



PO Box 304
308 Frontage Road
Sebeka, MN 56477

218-837-5151
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www.wcta.net

October 26, 2020

Mr. Will Seufert
Executive Secretary
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: Response to Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Request for Initial Comments in Docket No. 20-747

Dear Mr. Will Seuffert:

Enclosed please find the Initial Comments for West Central Telephone Association as a High Cost ETC in Docket No. P999/CI-20-747.

Please call me at 218-837-5151 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chris Olson'.

Chris Olson
Customer Service/Billing Manager

Enclosure



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Initial Comments for West Central Telephone Association as a High Cost ETC in Minnesota PUC Docket No. P999/CI-20-747

1. Current number of Lifeline Customer as of 9/30/20 for Study Area Code: 361501 is 35
2. How are Lifeline Services Advertised:

West Central advertises Lifeline on its website at:

<https://www.wcta.net/site/legal/assistance-programs>

In addition, West Central provides an ad in the local phone book, periodic bill messages, and communicates verbally to customers thru customer support specialists.

3. Provide Samples of Lifeline Advertising: Exhibit 1 is a Lifeline ad placed in its Phone books. Exhibit 2 is the Lifeline information from West Central's website, Exhibit 3 is the most recent message appearing on the customer bill.
4. No further comments.

Phone Discounts for Low-Income Users

Lifeline and TAP Assistance Programs

Lifeline is a federal assistance program funded by the Universal Service Fund which provides a discount towards telephone or broadband service for qualified low-income customers. The Lifeline program currently offers a credit of \$7.25/month for telephone service and \$9.25/month for broadband service per eligible household. These monthly credits will change in the future:

	<u>Telephone</u>	<u>Broadband</u>
12/1/2020	\$5.25	\$9.25
12/1/2021	\$0.00	\$9.25

Only one Lifeline discount per household is allowed nationwide. Federal eligibility is verified annually.

Minnesota's Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP) provides a monthly discount of \$7.00 on home phone service (excluding cell phones). The telephone service must be in the applicant's name in order to qualify based either on household income or the above listed assistance programs.

Qualifications

To qualify for Lifeline you must have a household income that is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or participate in one of the following assistance programs:

- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)/Section 8
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Veteran Pension & Survivor Pension Benefit
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicaid

If qualifying based on household income, see the Federal Poverty Guidelines at <http://aspe.hhs.gov>.

How to Apply

To apply for either program, contact our business office for an application or download from our website at https://www.wcta.net/pdf/s/wcta/Federal_Lifeline_Application_2020.pdf. You may also apply online at www.checklifeline.org.

What Happens After I Apply?

Discounts will show up on your bill about two months after your application is approved.

You must re-certify each year. If you do not send in your information to re-certify, you will lose your discounts.

These discounts may change without notice. Please contact your phone or broadband company if you see changes in your discount.

For More Details

For more details, contact the FCC at 1-888-225-5322 voice, 1-888-835-5322 TTY, website www.checklifeline.org or by mail at FCC, 445 12th St SW, Washington, DC 20554, or for MN TAP visit <https://mn.gov/puc/telecommunications/telephone-discounts>.





Home / LEGAL / Assistance Programs

Assistance Programs



Federal Lifeline & Minnesota Telephone Assistance Plan

The federal Lifeline discount plan provides a monthly credit on telephone bills. This discount is separate from Minnesota's Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP), which also offers a monthly credit to customers that meet the eligibility requirements. If you meet the eligibility requirements for the Federal Lifeline discount credit, you also qualify for the Minnesota TAP credit; no other form is necessary.

[DOWNLOAD Federal Lifeline Application 2020](#)

[DOWNLOAD MN Telephone Discounts](#)

LEGAL

- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Terms and Conditions](#)
- [Assistance Programs](#)
- [Closed Captioning](#)
- [CVAA Compliance Statement](#)
- [Do Not Call Registry](#)
- [Statement of Nondiscrimination](#)
- [Rural Development Loan Available](#)

Notice of Changes in Federal Lifeline Program Support Credits

The Federal Communications Commission has ordered changes in the Federal Lifeline Support Program which are scheduled to begin on December 1, 2020.

Lifeline Support Credits continue to be available to qualifying customers on voice or broadband services, but the level of the credit or the speed of the broadband service has changed as follows:

beginning December 1, 2020, the credit available for voice service will be reduced from \$7.25 to \$5.25 per month,

and

beginning December 1, 2020, broadband service speed purchased must be at least 25Mb/3Mb to be eligible for a Lifeline Credit.

If you are purchasing broadband service which meets the required speed level, your Federal Lifeline support credit will not change.

Customers that are interested in determining if they are eligible for Federal Lifeline support credits should contact our office or visit

<https://www.lifelinesupport.org> for information.

