

Wikstrom

Internet ♦ Telecom

Wikstrom Telephone Co. Inc.

PO Box 217, Karlstad, MN 56732

218-436-2121

October 29, 2020

Mr. William Seuffert
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 Information in
Docket No. 20-747

Dear Mr. Seuffert:

Enclosed please find the Initial Comments for Wikstrom Telephone Company, Study
Area Code 361505 as a High Cost ETC in Docket No. P999/CI-20-747.

Should you have any questions, please contact me via e-mail at cak@wiktel.com or by
phone at 218-436-5231.

Sincerely,

/s/ Carrie A. Taggart

Carrie A Taggart
Office Manager

Enclosures:

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

1. Current Number of Lifeline Customers as of 9/30/20:
 - a. Study Area Code 361505 Total Lifeline customers =116
 - b. Non-tribal service areas Lifeline customers = 116
 - c. Tribal service areas Lifeline customers = 0
2. How Lifeline Services are Advertised:

Wikstrom Telephone Company advertises Lifeline Services on our website.

Website: <https://wiktel.com/TAP/>

In addition, Lifeline Services are advertised in customer notices.
3. Provide Samples of Lifeline Advertising:

Exhibit 1 – Lifeline information from website.

Exhibit 2 – Lifeline information from customer notice.
4. Does the High Cost ETC have any other observations about Lifeline: No Comment



Telephone Discounts Can Help You Stay In Touch

Minnesota's Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP) and the federal LIFELINE Program help make telephone service affordable to low-income consumers.

TAP offers a **\$7.00 per month** discount on home landline telephone service.

The Lifeline Program offers a **\$9.25 per month** discount on home landline or internet service OR on cell phone service.

How do I find out if I am eligible?

Contact your service provider to ask if you qualify. Consumers enrolled in the following programs may already be eligible:

- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Medical Assistance
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Supplemental Security Income
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension Benefit
- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Head Start
- Food Distribution Program

How do I apply?

Your phone service provider can assist you with the application(s) or contact the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for assistance, consumer.puc@state.mn.us or 651-296-0406 or 1-800-657-3782.

PHONE OR INTERNET DISCOUNT NOTICE

As a Minnesota consumer, you may qualify for one of two programs that provide assistance with paying your telephone bill.

LIFELINE PROGRAM:

The Universal Service Fund low-income Lifeline Program benefit is available to recipients of:

- Medicaid (Medical Assistance)
- SSI (Supplemental Security Income)
- Veteran's Pension Benefits
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
- Tribal Lands
- Income is below 135% of the Federal Poverty Level

The USF Lifeline Program is not available to customers who are dependents for federal income tax purposes unless the customer is more than 60 years of age. With recent Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reforms, the Lifeline program has been streamlined, and eligible customers are now limited to one wireline or wireless phone or Broadband Internet Access Service (BIAS) per qualified household. The Lifeline Benefit provides a reduced monthly rate for telephone or BIAS service (subject to speed tier minimums).

MINNESOTA TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PLAN (TAP)

This program offers an additional monthly discount on your phone bill. Eligibility requirements are the same as lifeline above.

If you have questions in regards to the above mentioned programs, please contact our office at 800-436-1915