



**Department of
Public Service**

Telephone Lifeline Program

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Lifeline Program Basics

- Federal program that offers a discounted basic service rate for qualifying low-income customers
- Qualification based on income or participation in public assistance programs
- Lifeline providers must be designated as Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs)
- Federal monthly support of \$9.25/customer
- Support is given directly to the companies who provide the Lifeline service

Lifeline Program In New York

- New York provides a supplemental discount to wireline Lifeline customers
- In New York, Lifeline funding is administered by the Targeted Accessibility Fund
- The per-customer supplemental Lifeline discount recoverable through TAF is defined as the difference between the provider's retail telephone rate and the rate charges to a Lifeline customer for basic service, exclusive of any federal Lifeline support
- There are approximately 73,000 wireline Lifeline customers Statewide as of April 30, 2018 - down from 100,000 two years ago!
- Currently no supplemental discount for wireless Lifeline in New York, but new PSL Section 92-h passed in 2017

Lifeline Modernization Order

➤ FCC Order in April 2016:

- Instituted the National Verifier to determine subscriber eligibility for Lifeline in place of service providers having to perform their own in-house verification of eligibility
- Phase in support for Lifeline broadband, either stand –alone or as a bundled voice and data service package
- Phase out support for voice only Lifeline service
- Streamlined Lifeline eligibility to focus enrollment on the most highly-used eligibility programs and to help reduce waste, fraud and abuse
 - Participation in Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) f/k/a Food Stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Federal Public Housing Assistance, Veteran’s Disability Pension, and/or Surviving Spouse Pension allows a consumer to be eligible for Lifeline program benefits.

New Federal Lifeline Eligibility

- Removed three low income assistance programs as federal qualifying programs as of December 1, 2016
 - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
 - National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
 - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- FCC granted New York an initial waiver to implement these changes until December 2017
- Subsequent waiver granted until May 2018

New York Lifeline Eligibility

- By April 19, 2018 Order Commission:
 - Continued to allow NY consumers to qualify for NY Lifeline discount under programs that were eliminated by the FCC: LIHEAP, NSLP, and TANF
 - Authorized additional funding to offset the \$9.25 per customer loss in federal support that service providers would no longer receive due to a subscribers loss of federal Lifeline eligibility

New York Lifeline Proceeding

- In its April 2016 Order, the Commission directed DPS Staff to commence an examination of the future nature and level of state support for Lifeline services in response to the FCC Lifeline Modernization Order.

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Thank you!
Any Questions?