

Federal Lifeline and Link Up Programs in Oklahoma

What are the Lifeline and Link Up low-income telephone support programs?

Lifeline and Link Up are discount support mechanisms to ensure quality telecommunications services are available to all qualifying low-income consumers at just, reasonable and affordable rates. These two programs combine to provide low-income households with discounts for the installation of phone service (known as Link Up) and monthly phone bills (known as Lifeline) at their principal place of residence. The program applies to either a wire-line or wireless phone service provided by a participating carrier (eligible telecommunications carrier or ETC).

Low-income Oklahomans may apply for reduced cost wire-line or wireless phone service through designated telephone companies.

What Counties in Oklahoma qualify for the enhanced programs?

The Enhanced programs and Link Up are available only on Tribal Lands, which includes all Oklahoma counties other than those listed below:

Counties in Oklahoma “Not” eligible for Enhanced Lifeline/Link Up.

Alfalfa, Beaver, Cimarron, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Texas, and Beckham county south of the North Fork of the Red River known as “the leased district.”

Additionally, the portions of the counties described as follows are also not eligible for Enhanced Lifeline/Link Up. Oklahoma County west of Indian Meridian Road, approximately the eastern half of Canadian County, Kingfisher county east of N2810 Rd to the Cimarron River then north of the Cimarron River, Cleveland county west of Indian Meridian Road, Logan county west of Indian Meridian Road, Payne county north of the Cimarron River and west of Mt. Vernon Road/N3470 Rd and south of Airport/E0590 Rd. These counties are also not eligible for Enhanced Lifeline/Link Up.

The basic Lifeline discount is available in the above listed, non-tribal lands.

How do I qualify for these programs?

To be eligible for federal Basic or Enhanced Lifeline/Link Up Support, You must be eligible for or a participant in at least one of the following programs:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TTANF) Head Start Programs (under income qualifying eligibility provision only)
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Programs
- Income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines

How do I apply for these programs?

You will be required to fill out an application and show documentation of your qualification for at least one of the qualifying assistance programs.

You should contact your local telephone company for information on whether you qualify for the Lifeline or the Enhanced Lifeline/Link up programs and how to apply. State Qualifying information is also available on the Universal Service Administrative Company's (USAC) web site, www.lifelinesupport.org, in your local phone directory, or you can call USAC toll free at 1-888-641-8722.

Eligible carriers in the State of Oklahoma are listed at the end of this document.

What are the benefits of the Basic Lifeline support programs?

Basic Lifeline federal discounts on phone bills can be up to \$9.25 per month. Consumers living on tribal lands may qualify for additional Lifeline and Link-Up discounts. (see below)

What are the benefits of the Enhanced Lifeline/Link Up for Tribal Lands in Oklahoma?

In the summer of 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued what is referred to as its "12th Report and Order" which estimated that in portions of the nation, notably those on reservations or near reservation lands, as much as 40% of the families were without telephone service in the home. In response, the FCC authorized a fourth tier of enhancement to be paid through the Lifeline and Link-Up programs. Eligibility requirements were expanded and the program was named Enhanced Lifeline and Link Up.

Qualified Enhanced Lifeline consumers, as described, are provided with an additional federal discount of up to \$25 on monthly basic phone service. Depending on current rates, eligible subscribers may receive local phone service for no charge each month.

Eligible Link-Up consumers receive a 100 percent reduction, up to a maximum of \$100, of the customary charge for commencing service at a subscriber's residence. Additional rules and conditions apply.

What qualifies as Tribal Lands?

The Enhanced Lifeline and Link Up programs include low-income consumers on Tribal Lands in Oklahoma and other states. Tribal Lands are defined as any federally recognized Indian Tribe's Reservation (The Osage Nation) or former reservation in Oklahoma or an Indian Allotment. The areas of the state where consumers may apply for Enhanced Lifeline and Link Up include the entire state of Oklahoma except for the panhandle, portions of the extreme southwest, and areas in central Oklahoma (described above).

Designated Eligible Carriers

In Oklahoma, the following telephone companies are designated as eligible to offer Lifeline/Link Up support programs:

Companies Designated as ETCs in Oklahoma

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