

TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

There are several programs that are available to assist low-income consumers to get and keep telephone service.

1. PROGRAMS TO HELP YOU GET PHONE SERVICE

LINK-UP

This federal program, administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), helps you get phone service. Link-Up offers a reduction of 50% of the hook-up charge or \$30.00, whichever is less. Link-Up also provides for deferred payment of connection charges without interest.

To qualify, you must have a household income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) or receive benefits under one of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- Food Stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8) or live in public housing
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (in Minnesota, MFIP)
- National School Lunch Program

In addition, if you live on a reservation, receipt of the following programs also qualify you for Link Up:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribally administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Head Start

2. DISCOUNT PROGRAMS TO HELP YOU KEEP YOUR PHONE SERVICE

A. LIFELINE

This federal program, also administered by the FCC, helps you keep phone service by providing a discount off your monthly phone bill. To qualify, you must receive benefits under one of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- Food Stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8) or live in public housing
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (in Minnesota, MFIP)
- National School Lunch Program

People who do not qualify under the above criteria but live on federally recognized reservations, may qualify if they receive benefits from one of the following programs: Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance; or Head Start.

B. TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PLAN (TAP)

This state program supplements the federal monthly discount program (Lifeline). You can get an additional credit on your monthly bill. Eligibility for TAP is identical to that of the federal LIFELINE program. That is, you must have a household income at or below 135% of the FPG or receive benefits under one of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- Food Stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8) or live in public housing
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (in Minnesota, MFIP)
- National School Lunch Program

WHAT ARE THE INCOME REQUIREMENTS?

The income requirements are tied to the Federal Poverty Guidelines. They vary by family size and change each year. For the current income requirements, [click here](#).

HOW DO I APPLY FOR TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE?

Application forms that cover both state and federal programs are available on the [Public Utilities Commission's](#) website or [click here](#). You can also get it from your local telephone company.

Additional information is available from the PUC Consumer Affairs Office by phone at 651-296-0406 (toll-free at 1-800-657-3782) or by e-mail at consumer.puc@state.mn.us. You may also get additional information by contacting your local telephone company.

3. PROGRAMS FOR PERSONS WITH SPEECH OR HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

TELEPHONE EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM (TED)

This state program provides telephone equipment to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf, blind, speech impaired or have a physical disability and need adaptive equipment in order to use the phone. The equipment is loaned out at no cost as a long-term loan.

Available equipment include Captel phones, light flashing ring signalers, TTYs, amplified telephones, loud ringers, hands free speakerphones, as well as other equipment.

To qualify, you must:

- Live in Minnesota

- Have a hearing loss, speech or physical disability that limits your use of a standard telephone
- Have a telephone in your home (or have applied for phone service) and
- Meet the income requirements

The income requirements vary depending on your family size and change each year. For current income requirements, visit the [Minnesota Department of Human Services](#) or call the Department of Human Services at 651-431-2000 (TTY/TDD service: 1-800-627-3529).

To apply, you can either:

- 1) Fill out an application online. Click here to go directly to the [Application](#).

Then either:

- a. Mail it to:
Telephone Equipment Distribution Program
444 Lafayette Road N.
St Paul MN 55155-3814
or
 - b. Fax it to 651-297-7155
- 2) Request an application from the Department of Human Services by either:
 - a. Calling 1-800-657-3663 (phone) or 75.146.179.162 (IP) or 651-297-1316 (VP) or 1-888-206-6555 (TTY).
 - or
 - b. Sending an e-mail request to: ted.program@state.mn.us.

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