

D.T.C. 11-19 – Final Order Attachment
(FCC Lifeline Reform Order – APPENDIX C)
Certification Requirements for Lifeline Subscribers

Pursuant to the Universal Service Low-Income Order, all ETCs (or the state Lifeline program administrator, where applicable) must provide the following information in clear, easily understandable language on their initial and annual Lifeline certification forms:

Household Information for Initial and Annual Certification Forms

- **Contact Information:** All certification forms must ask for the Lifeline subscriber's name and address information.
 - *Residential Address:* Prior to providing service to a consumer, ETCs must collect a residential address from each subscriber, which the subscriber must indicate is his/her permanent address, and a billing address, if different than the subscriber's residential address. ETCs should inform subscribers that, if the subscriber moves, they must provide their new address to the ETC within 30 days of moving.
 - A consumer who lacks a permanent residential address (*e.g.*, address not recognized by the Post Office, temporary living situation) must provide a temporary residential service address or other address identifying information that could be used to perform a check for duplicative support.
 - *Consumers using Post Office Box Addresses:* Lifeline subscribers may not use a post office box as their residential address. An ETC may accept a P.O. Box or General Delivery address as a billing address, but not a residential address.
 - *Consumers with Temporary Addresses:* ETCs must collect permanent addresses from subscribers. If a subscriber does not have a permanent address, ETCs must:
 - Inform applicants that, if they use a temporary address, the ETC will attempt to verify every 90 days that the subscriber continues to rely on that address, and (as noted above) the subscriber must notify the ETC within 30 days of their new address after moving.
 - Inform the subscriber that if he or she does not respond to the ETC's address verification attempts within 30 days, the subscriber may be de-enrolled from the ETC's Lifeline service.
- *Multiple Households Sharing an Address:* Upon receiving an application for Lifeline support, all ETCs must check the duplicates database to determine whether an individual at the applicant's residential address is currently receiving Lifeline-supported service. The ETC must also search its own internal records to ensure that it does not already provide Lifeline-supported service to someone at that residential address.
 - If nobody at the residential address is currently receiving Lifeline-supported service, the ETC may initiate Lifeline service after determining that the household is otherwise eligible to receive Lifeline and obtaining all required certifications from the household.

- If the ETC determines that an individual at the applicant's residential address is currently receiving Lifeline-supported service, the ETC must collect from the applicant upon initial enrollment and annually thereafter a worksheet that: (1) explains the Commission's one-per-household rule; (2) contains a check box that an applicant can mark to indicate that he or she lives at an address occupied by multiple households; (3) provides a space for the applicant to initial or certify that he or she shares an address with other adults who do not contribute income to the applicant's household and/or share in the household's expenses; and (4) notifies applicants of the one-per-household certification requirement adopted below and the penalty for a consumer's failure to make the required one-per-household certification (*i.e.*, de-enrollment).
- One-per-Household Certification: All consumers must certify that they receive Lifeline support for a single subscription per household.
 - All ETCs (or state agencies or third-parties, where they are responsible for Lifeline enrollment in a state) must obtain a certification from the subscriber at sign up and annually thereafter attesting under penalty of perjury that the subscriber's household is receiving no more than one Lifeline-supported service. In addition, the certification form must include a place for the subscriber to separately acknowledge that, to the best of his or her knowledge, no one at the consumer's household is receiving a Lifeline-supported service from any other provider.
 - The certification form must explain in clear, easily understandable language that: (1) Lifeline is a federal benefit; (2) Lifeline service is available for only one line per household; (3) a household is defined, for purposes of the Lifeline program, as any individual or group of individuals who live together at the same address and share income and expenses; and (4) households are not permitted to receive benefits from multiple providers.
 - The certification form must also contain clear, easily understandable language stating that violation of the one-per-household requirement would constitute a violation of the Commission's rules and would result in the consumer's de-enrollment from the program, and potentially, prosecution by the United States government.

