

# TURN's Consumer Advisor

## Is California LifeLine Right For You?



California LifeLine program, formerly Universal Lifeline Telephone Service (ULTS), was established by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to provide discounted basic residential (landline) phone services to low-income households.

Consumers can sign up for the program through an *Income* or *Program* based eligibility process. People who enroll through an income-based process must show proof of income or be enrolled in one or more of the eligible public assistance programs.

### 1) Program-Based:

You can qualify for California LifeLine if you or another person in your household is enrolled in any one of the following public-assistance programs:

Medicaid/Medi-Cal	Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8
Food Stamps or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
Healthy Families Category A	National School Lunch's FREE Lunch Program (NSL)
Tribal TANF	Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
Women, Infant and Children Program (WIC)	Head Start Income Eligible (Tribal Only)

### 2) Income-Based

You can qualify for California LifeLine if your total household income is at or less than these income maximums:

Household Size	California LifeLine Annual Income Limits through 5/31/10
1-2	\$24,000
3	\$28,000
4	\$34,000
Each Additional Member	Add \$5,800

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In order to qualify for California LifeLine based on household income, you will need to provide documents proving that your total household income is at or below the income maximum for your household size. Income documents include:

- Prior year's state, federal, or tribal tax return
- Income statements or paycheck stubs for three consecutive months within the calendar year
- Statement of benefits from Social Security, Veterans Administration, retirement/pension, unemployment compensation, and/or workmen's compensation
- Divorce decree
- Child support document
- Other official documents

### **Two Steps to Enroll**

**1)** If you think you meet the above qualifications, contact your telephone company and tell them you want to enroll in LifeLine. If the telephone company can verbally qualify you, they will enroll you in LifeLine immediately.

**2)** Within two to three weeks California LifeLine will mail to you, in a **PINK** envelope, an enrollment form. In order to maintain your telephone discounts, you must complete the form, sign it, and return it to California LifeLine along with any required income documentation by the due date. If you do not return the completed signed form to California LifeLine by the due date, you will be disqualified. In addition, your telephone company will bill you for any discounts you may have received.

### **Yearly Verification Process**

The California LifeLine program requires all existing California LifeLine customers to verify their eligibility on an annual basis. Each year, on your LifeLine anniversary date, the California LifeLine program will mail to you, in a **PINK** envelope, a LifeLine verification form. **In order to continue receiving your LifeLine discount, you must complete and sign the form and return it to California LifeLine by the due date.**

### **Recent Changes**

Because of recent changes in the administration of the program, many people have fallen off the system or are finding it very hard to qualify.

#### **If I am disqualified, can I complain? Where do I go with complaints related to LifeLine?**

Contact The Utility Reform Network at:

1-800-355-TURN (8876)

Or you can file a written complaint with the

CPUC Consumer Affairs Branch

505 Van Ness Ave

San Francisco, CA 94102

Be sure to include the following information:

- The name of the person the account is billed under
- Mailing address and phone number
- Name of the company you are complaining about
- Address and telephone number of the company (if applicable)
- The name of the company's representative you contacted (if applicable)
- Your utility account number (if applicable)
- A brief description of the complaint (please limit your complaint to two pages or less)