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OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

WATERFRONTS

February 25, 2011

Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: **Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Lifeline and Link Up**
CC Docket No. 96-45; WC Docket 03-109

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

At a time when 1.7 million New Yorkers are living in poverty and the unemployment rate remains stubbornly high - and a much greater number are underemployed - I write to advocate on behalf of the valuable free phone services provided by the Lifeline program, and my constituents who have benefited from these services.

When I first learned of this program, I reached out to residents of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) developments in my district; there are currently 3041 dwelling units in Council District 6. Flyers were posted and residents signed up to take advantage of this program. As you know, the application must be done online, and many NYCHA residents, especially seniors, do not own or know how to use a computer. To address the needs of the community, my staff worked with residents from a laptop in the community room of a development for predetermined hours on the weekends. My office facilitated many of the requests for Lifeline with a remarkable success rate, and we continue to receive inquiries from constituents who qualify and are unaware of the program. Please see the attached flyer and article in the Chelsea Now newspaper regarding my office's outreach.

The ability of low-income citizens of this country, whether they be black, white or Hispanic, to have access to phone service is crucial to their ability to move out of poverty. The Lifeline program has been a critical factor in empowering people to mobilize and find work, because a phone line is essential to receiving and accepting job offers. In addition, all citizens deserve the very basic right of access to emergency services, which Lifeline is able to provide.

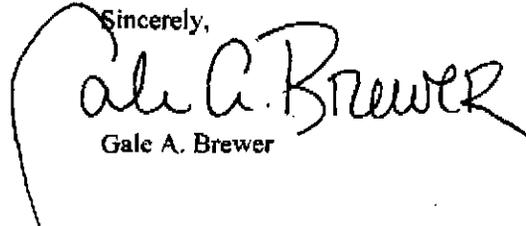
The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Lifeline and Link Up recently made a set of recommendations to the Commission on how to reduce fraud, waste and abuse within the system. I fully support the Board's findings toward making Lifeline a more efficient and sustainable program, and the Commission should act quickly to consider the

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recommendations outlined in the report. However, these recommendations should not be instituted without consideration of the Lifeline program's continued existence. Economically challenged citizens must have access to free phone service. I urge you to not adopt policies that would cap support for this program, or in any way limit access to an already underserved population.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have questions, please contact Rosalba Rodriguez of my staff, or me, at (212) 873-0282.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gale A. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "G".

Gale A. Brewer

Enclosure



Council Member
Gale A. Brewer

Where?

**Saturday,
May 2nd, 2009**

from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

120 WEST 94 STREET
(TENANTS ROOM
SIDE ENTRANCE)

**You may be eligible
for SafeLink!**

SafeLink Wireless is a government supported program that provides a free cell phone and airtime each month for income-eligible customers.

6th District
563 Columbus Avenue
at 87th Street, New York, NY 10024
Tel: (212) 873-0282
E-mail: gabrewer@council.nyc.gov

COUNCIL MEMBER
GALE A. BREWER
AND
POLLY SPAIN

TA PRESIDENT, FOR 120 W 94 STREET
TENANT ASSOCIATION

INVITE YOU TO SIGN UP FOR A

FREE CELL PHONE

FREE

Open to the Entire
Community

Do you know if you qualify
for a free cell phone?

➤ Application will be
done online

Please contact
Rosalba Rodriguez

at CM Brewer's Office at
(212) 873-0282

with all inquiries.



If you have your own computer please visit www.safelinkwireless.com

Chelsea ^{now} Gay City The Villager ^{downtown} ^{express}



News

West Siders get the 411 on free cell phone service

[Print Page](#)

By Heather Murray

Published: Wednesday, May 13, 2009 11:46 AM CDT

"Nada?" a resident asked in disbelief when Rosalba Rodriguez told her that she could get a free cell phone through a government program.

"That's right, it costs nothing," she replied in Spanish, for a phone and 68 minutes of airtime a month.

The federally supported SafeLink Wireless program, which provides the free cell-phone service each month for income-eligible customers, is already available to residents in 10 states.

Rodriguez, the director of Councilmember Gale Brewer's district office, could hardly believe the offer herself when she first saw it advertised on television back in March.

So she called up SafeLink to get more details about the program and told Brewer that many residents could benefit from the service.

In less than a month, Rodriguez had set up several SafeLink Wireless information and registration sessions on the West Side. The third session was held on Sat., May 2, at the Upper West Side's Wise Towers, the New York City Housing Authority-owned apartment complex in the West Side Urban Renewal Area (WSURA). So far, Rodriguez has registered about 60 people for the program at the outreach events.

Polly Spain, the recently elected president of the building's tenant association, greeted residents who dropped by to check out the program and to take a look at the new tenant room, which for the past several years was used by NYCHA and residents for storage.

"This was Rosalba's great idea," said Brewer, who chairs the Council's Technology in Government Committee. "She was the one who found out about the service."

Now other district offices and residents from as far away as Brooklyn and Queens are calling up Brewer's office for information about SafeLink.

The councilmember has also performed public outreach regarding television networks' switchover to digital, which is happening June 12, as well as exploring how to wire NYCHA buildings for high-speed Internet.



Rosalba Rodriguez (at left), director of Councilmember Gale Brewer's district office, helps resident Millie Ortiz apply for a free cell phone. (Chelsea Now photo courtesy Polly Spain)