

ALERT

FCC Reforms Federal Lifeline Program

February 8, 2012

On February 6, 2012, the Federal Communications Commission released the text of its order reforming the federal Lifeline program, which provides low income consumers with reduced rates for basic telephone service. For eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs), the order modifies on an interim basis the support that is available for eligible Lifeline subscribers and limits such support to one subscriber per household. The order also imposes on ETCs new obligations to determine an applicant's eligibility for Lifeline and new certification requirements in connection with participation in the Lifeline program.

The order permits eligible consumers to apply Lifeline discounts to all residential service plans that provide voice telephony, including bundled service packages that combine voice and broadband. The order also takes the first step to using Lifeline to support broadband and creates a pilot program to promote the adoption and retention of broadband services by low-income households.

A summary of the order is available [here](#).

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