

# Telephone Lifeline Program

---

2016 LIFE Statewide Conference

Angelo Rella

Administrator

Targeted Accessibility Fund of New York, Inc. and  
New York State Universal Service Fund



# Telephone Lifeline Program Basics

---

- ❑ Offers discount on telephone bill
- ❑ New York's program in effect since 1985
- ❑ Offered by incumbent local landline telecommunications companies, some competitive landline telecommunications companies, and wireless companies



# Telephone Lifeline Program Basics

---

- Funding for the Lifeline discount comes from a combination of support from both the Federal Government and New York State and is given directly to the company providing the Lifeline service
- Wireless Companies do not receive the New York State portion of the funding



# Lifeline Program Elements

---

- ❑ Offers reduced basic service rate – Amount dependent upon customer's designated local telecommunications company
- ❑ Waiver of the Federal subscriber line charge
- ❑ Various affordable wireless Lifeline packages
- ❑ 42 companies currently serve approximately 100,000 wireline lifeline customers Statewide – 2 years ago, there were 150,000!

# Lifeline Eligibility Criteria

□ Customers are eligible if enrolled in these programs:

- Family Assistance
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)  
formerly Food Stamps
- HEAP
- Medicaid
- Safety Net Assistance
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Veteran's Disability & Surviving Spouse Pension
- National School Lunch Program
- Federal Public Housing Assistance



# Income Eligibility

---

- ❑ Can qualify to receive Lifeline based on annual gross income.
- ❑ Income must be at or below 135% of Federal Poverty Guidelines
- ❑ Customer needs to provide documentation of income eligibility
- ❑ Documentation includes state or federal tax returns, social security statement of benefits, unemployment statements, child support awards, among others.

# FCC Order 12-11 Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization (2/6/12)

---

- ❑ Lifeline limited to a single discount per household.
- ❑ All Lifeline customers need to be recertified annually.
- ❑ Lifeline customers required to provide last 4 digits of social security number and birthdate.
- ❑ Companies conduct a database match to help eliminate duplication.



# Lifeline Customer Certifications

---

- ❑ Whether address is temporary or permanent.
- ❑ Only one Lifeline discount per household.
- ❑ Agree not to transfer Lifeline benefit to another person.
- ❑ Agree to notify phone company if moving to another address.
- ❑ Agree to notify phone company if no longer receiving federal or state benefits.



# Lifeline Customer Certifications

---

- Agree to participate in annual certification of eligibility.
- Acknowledge that providing false or fraudulent information is punishable by law.

# What's New???

---

- On March 31, 2016, FCC approved changes to Lifeline program to support stand-alone broadband service as well as bundled voice and data service packages.
- Phases in Federal broadband support as Federal support for stand-alone voice service is phased out by December 1, 2021. (Except in areas where there is only one Lifeline provider)



# What's New???

---

- Provides for a National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier and Database
- No decision yet on how New York Public Service Commission will react to this new plan