



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE  
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Mike Quigley  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2000 Rayburn House Office Building (G Floor)  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Quigley:

I am writing today to offer an update on the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC or Commission) progress in addressing findings in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report entitled *FCC Has Implemented the Lifeline National Verifier but Should Improve Consumer Awareness and Experience* (Report).

In the United States we need to connect 100 percent of our households to broadband. The Lifeline program remains a valuable tool for helping achieve this goal, by making internet access more affordable. However, in recent years a series of FCC decisions limited the reach of this program and led to uneven implementation of the National Verifier. As a result, the GAO report was a welcome contribution to help focus our efforts on how we can improve the National Verifier—and by extension, the programs like Lifeline that rely on it.

Since the publication of the GAO's report earlier in January 2021, the FCC has launched the Emergency Broadband Benefit program, one of the biggest broadband adoption efforts in the country's history. Significantly, pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. No. 116-260), the FCC was directed to use the National Verifier as one pathway for enrollment of eligible households in this new program.

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The EBB program leverages the National Verifier system and is administered by USAC. The recent communication efforts undertaken to spread the word about the EBB program have provided valuable insights that can be applied toward future efforts to educate stakeholders and consumers on the Lifeline program and the National Verifier. Since those consumers who qualify for the Lifeline program also qualify for the EBB program, improving outreach efforts for Lifeline will also benefit prospective EBB program participants. In addition, many of the nearly 4 million households that have enrolled in the EBB program in its first ten weeks are now likely to be more familiar with USAC, the National Verifier, and the Lifeline program.

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Jessica Rosenworcel



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Steve Womack  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1016 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Womack:

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July 27, 2021

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government  
United States Senate  
S-128 The Capital Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Van Hollen:

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July 27, 2021

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government  
United States Senate  
125 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Hyde-Smith:

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July 27, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Chair  
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chair:

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Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
United States Senate  
425 Hart Senate Office Building  
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE  
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone:

I am writing today to offer an update on the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC or Commission) progress in addressing findings in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report entitled *FCC Has Implemented the Lifeline National Verifier but Should Improve Consumer Awareness and Experience* (Report).

In the United States we need to connect 100 percent of our households to broadband. The Lifeline program remains a valuable tool for helping achieve this goal, by making internet access more affordable. However, in recent years a series of FCC decisions limited the reach of this program and led to uneven implementation of the National Verifier. As a result, the GAO report was a welcome contribution to help focus our efforts on how we can improve the National Verifier—and by extension, the programs like Lifeline that rely on it.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE  
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2322A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers:

I am writing today to offer an update on the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC or Commission) progress in addressing findings in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report entitled *FCC Has Implemented the Lifeline National Verifier but Should Improve Consumer Awareness and Experience* (Report).

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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OFFICE OF THE  
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Gary Peters  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Peters:

I am writing today to offer an update on the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC or Commission) progress in addressing findings in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) report entitled *FCC Has Implemented the Lifeline National Verifier but Should Improve Consumer Awareness and Experience* (Report).

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE  
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Rob Portman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate  
442 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Portman:

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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OFFICE OF THE  
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2157 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney:

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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OFFICE OF THE  
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

July 27, 2021

The Honorable James R. Comer  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2471 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Comer:

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In the United States we need to connect 100 percent of our households to broadband. The Lifeline program remains a valuable tool for helping achieve this goal, by making internet access more affordable. However, in recent years a series of FCC decisions limited the reach of this program and led to uneven implementation of the National Verifier. As a result, the GAO report was a welcome contribution to help focus our efforts on how we can improve the National Verifier—and by extension, the programs like Lifeline that rely on it.

Since the publication of the GAO's report earlier in January 2021, the FCC has launched the Emergency Broadband Benefit program, one of the biggest broadband adoption efforts in the country's history. Significantly, pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. No. 116-260), the FCC was directed to use the National Verifier as one pathway for enrollment of eligible households in this new program.

During the first five months of 2021, the FCC and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) worked with laser-like focus to stand up the EBB program as quickly as possible, and we started receiving applications on May 12, 2021. As of July 26, 2021, nearly 4 million households have enrolled in the EBB program. To support outreach efforts and drive awareness around the new, temporary EBB program, the FCC has worked with over 26,500 partners ranging from local Boys and Girls clubs, school districts, libraries, YMCAs, food banks, Meals on Wheels and grass roots organizers to national non-profits that focus on digital inclusion. The agency provided these partners with a customizable toolkit, available in English, Spanish, and 13 other languages. The toolkit includes a wide variety of materials to use when spreading the word about this important program. In addition, FCC staff have conducted over 320 virtual public presentations on the program since April. These presentations have ranged from smaller localized events for community groups and libraries to larger "train the trainer" style events with national non-profit organizations. The FCC also conducted a consumer-focused webinar on the program in April 2021 and has a recording of that event available for on

demand access as part of its toolkit. The agency partnered across government too, working with the Department of Labor who, in turn, passed information on to state unemployment offices and workforce associations, and the agency cohosted webinars with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. In addition, the Department of Education sent e-mails to every Pell grant recipient in the country to inform them about the EBB program. And the FCC is currently engaging in a series of conversations with a broad array of partners, in which we are soliciting and incorporating feedback on EBB program outreach and materials.

The EBB program leverages the National Verifier system and is administered by USAC. The recent communication efforts undertaken to spread the word about the EBB program have provided valuable insights that can be applied toward future efforts to educate stakeholders and consumers on the Lifeline program and the National Verifier. Since those consumers who qualify for the Lifeline program also qualify for the EBB program, improving outreach efforts for Lifeline will also benefit prospective EBB program participants. In addition, many of the nearly 4 million households that have enrolled in the EBB program in its first ten weeks are now likely to be more familiar with USAC, the National Verifier, and the Lifeline program.

In addition to the outreach efforts that were part of the EBB program, the FCC and USAC have undertaken a number of new Lifeline-focused initiatives to share information with stakeholders. USAC issued the first quarterly newsletter to state and federal partners to provide updates on the Lifeline program and the National Verifier on March 4, 2021 and will continue to issue this newsletter each quarter. USAC also has conducted two Tribal-specific Lifeline webinars – on March 3, 2021 and June 2, 2021. These Tribal-specific webinars served as information sessions to assist Tribal organizations in understanding the Lifeline program and its systems, with the goal of providing information that Tribal organizations can use to assist eligible consumers to enroll in the program. USAC will continue to hold Tribal-specific webinars each quarter. USAC has also been working with the Bureau to develop a more comprehensive communications plan that better aligns its existing consumer education activities with the best practices for consumer education planning identified in the Report.

In response to feedback from different consumer groups, USAC also implemented a number of changes to enhance the National Verifier consumer experience, including adding an application status bar, enabling the option to update an email address or add a secondary email address, and providing live translation call support for over 200 additional languages. USAC made several updates to the National Verifier portal and USAC's consumer information pages to ensure that its content is accurate, clear, and accessible and to enhance system accessibility for users with disabilities. USAC is also planning a comprehensive redesign of LifelineSupport.org, including changes to navigational elements and content, informed by user feedback. Finally, the FCC and USAC have also been working to determine the specific technical development work and other steps that will be needed to transition checklifeline.org to the "fcc.gov" subdomain.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide an update on recent actions the Commission and USAC have taken to address the findings in the GAO's report, including our work to adjust the National Verifier and related websites and resources. Moreover, I believe that our effort launching the EBB program also will provide new lessons learned that may help further improve

the Lifeline program and continuing administration of the National Verifier. I would be happy to provide additional updates in the future, as our work in this effort is ongoing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Rosenworcel", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jessica Rosenworcel