



UPDATE

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

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

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 16, 2012

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Mark Wigfield, 202-418-0253
Email: mark.wigfield@fcc.gov

FCC RELEASES RESULTS OF LATEST REVIEW OF LIFELINE PROGRAM REFORMS TO CUT WASTE, FRAUD & ABUSE: 135,000 MORE DUPLICATE SUBSCRIPTIONS TO BE ELIMINATED, GENERATING \$15 MILLION OF SAVINGS

Lifeline reform efforts eliminating more than 400,000 duplicate subscriptions and saving \$50 million; Reform efforts on track to save up to \$2 billion over next 3 years, protecting a vital program that helps low-income Americans access phone service

Washington, D.C. – As a result of comprehensive reforms of the Lifeline program over the last year, the Federal Communications Commission today released new data about efforts to eliminate duplicate subscriptions and save tens of millions of dollars. The data revealed another \$15 million in savings will be gained by eliminating 135,000 duplicative subscriptions in three states: Missouri, New York and Washington. In 2011, FCC audits identified and eliminated over 270,000 duplicate Lifeline subscriptions, saving \$35 million. The FCC is also moving ahead to develop a comprehensive subscriber database that, when launched in 2013, will safeguard against duplicate subscriptions. Overall, the Lifeline reforms to cut waste, fraud and abuse are expected to save \$2 billion over three years.

Over 13,000 letters were mailed to subscribers in Washington State last week, while another 20,500 letters will be mailed in Missouri this week, and nearly 111,800 more in New York State next week, informing subscribers that they must choose a single provider.

The FCC anticipates reviewing another 4.2 million Lifeline records this year.

Launched in 1985, Lifeline is intended to make basic phone service – and the access it provides to jobs, family and emergency services -- more affordable for low-income consumers. To preserve and improve Lifeline for those who need it most, the FCC has been [implementing comprehensive reform and modernization](#) of the program to increase fiscal responsibility and address changes in communications technology.

In addition, the FCC on April 1 largely eliminated the “Link Up” program, which the Commission concluded had become wasteful and unnecessary. Link Up paid companies up to \$30 for initial phone connections even though other companies are now enrolling new subscribers for free. Elimination of Link Up on non-Tribal lands is expected to save \$100 million annually. Further reforms are helping ensure that only eligible consumers are enrolled, and will step up audits of Lifeline providers.

A [consumer guide](#) explains further what steps Lifeline consumers with multiple service providers should take.

Wireline Competition Bureau Staff Contact: Kimberly Scardino at 202-418-1442

-FCC-

News about the Federal Communications Commission can also be found
on the Commission’s web site www.fcc.gov.