



PUBLIC NOTICE

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WORKING GROUP ON LIFELINE AND LINK-UP TELEPHONE SERVICES SEEKS INFORMATION ON EFFECTIVE OUTREACH TO LOW-INCOME CONSUMERS

This Notice informs the public that the joint Working Group of staff from the Federal Communications Commission, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (“NARUC”), and the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates seeks input on the most effective ways to enhance consumer awareness of Lifeline and/or Link-Up telephone services. The formation of the Working Group was announced in July 2005 at the NARUC summer meeting.¹ The focus of the Working Group is developing targeted outreach materials regarding Lifeline and Link-Up as well as best practices for carrier outreach on these programs.

Lifeline and Link-Up are low-income support mechanisms that ensure that quality telecommunications services are available to low-income consumers at just, reasonable, and affordable rates. Since its inception, Lifeline/Link-Up has provided support for telephone service to millions of low-income consumers.² These programs provide for discounts to low-income households for both the initial installation of phone service (Link-Up) and monthly phone bills (Lifeline).³ National statistics, however, reveal that citizens who qualify for Lifeline and Link-Up may not be aware of the benefits of the programs.⁴

The Working Group is gathering input to support the development of best practices to ensure that eligible consumers are aware of Lifeline and Link-Up and develop outreach and

¹ See “FCC and NARUC Launch ‘Lifeline Across America’ to Raise Awareness of Lifeline and Link-Up Programs,” Press Release, July 26, 2005.

² See Wireline Competition Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, *Trends in Telephone Service Report*, Table 19.8 (June 21, 2005).

³ See 47 C.F.R. §§ 54.401, 54.411.

⁴ See *Lifeline and Link-Up*, WC Docket No. 03-109, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 18 FCC Rcd 8302, para. 1 (2004).

training materials. Specifically, the Working Group asks the following questions, not all of which will be applicable to all who choose to respond:

1. **Success of outreach:** What are successful examples of Lifeline/Link-Up outreach within the last two years? Why was this outreach successful? What form or type of media did this outreach activity take (*e.g.*, advertisements, brochures)? How was the outreach developed? How were the costs covered? To the extent that past outreach on Lifeline/Link Up has been less than successful, please explain why you think this was so.
2. **Measuring the success of outreach:** How should the success of outreach efforts on Lifeline/Link-Up be measured?
3. **Currently available information:** If someone contacts your organization asking for information regarding the type of assistance available through Lifeline or Link-Up, what do they receive? What resources do you currently have available to promote the availability of Lifeline and Link-Up to your constituency? What resources would you like to have available? Is there anything on your website about assistance for low-income consumers? Is it specific to Lifeline and Link-Up? Do you produce a hard copy publication to promote Lifeline and Link Up?
4. **Joint outreach:** Are you aware of any joint partnerships or outreach activities that have taken place or are planned in your region? If so, what has been your experience?
5. **Effects of 2005 Hurricanes:** Have you seen or do you anticipate an increase in the number of consumers that apply for Lifeline and/or Link-Up as a result of the hurricanes? Has your region made changes recently in Lifeline/Link-Up eligibility as a result of the hurricanes? What additional outreach measures would you propose for Lifeline/Link-Up as a result of the hurricanes? Other emergency situations?
6. **Challenges and obstacles:** What are some of the challenges/obstacles to implementing a successful outreach program on Lifeline and Link-Up?
7. **Overall recommendations:** What recommendations would you make in terms of outreach on Lifeline and Link-Up? Does an increase in the number of consumers eligible for or applying to the programs impact how outreach should be done?

Responses may be submitted by email to lifeline@fcc.gov. Please submit information by March 1, 2006. For more information contact Lauren Patrich, Federal Communications Commission, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, at Lauren.patrich@fcc.gov or (202) 418-7944.