Telephone Lifeline Program

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Telephone Lifeline Program Basics

- Offers discount on telephone bill
- New York’s program in effect since 1985
- Offered by incumbent local companies, some competitive companies, and wireless companies
Lifeline Program Elements

- Offers reduced basic service rate
- Message rate of $1.00 per month, plus a per call charge
- Flat rate of $2.00 per month, plus a monthly usage charge for unlimited local calling
- Waiver of the Federal subscriber line charge
- Various affordable wireless Lifeline packages
- Approximately 150,000 wireline lifeline customers enrolled Statewide
Lifeline Eligibility Criteria

- Customers are eligible if enrolled in these programs:
  - Family Assistance
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) formerly Food Stamps
  - HEAP
  - Medicaid
  - Safety Net Assistance
  - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
  - Veteran’s Disability & Surviving Spouse Pension
  - National School Lunch Program
  - Federal Public Housing Assistance
Income Eligibility

- Can qualify to receive Lifeline based on annual gross income.
- Income must be at or below 135% of Federal Poverty Guidelines
- Customer needs to provide documentation of income eligibility
- Documentation includes state or federal tax returns, social security statement of benefits, unemployment statements, child support awards, among others.
- Lifeline limited to a single discount per household.
- All Lifeline customers need to be recertified annually.
- Lifeline customers required to provide last 4 digits of social security number and birthdate.
- Companies conduct a database match to help eliminate duplication.
Lifeline Customer Certifications

- Whether address is temporary or permanent.
- Only one Lifeline discount per household.
- Agree not to transfer Lifeline benefit to another person.
- Agree to notify phone company if moving to another address.
- Agree to notify phone company if no longer receiving federal or state benefits.
Lifeline Customer Certifications

- Agree to participate in annual certification of eligibility.
- Acknowledge that providing false or fraudulent information is punishable by law.