

Low Income Telephone Assistance Program

Every person in America should have access to quality, affordable telecommunications service. This principle of “Universal Service” has been the goal of the telecommunications industry for decades. In 1934, the federal government codified the goal and reaffirmed it in 1996 by establishing policies for the “preservation and advancement of Universal Service.”

To achieve the Universal Service goal, carriers have access to a fund that is generated by contributions from the telecommunications providers in the United States. Telecommunications companies draw from the fund to provide four programs that support telecommunications services nationwide. Link-Up America (Link-Up) and the Lifeline Assistance Program (Lifeline) are part of the Fund’s Low-Income Program and are described in this article. Toll Limitation service is another program available to low income subscribers to help them control what they spend on telephone service.

Lifeline, Link-Up, and Toll Limitation Service support provide discounts to eligible low-income consumers to help them establish and maintain telephone service.

What types of discount is available?

Lifeline assistance lowers the cost of basic monthly local telephone service. Thanks to Federal and State support, eligible consumers can receive \$13.50 per month in discounts,

Link-Up reduces the cost of initiating new telephone service. Eligible consumers can receive a 50% or \$15 discount off the one-time cost associated with initiating telephone service.

Toll Limitation Service (TLS) support allows eligible consumers who wish to avoid incurring long distance fees to choose toll blocking or toll control at no costs.

How do I know whether I am eligible?

TBTC follows FCC support guidelines. individuals are eligible if you participate in one of the following programs:

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8
- Medicaid
- Food Stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- National School Lunch free lunch program

In addition, a consumer can be eligible if his or her income is at or below the following levels:

Persons in Family Unit	Total Household Income
1	\$16,245
2	\$21,855
3	\$27,465
4	\$33,075
5	\$38,685
6	\$44,295
7	\$49,905
8	\$55,515
For each additional person, add	\$5,610

2009/2010 HHS Poverty Guidelines found at <http://liheap.ncat.org/profiles/povertytables/FY2010/popstate.htm>