



Universal Service  
Administrative Co.

## Lifeline Newsletter 2024 June

June 27, 2024



### Safe Connections Act Background and Upcoming System Changes

On November 15, 2023, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a [Report and Order](#) implementing the Safe Connections Act (SCA) of 2022 to help survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, and related crimes. Under the SCA, survivors of domestic violence experiencing financial hardship will be able to qualify and receive emergency Lifeline support for up to six months.

#### **Lifeline Support for Survivors**

Survivors experiencing financial hardship will be able to apply for emergency support starting in August 2024 (exact timing is still to be determined). Qualifying survivors can receive a discount of \$9.25 on voice or internet service for up to six months. After six months, they may apply for the standard Lifeline benefit of up to \$9.25 for qualifying internet service or \$5.25 per month for voice service.

Survivors can confirm their financial hardship status based on [the existing Lifeline program qualification requirements](#), or they can receive emergency support from Lifeline under the SCA can demonstrate or self-certify that their household income is

at or below [200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines](#) (FPG). Survivors can also qualify for emergency support if they participate in any of the following additional eligibility programs:

- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch or School Breakfast Program, including enrollment at a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) school or school district
- Received a Federal Pell Grant in the current award year

Survivors will also need to provide valid documentation from their phone company proving they made a completed line separation request to receive emergency support from Lifeline. Once a survivor asks their phone company to separate their line, the phone company has two business days to comply and must respond with either an email, text message, or letter acknowledging the survivor's request. The line separation document must include the survivor's name, a date from within the last twelve months, and the name of the phone company. The request to separate a line does not need to be successfully completed by the phone company, who may be unable to complete the request because of some technical infeasibility, but proof of the request itself must be provided to qualify for emergency communications support.

## Upcoming System Changes

USAC is making system updates in the National Verifier, National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD), and Lifeline Claims System (LCS) to flag and protect survivors' entries and treat survivors' information with greater sensitivity. Only a limited group of designated personnel will have access to survivors' information. Key system changes include:

- **National Verifier:** When survivors apply, they will be able to decide how USAC can reach them – either by mail or email. Consumers will only be able to apply through the consumer portal and mail at this time.
- **NLAD:** After a successful enroll, transfer, or update transaction, providers will see a new “**SCA Status**” field to identify whether a subscriber is a current SCA recipient, former SCA recipient, or not SCA eligible. This status is determined by the consumer's National Verifier application. Primary and mailing address information will be masked in NLAD throughout the User Interface and also masked in reports for all subscribers identified as survivors.
- **LCS:** Providers will see a new “**SCA Subscriber**” field on original claims and revision templates. If a subscriber is currently enrolled as a current SCA recipient, the “SCA Subscriber” field value will be set to 1 and can be claimed up to \$9.25 or up to \$34.25 (for those living on Tribal lands) for voice-only service. The value will be set to 0 for all other subscribers. Primary and mailing address information will also be masked on original claims and revision templates.

On July 9, USAC will update the [staging environments](#) for the National Verifier and NLAD, to allow providers to test how survivors will apply and get enrolled.

## Upcoming Training

USAC will host a webinar on **Tuesday, July 30** at 3 p.m. ET for service providers, [register here](#). The sessions will cover information on SCA, requirements for service providers, and additional resources USAC is developing to help guide service providers. In the meantime, service providers are encouraged to become familiar with the requirements of the [Report and Order](#).

## New Consumer Email Field in NLAD

On July 9<sup>th</sup>, USAC will release a new optional field named '**consumer email**' in NLAD staging environment. This will be an optional field that service providers can use to enter in a consumer's email.

If the email address is rejected service providers will receive the following error:

- **INVALID\_CONSUMER\_EMAIL**: Please enter a valid email address.

Service providers will need re-enter the email address in the correct format (e.g., [email@email.com](#)) and ensure the email is a minimum of two characters. USAC will notify providers when the new field will be available in the production environment (expected to occur sometime in August).

## Reverification Update

### Group Two and Group Four De-Enrollment Window Closing

Reverification for Group Two and Group Four is nearly finalized. USAC is actively conducting outreach to subscribers in Group Two and Group Four who require additional documentation to complete the process. Consumers who fail to successfully complete the reverification process will be de-enrolled and mailed a de-enrollment notice.

De-enrollments will occur within five days of a subscriber's reverification due date. Service providers are encouraged to monitor the Failed Reverification De-Enroll Report in the NLAD to see which subscribers failed the reverification process and have been de-enrolled.

### Group Three Submission Deadline is June 28

The submission window for Group Three is open. This group includes subscribers in specific Study Area Codes (SACs). Service providers must collect on-hand documentation and conduct consumer outreach to obtain additional documentation. All final documentation must be submitted to USAC by June 28, 2024.

For more information on the Lifeline reverification process, providers can visit USAC's [Reverification](#) page.



## Lifeline Program Compliance Reminder: Advertise Lifeline

All service providers are required to advertise the availability of Lifeline program benefits in a manner designed to reach eligible households within its study area, per FCC's rules at 47 C.F.R. § [54.405\(b\)](#).

### **FCC Advertising Guidelines**

Service providers should utilize outreach materials and methods designed to reach eligible households that do not currently receive service. For example, service providers may:

- Post notices at public transportation stops and agencies, shelters, and soup kitchens
- Run public service announcements
- Provide information booths at central locations
- Provide customer service to program participants who have disabilities on an equal basis by using telecommunications relay services (TRS), text telephone (TTY), and speech-to-speech (STS) services
- Provide outreach materials in braille

Service providers should develop advertising in languages other than English for any sizeable populations in their service areas who speak other languages. USAC recommends that Lifeline service providers proactively review their advertising material periodically to ensure the outreach is accurate, up-to-date, and includes necessary information for consumers.

Service providers can also coordinate their outreach efforts with government agencies that administer any of the relevant government assistance programs such as social service agencies, Tribal organizations, community centers, public schools, and nursing homes. Lifeline resource materials are available on the LifelineSupport.org [Community Education](#) page.

**July Webinar: Lifeline Common Audit Findings**

Join us on Wednesday, July 10 for our next Lifeline program webinar to learn more about how Lifeline service providers can avoid common audit findings. Register below for the July 2024 monthly webinar.

Recordings of previous webinars are available on our [Lifeline Learn: Webinars](#) page.

[Register](#)



## July Maintenance Schedule

As part of continual system improvements, USAC conducts regular system maintenance. Scheduled maintenance dates are available on the [NLAD Maintenance Schedule](#) and the [National Verifier Maintenance Schedule](#) pages.

### **NLAD System Maintenance, July 12<sup>th</sup>**

NLAD, LCS, ACCS, and RAD will be unavailable due to a scheduled monthly maintenance starting Friday, July 12 at 10:00 p.m. until 3:00 a.m. ET on Saturday, July 13.

National Verifier will be available for use during this time.

### **National Verifier System Maintenance, July 19<sup>th</sup>**

National Verifier will be unavailable due to scheduled monthly maintenance starting Friday, July 19 at 10:00 p.m. until 3:00 a.m. ET on Saturday, July 20.

NLAD, LCS, ACCS, and RAD will be available for use during this time.

## Need Help? Contact Us!

For questions about Lifeline, including technical issues and program resources or rules, email [LifelineProgram@usac.org](mailto:LifelineProgram@usac.org). Review all appropriate program contacts on USAC's Lifeline [Contact Us](#) webpage.