**DA 16-56**

**Released: January 15, 2016**

**WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES effective dates of**

**lifeline rules following approval by THE**

**Office of Management and Budget**

**WC Docket Nos. 11-42, 09-197, 10-90**

On June 22, 2015, the Federal Communications Commission released a Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Order on Reconsideration, Second Report and Order, and Memorandum Opinion and Order that modified the reporting requirements of the Lifeline program (2015 *Lifeline Reform Order*).[[1]](#footnote-2) The *2015 Lifeline Reform Order* built upon the successful reforms from the *2012 Lifeline Reform Order*, which substantially strengthened protections against waste, fraud, and abuse and improved program administration and accountability.[[2]](#footnote-3) The Commission also wanted to ensure that adequate controls are in place before implementing any further changes to the Lifeline program.[[3]](#footnote-4) As part of these efforts, the Commission adopted several rules in the *2015 Lifeline Reform Order* to strengthen the document retention requirements, ensure that only ETCs directly serving low-income customers receive reimbursement under the Lifeline program, and require ETCs to use a uniform snapshot date to request reimbursement from USAC for the provision of Lifeline support.[[4]](#footnote-5)

On January 5, 2016, the Commission received Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval of modified information collection requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA).[[5]](#footnote-6) The announcement of OMB approval of the rules will be sent to the Federal Register on February 4, 2016. As ordered in the *2015 Lifeline Reform Order*, all adopted rules contained in the order will take effect upon announcement in the Federal Register of OMB approval.[[6]](#footnote-7) Therefore, parties should expect these rules to become effective on or after February 4, 2016.

Specifically, the following rules will take effect:

* Updating the definition of eligible telecommunications carriers, direct service, and Lifeline;[[7]](#footnote-8)
* Updating instructions and number of respondents for FCC Forms 497 and 481;[[8]](#footnote-9)
* Retaining eligibility documentation for enrollment and dispute resolution;[[9]](#footnote-10)
* Revising the burden for consumer recertification;[[10]](#footnote-11)
* Revising FCC Form 555 for annual reporting of subscriber recertification;[[11]](#footnote-12)
* Requiring a uniform snapshot date for payment of low-income support;[[12]](#footnote-13)
* Revising the subscriber usage requirement;[[13]](#footnote-14)
* Requiring marketing and outreach plans;[[14]](#footnote-15)
* Updating the ETC audit requirements;[[15]](#footnote-16)
* Allowing electronic signatures for Lifeline subscriber certifications;[[16]](#footnote-17)

For further information, please contact Christian Hoefly, Wireline Competition Bureau, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, at (202) 418-3607 or via e-mail at christian.hoefly@fcc.gov.

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1. *See* *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization* et al., WC Docket No. 11-42, et al., Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Order on Reconsideration, Second Report and Order, and Memorandum Opinion and Order, 30 FCC Rcd 7818 (2015) (*2015 Second Reform Order*). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. *See Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization* et al., WC Docket 11-42, et al., Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 27 FCC Rcd 6656 (2012)(*2012 Lifeline Reform Order*). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. *2015 Second Reform Order*, 30 FCC Rcd at 7820-21, para. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. *Id.* at 7925-29, Appx. B. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Public Law No. 104-13, 109 Stat. 163 (May 22, 1995), *codified at* 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501 *et seq*. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. *2015 Second Reform Order*, 30 FCC Rcd 7917, para. 299. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. 47 CFR §§ 54.403, 54.400, 54.401. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. 47 CFR §§ 54.403, 54.313(a)(8) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. 47 CFR §§ 54.404(b)(11), 54.410(b)(1)(ii), 54.410(c)(1)(ii), 54.410(c)(2)(ii), 54.417. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. 47 CFR § 54.410(f). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. 47 CFR § 54.416(b). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. 47 CFR § 54.407. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. 47 CFR § 54.405(e)(3). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. 47 CFR § 54.405(c). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. 47 CFR §§ 54.420(a), (b). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. 47 CFR § 54.419. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)