



PUBLIC NOTICE

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WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL LIFELINE ELIGIBILITY VERIFIER FOR ALL NEW ENROLLMENTS IN PUERTO RICO

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 Puerto Rico.¹ Starting on June 23, 2020, eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) in Puerto Rico 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 June 23, 2020 to verify that subscribers in the National Verifier for Puerto Rico are eligible to receive Lifeline service through the process that was initiated during the soft launch on October 11, 2019.² In addition, annual recertification will now be conducted by the National Verifier for all Lifeline consumers in Puerto Rico. All reverification and recertification activities will be conducted consistent with any waiver orders issued by the Bureau as part of the Commission's efforts to keep Lifeline subscribers connected during the COVID-19 pandemic.³

As of June 23, 2020, consumers in Puerto Rico 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:

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 Nine States and One Federal Territory*, Public Notice, 34 FCC Rcd 8631 (WCB 2019) (announcing the October 11, 2019 soft launch of the National Verifier in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, and Washington).

³ See, e.g., *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization*, Order, DA 20-285 (WCB Mar. 17, 2020) (waiving reverification and recertification requirements for 60 days beginning March 17, 2020); *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization*, Order, DA 20-354 (WCB Mar. 30, 2020) (extending the initial 60-day reverification and recertification waiver period until May 29, 2020); *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization*, Order, DA 20-462 (WCB Apr. 29, 2020) (extending the reverification and recertification waiver period until June 30, 2020, and stating that the Bureau will continue to monitor the situation to determine whether any additional extension of these waivers is appropriate).

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

USAC has been conducting ongoing outreach and training for ETCs in Puerto Rico 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 Puerto Rico to provide details regarding additional training opportunities. Informational resource materials regarding the National Verifier are also available on USAC's website.⁴

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.⁵

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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⁴ See <https://www.usac.org/lifeline/eligibility/national-verifier/how-to-use-it/>.

⁵ 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).