



Comments from Red River Rural Telephone Association dba Red River Communications,
a High-Cost ETC Serving Minnesota

PUC Docket No. 20-747

1. Current number of Lifeline customers as of 10/31/20: 5 in Minnesota; 22 total amongst 3 states

2. How Lifeline services are advertised:
 - In telephone directory which was distributed January 2020
 - In bill insert with February 2020 bills
 - In three area newspapers which were published in June 2020
 - On the company website <https://redrivercomm.com/phone/lifeline/> which is available 24 hours, seven days a week, and is updated to reflect the December 2020 reduction in Lifeline credit

3. Provide samples of Lifeline advertising:
 - Attached is Exhibit 1 - a copy of company telephone directory information
 - Attached is Exhibit 2 – a copy of the bill insert provided to customers
 - Attached is Exhibit 3 - a copy of the newspaper ad placed in local newspapers
 - Attached is Exhibit 4 - a copy of company's webpage on Lifeline

4. No comments

510 Broadway • PO Box 136 • Abercrombie, ND 58001
Phone 701-553-8309 Fax 701-553-8396
redrivercomm.com

A RED RIVER RURAL TELEPHONE ASSOCIATION COMPANY



Nondiscrimination Statement

Exhibit 1
Telephone directory
January 2020

Red River Rural Telephone Association dba Red River Communications is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (PDF) found online at <http://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer>, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 or email SM.OASCR.Info to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement, 1400 Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

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.

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>.

To apply for discounts:

ND & SD residents - The FCC uses a National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier to review an applicant's Lifeline eligibility. To apply for Lifeline visit www.CheckLifeline.org, select your state in the drop down menu, and after the FCC National Eligibility Verifier approves your application, contact our business office to activate your Lifeline benefits.

MN residents, in addition to Lifeline, may also qualify for a \$7.00/month state Telephone Assistance Program (TAP) discount on landline telephone service. 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. To apply for either program, contact our business office for an application.

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

Account Privacy Information (CPNI)

Red River Communications has always considered customer account information private. FCC rules now dictate how that information is protected.

You need:

- * **Authorized contacts** - Be sure anyone you authorize to access your account, including your spouse, is listed as an additional contact.
- * **Password** - If you aren't calling from the account telephone number, a password will be requested before information is shared.
- * **Security questions** - These questions will be asked if the correct password isn't supplied.
- * **Identification** - A photo ID may be required when accessing the account in person.

Contact the business office if you have any questions about the privacy of your account or to add an authorized contact.

Non-Discrimination Statement

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You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.



Recycle Your Old Telephone Books

Help conserve natural resources by recycling your old phone books. Collection points are at the business office in Abercrombie, ND and these recycling centers:

205 Front St N, Barnesville, MN
Tuesday & Thursday 12 – 8 p.m. & Saturday 8 a.m. to noon.

716 Front St, Hawley, MN
Monday – Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Red River Communications office:
Monday thru Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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◆ **Password** – If you aren't calling from the account telephone number, a password will be requested before information is shared.

◆ **Security questions** – These questions will be asked if the correct password isn't supplied.

◆ **Identification** – A photo ID may be required when accessing the account in person.

Contact the business office if you have any questions about the privacy of your account.



Lifeline and TAP Assistance Programs



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

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>.

To apply for discounts:

Federal - The FCC uses a National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier to review an applicant's Lifeline eligibility. To apply for Lifeline visit www.CheckLifeline.org, select your state in the drop down menu, and after the FCC National Eligibility Verifier approves your application, contact our business office to activate your Lifeline benefits. For more details, contact the FCC at 1-888-225-5322 voice, 1-888-835-5322 TTY, website www.lifeline.gov or by mail at FCC, 445 12th ST SW, Washington, DC 20554.

MN residents – you may qualify for a \$7.00/month state Telephone Assistance Program (TAP) discount on landline telephone service. 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. To apply contact our business office for an application or visit <https://mn.gov/puc/telecommunications/telephone-discounts>.

Telephone Lifeline Assistance Available

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Lifeline is a low-income telephone service discount available to qualifying persons participating in these assistance programs:

- Medicaid
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
 - Supplemental Security Income
 - Federal Public Housing Assistance/Section 8
 - Veterans Pension/Survivor Benefit Program
- or to those who qualify based on income compared to the poverty level.

MN State assistance is also available. For more information on Lifeline, call Red River Communications at 701-553-8309, 1-866-553-8309, or visit www.lifelinesupport.org.

Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, "universal service" means basic telephone service is available to all consumers.

Universal service is voice grade access to the telecommunications network, including local usage, touchtone calling, single-party service, access to emergency 911 services, access to operator service, access to qualifying low-income consumers. All of these services are available from Red River Communications in these areas: In ND - Abercrombie, Barney, Colfax, Fairmount, Great Bend, Hankinson, Lidgerwood, Mantador, Mooreton and Wyndmere; In MN - Barnesville rural, Kent and Rollag; In SD - South Lidgerwood.

2020 charges for these universal services are:

- Local residential service \$18/month
(Rates vary by exchange and EAS charges may apply)
- Touchtone calling No charge
- Single-party service No charge
- Access to 911 service No charge
(Local government assesses a tax to pay for special equipment.)
- Access to operator services No charge
- Access to directory assistance \$.60/call
for local info
(If you call a long distance company for DA, that company may charge for its services.)
- Access to long distance telephone companies \$6.50/month
(Flat rate prescribed by federal agency)
- Low-income discounts \$7.25/month
- Toll-blocking No charge

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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

To apply for discounts in MN, ND & SD – The FCC National Lifeline Verifier determines an applicant's Lifeline eligibility. To apply for Lifeline, visit www.CheckLifeline.org, select your state in the drop down menu, enter your personal information, and after the FCC National Eligibility Verifier approves your application, contact our business office to activate your Lifeline benefits.

MN residents who qualify for the federal Lifeline for telephone service also automatically qualify for a \$7.00/month state Telephone Assistance Program (TAP) discount on landline telephone service. 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. Contact our business office for assistance with MN TAP.

For more details, contact the FCC at 1-888-225-5322 voice, 1-888-835-5322 TTY, visit www.lifelinesupport.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>.