



PUBLIC NOTICE

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WIRELINER COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL LIFELINE ELIGIBILITY VERIFIER FOR ALL NEW ENROLLMENTS IN FIVE STATES

WC Docket No. 11-42

By this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) announces the launch of the National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier (National Verifier) for all new enrollments in Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.¹ Starting on March 24, 2020, eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) in these five states will be required to use the National Verifier's eligibility determination process for all consumers applying for Lifeline service and must cease using legacy eligibility processes for prospective Lifeline subscribers.

USAC will continue after March 24, 2020 to verify that subscribers in the National Verifier for these five states are eligible to receive Lifeline service through the process that was initiated during the soft launch on December 16, 2019.² In addition, annual recertification will now be conducted by the National Verifier for all Lifeline consumers in these five states.

As of March 24, 2020, consumers in Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin can begin to check their eligibility for Lifeline service directly by using the National Verifier consumer portal available at CheckLifeline.org. The consumer portal is available in both English and Spanish language versions. Consumers, as well as service providers, will also be able to mail Lifeline program forms and documentation to USAC for manual review. Consumers and service providers can obtain the Lifeline program application form by going to CheckLifeline.org and clicking on "use a paper form." Forms sent by mail should be sent to:

USAC Lifeline Support Center
P.O. Box 7081
London, KY 40742

USAC has been conducting ongoing outreach and training for ETCs in the relevant states during the soft launch. ETCs have also had access to a pre-production test environment during the soft launch, which was designed to improve ETCs' ability to conduct sample transactions using test data that does not reflect actual Lifeline applicants and train their employees for readiness. To ensure that ETCs continue to be supported during the transition to the National Verifier, USAC will also be contacting ETCs in the

¹ See *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization et al., Third Report and Order, Further Report and Order, and Order on Reconsideration*, 31 FCC Rcd 3962, 4021, para. 165 (2016) (*2016 Lifeline Order*) (directing the Bureau to "issue a notification to all interested participants providing information about effective dates and any other relevant obligations" as USAC deploys the National Verifier in each state).

² *Wireline Competition Bureau Announces the Next National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier Launch in Five States*, Public Notice, 34 FCC Rcd 11957 (WCB 2019) (announcing the December 16, 2019 soft launch of the National Verifier in Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin).

relevant states to provide details regarding additional training opportunities. Informational resource materials regarding the National Verifier are also available on USAC's website.³

We emphasize that, even where the National Verifier is fully launched, ETCs remain responsible for any fraud that forms the basis of their claims for Lifeline reimbursement, and the National Verifier does not provide a "safe harbor" for ETCs that improperly claim or obtain reimbursement.⁴

For further information, please contact Allison Jones of the Wireline Competition Bureau's Telecommunications Access Policy Division at (202) 418-1571.

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³ See <https://www.usac.org/lifeline/eligibility/national-verifier/how-to-use-it/>.

⁴ See *Lifeline Providers Remain Liable for Ensuring the Eligibility of Their Subscribers to Receive Lifeline Service*, Public Notice, FCC Enforcement Advisory, 34 FCC Rcd 11934 (EB 2019); *Wireline Competition Bureau Reminds Eligible Telecommunications Carriers of Their Ongoing Responsibility to Claim Lifeline Support Only for Eligible Low-Income Consumers*, Public Notice, 32 FCC Rcd 5129 (WCB 2017).