

199—39.6 (476) Universal service support for low-income consumers (Lifeline program and Tribal Link Up program).

39.6(1) *Carrier obligation to offer Lifeline.* Pursuant to 47 CFR § 54.405, which specifies the Lifeline obligations of eligible telecommunications carriers, all eligible telecommunications carriers must make available Lifeline service, as defined in 47 CFR § 54.401, to qualifying low-income consumers, defined as consumers who meet the qualifications for Lifeline as specified in 47 CFR § 54.409.

39.6(2) *Customer notification.* Eligible telecommunications carriers shall include a description of their Lifeline offerings or discounts in their residential service agreements. Eligible telecommunications carriers shall provide the board with information about their residential service agreements upon request. Eligible telecommunications carriers shall publicize the availability of Lifeline service in a manner reasonably designed to reach those likely to qualify for service as required by 47 CFR § 54.405(b).

39.6(3) *Consumer qualification for Lifeline.* To constitute a qualifying low-income consumer, a consumer's household income as defined in 47 CFR § 54.400(f) and (h) must be at or below 135 percent of the federal poverty guidelines for a household of that size or such percentage as may be determined by the FCC or the consumer, one or more of the consumer's dependents, or the consumer's household must participate in one of the following federal assistance programs: Medicaid; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Supplemental Security Income; Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8); Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program; National School Lunch Program's free lunch program; or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. A consumer who lives on tribal lands is eligible for Lifeline service as a qualifying low-income consumer if the consumer meets the qualifications for Lifeline specified in 47 CFR § 54.409(a) or if the consumer, one or more of the consumer's dependents, or the consumer's household participates in one of the following tribal-specific federal assistance programs specified in 47 CFR § 54.409(b): Bureau of Indian Affairs general assistance; tribally administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Head Start (only those households meeting its income qualifying standard); or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. A consumer may only receive Lifeline service from one telephone provider per household.

39.6(4) *Determination of subscriber eligibility.* Iowa eligible telecommunications carriers are responsible for establishing consumer eligibility for Lifeline assistance. Iowa eligible telecommunications carriers shall ensure that their Lifeline subscribers are eligible to receive Lifeline services in accordance with 47 CFR § 54.410. Eligible telecommunications carriers shall:

a. Implement policies and procedures for ensuring that their Lifeline subscribers are eligible to receive Lifeline services;

b. Confirm a subscriber's income-based or program-based eligibility according to 47 CFR § 54.410(b) or (c);

c. Provide prospective subscribers Lifeline certification forms that comply with 47 CFR § 54.410(d); and

d. Recertify all subscribers' Lifeline eligibility annually and at 90-day intervals (where subscribers have provided a temporary address) in accordance with 47 CFR § 54.410(f) and (g).

39.6(5) *Annual certifications by eligible telecommunications carriers.* Eligible telecommunications carriers shall make and submit to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) annual certifications relating to the Lifeline program as required by 47 CFR § 54.416. Eligible telecommunications carriers shall file their annual Lifeline certifications with the board as provided in 39.7(1) "a" and, if applicable, with the relevant tribal governments.

39.6(6) *Tribal Link Up.* A telecommunications carrier receiving high-cost support on tribal lands that is offering the Tribal Link Up assistance program, as defined in 199—39.2(476), to eligible residents of tribal lands, as defined in 47 CFR § 54.400(e), must provide (1) a 100 percent reduction of the customary connection charge for commencing service at a subscriber's residence, and (2) a deferred schedule of interest-free payments for the connection charge, pursuant to 47 CFR § 54.413. Prior to enrolling an eligible resident of tribal lands in the Tribal Link Up program, an ETC must obtain from the resident a certification form that complies with 47 CFR § 54.410.

39.6(7) Audits. Eligible telecommunications carriers shall file with the board finalized reports of audits involving the audited ETC's operations in Iowa conducted pursuant to 47 CFR § 54.420 requiring low-income program audits. The audit reports will not be considered or deemed confidential. The audit reports shall be filed with the board within 30 days of issuance of the final audit report.

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