



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES DUTY TO QUERY THE NATIONAL LIFELINE ACCOUNTABILITY DATABASE

WC Docket No. 11-42

In the 2012 *Lifeline Reform Order*, the Commission established the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) to detect, prevent and eliminate duplicative support in the Lifeline program.¹ The *Lifeline Reform Order* also directed the Bureau to provide eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) 30-days notice of their obligation to begin querying the NLAD.² With this public notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau informs all authorized entities, including ETCs, of their obligation to begin querying the NLAD to determine if a prospective subscriber is currently receiving Lifeline-supported service.³ The duty of authorized entities to query the NLAD commences in accordance with the schedule released by USAC, but no sooner than 30 days after the release of this public notice.⁴

The Bureau reminds ETCs that they are required to collect, and provide to the NLAD, the following information for each new and existing Lifeline subscriber:⁵

¹ See *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization et al.*, WC Docket No. 11-42 et al., Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 27 FCC Rcd 6656 (2012) (*Lifeline Reform Order*). Additionally, in a prior Bureau notice, the Bureau announced that the information for existing subscribers would be loaded into the database beginning in December 2013, in accordance with a schedule to be released by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). See *Wireline Competition Bureau Announces That The National Lifeline Accountability Database Will Begin Accepting Subscriber Data In December*, WC Docket No. 11-42, Public Notice, 28 FCC Rcd 14639 n.3 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2013) (*NLAD Loading Notice*).

² See *Lifeline Reform Order*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6736, para. 185.

³ See *id.*

⁴ See USAC, NLAD Migration, <http://www.usac.org/li/tools/nlad/nlad-migration.aspx> (last visited Jan. 3, 2014). USAC has announced that the first state in which ETCs must query the database prior to enrolling new subscribers is Maryland in mid-February 2014, with additional states to follow on a rolling basis through the first quarter of 2014. See *id.*

⁵ Over the last seven months, the Bureau and USAC held five webinars and workshops on the implementation and technical features of the NLAD, including the process by which ETCs must query and load new subscriber information. These workshops were held on June 19, August 27, September 18, October 31 and November 20, 2013, with hundreds of attendees participating. See USAC Trainings and Outreach, Online Learning Library, <http://www.usac.org/li/about/outreach/online-learning.aspx> (last visited Jan. 14, 2014). Moreover, USAC has posted a substantial amount of NLAD training materials that remain accessible on the USAC website and can be retrieved at any time. See USAC, National Lifeline Accountability Database, <http://www.usac.org/li/tools/nlad/nlad-resources.aspx> (last visited Jan. 14, 2014). USAC has also posted responses to various questions presented by ETCs

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- a. The subscriber's full name;
- b. Full residential address;
- c. Date of birth;
- d. Last four digits of the subscriber's Social Security number, or of the subscriber's Tribal Identification number if the subscriber is a member of a Tribal nation and does not have a Social Security number;
- e. The telephone number associated with the Lifeline service;
- f. The date on which the Lifeline service was initiated;
- g. The date on which the Lifeline service was terminated, if it has been terminated;
- h. The amount of support being sought for that subscriber; and
- i. The means through which the subscriber qualified for Lifeline.⁶

With this information, the NLAD will serve its purpose of detecting, eliminating, and preventing duplicative support, and preventing waste in the universal service fund.

We also reiterate that ETCs receiving federal universal service support from the Lifeline program must collect the subscriber information necessary to detect duplicative support.⁷ Pursuant to section 54.410 of the Commission's rules, ETCs must confirm that their subscribers are qualifying low-income consumers eligible under the Commission's rules for Lifeline service.⁸ This includes the obligation to eliminate any instances of intra-company duplicative support.⁹ Section 54.405(e) of the Commission's rules states that, if an ETC "has a reasonable basis to believe that a Lifeline subscriber no longer meets the criteria to be considered a qualifying low-income consumer under § 54.409, the carrier must notify the subscriber of impending termination of his or her Lifeline service."¹⁰ ETCs should use all information available to them, including the information collected as part of their obligation to transmit information to the NLAD, to identify and eliminate household duplicates.

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 about the NLAD. See USAC, Getting Started, National Lifeline Accountability Database, <http://www.usac.org/li/about/getting-started/faq-nlad.aspx> (last visited Jan. 14, 2014).

⁶ See 47 C.F.R. § 54.404(b)(6); see also *Lifeline Reform Order*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6736, para. 184; *NLAD Loading Notice*. In the *Lifeline Reform Order*, the Commission suggested that ETCs could obtain updated address information and the other subscriber information required for the NLAD during the recertification process. See 27 FCC Rcd at 6717, para. 134.

⁷ See *NLAD Loading Notice*, 28 FCC Rcd at 14640.

⁸ See 47 C.F.R. § 54.410(a)(1)-(2).

⁹ See *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization et al.*, WC Docket No. 11-42 et al., Report and Order, 26 FCC Rcd 9022, 9027, para. 8 (2011); see also *Wireline Competition Bureau Reminds Eligible Telecommunications Carriers of Their Obligation to Eliminate Duplicative Lifeline Support*, WC Docket No. 11-42, Public Notice, 27 FCC Rcd 12325, 12326 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2012); *i-wireless, LLC*, Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture, 28 FCC Rcd 15381, 15386, para. 17 (2013).

¹⁰ 47 C.F.R. § 54.405(e)(1).

For further information, please contact Anita Patankar-Stoll, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau at (202) 418-7121 or TTY (202) 418-7340; Anita.Patankar-Stoll@fcc.gov.

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