Eligibility Information for Initial and Annual Certification Forms

- *Identity Information:* all certification forms must ask for the Lifeline subscriber's date of birth and the last 4 digits of the subscriber's social security number.
- *Establishing eligibility for Lifeline:*
 - The certification form should be written in clear, easily understandable language and should include a place for the customer to sign under penalty of perjury attesting to his/her eligibility for Lifeline. All ETCs (or the state Lifeline program administrator, where applicable) should obtain the consumer's signature certifying under penalty of perjury that:
 - The consumer either participates in a qualifying federal program or meets the income qualifications to establish eligibility for Lifeline;

- The consumer has provided documentation of eligibility, if required to do so;
- The consumer attests that the information contained in his or her application is true and correct to the best of his or her knowledge and acknowledging that providing false or fraudulent information to receive Lifeline benefits is punishable by law. The certification form should explain that Lifeline is a government benefit program and consumers who willfully make false statements in order to obtain the benefit can be punished by fine or imprisonment or can be barred from the program.
- The certification form must include space for consumers qualifying for Lifeline under an income-based criterion to certify the number of individuals in their household.
- ETCs (or the state administrator, where applicable) should also obtain the consumer's initials or signature on the certification form acknowledging that the consumer may be required to re-certify his or her continued eligibility for Lifeline at any time, and that failure to do so will result in the termination of the consumer's Lifeline benefits.
- *Consumer no longer eligible for Lifeline:* The certification form must notify the consumer using clear, easily understandable language that he or she must inform the ETC within 30 days if (1) the consumer ceases to participate in a federal qualifying program or programs or the consumer's annual household income exceeds 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines; (2) the consumer is receiving more than one Lifeline-supported service; or (3) the consumer, for any other reason, no longer satisfies the criteria for receiving Lifeline support. Additionally, prior to enrolling in Lifeline, consumers must certify attest under penalty of perjury that they understand the notification requirement, and that they may be subject to penalties if they fail to follow this requirement.
- *Tribal eligibility:* Consumers seeking Tribal lands Lifeline support must certify that they reside on Federally-recognized Tribal lands.
- *Non-transferability of Lifeline benefit:* The certification form should inform consumers that Lifeline service is a non-transferable benefit, and that a Lifeline subscriber may not transfer his or her service to any other individual, including another eligible low-income consumer.

Annual Re-certification of Consumer Eligibility for Lifeline

- By the end of 2012, each Lifeline subscriber enrolled in the program as of June 1, 2012 must provide a signed re-certification form to the ETC (or the state Lifeline administrator, where applicable) attesting to their continued eligibility for Lifeline. This signed certification should collect all of the subscriber information noted above, including an updated address. Consumers may provide the re-certification in writing, by phone, by text message, by email, or otherwise through the Internet.
- Alternatively, where a database containing consumer eligibility data is available, the carrier (or state Lifeline administrator, where applicable) must query the database by the end of 2012 and maintain a record of what specific data was used to re-certify the consumer's eligibility and the date that the consumer was re-certified.
- The ETC or the state administrator, where applicable, must report the results of their re-certification efforts to USAC, the Commission, and the relevant state commission (where the state has jurisdiction over the carrier) by January 31, 2013. ETCs or the state administrator,

where applicable, should also provide their re-certification results to the relevant Tribal government, for subscribers residing on reservations or Tribal lands.

- ETCs must remind consumers about the annual re-certification requirement on the ETC's certification form that is completed upon program enrollment and annually thereafter.

Database

- *Consent to provide information to the database:* An ETC must obtain acknowledgement and consent from each of its subscribers that is written in clear, easily understandable language that the subscriber's name, telephone number, and address will be divulged to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) (the administrator of the program) and/or its agents for the purpose of verifying that the subscriber does not receive more than one Lifeline benefit. In the event that USAC identifies a consumer as receiving more than one Lifeline subsidy per household, all carriers involved may be notified so that the consumer may select one service and be de-enrolled from the other.