The proposed expansion of the Lifeline program to include broadband access would provide a considerable additional resource to the residents we serve and undoubtedly, residents all over the United States. Access to information is essential in the 21st century, and as a result of the overwhelming importance of access to information, it is an essential part of the equation to break the cycle of generational poverty in public housing authorities nationwide. Having access to broadband internet would allow residents who otherwise may not be able to afford internet access of any meaningful capacity, to have access to the variety of free resources that may exist electronically in their communities. In the 21st century, practically all career opportunities are posted on digital job boards such as Monster.com and indeed.com, access to research information for school aged children is now based in academic web resources, easily searchable information on local resources such as free healthcare and food banks is also readily available online. Providing access to the wealth of opportunity and resources that exist in the digital landscape is a cornerstone in the search for a viable solution to long term and generational poverty.

The Aurora Housing Authority strongly supports reforming the Lifeline program to include broadband access, and wishes to, through this correspondence, voice that support.

Thank you,

Keith L. Gregory
Executive Director