



## Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

Your Residential Utility Consumer Advocate

# CONSUMERS' FACT SHEET

### Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

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# TELEPHONE LIFELINE PROGRAMS IN OHIO



Lifeline programs provide financial assistance to low-income residents and help ensure that they can afford telephone service, either through a traditional wireline company or through a qualified wireless provider. Eligible customers must choose to get Lifeline service from **only one company per household** and only one line per household. Traditional home telephone Lifeline programs provide discounts when establishing service, lower monthly service charges and special payment arrangements.

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), your residential utility consumer advocate, offers the following information about Lifeline programs, including benefits, restrictions, qualification guidelines and how to apply.

### Lifeline available from all local wireline carriers

Enhanced Lifeline services are offered by all local telephone carriers throughout the state to consumers with household incomes at or below 135 percent of the federal poverty guidelines or who participate in at least one of the following programs:

- ▶ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- ▶ Medicaid;
- ▶ Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
- ▶ Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA) or Section 8; or
- ▶ Veterans Pension.

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The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, represents the interests of 4.5 million households in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts.

The state agency also educates consumers about electric, natural gas, telephone and water issues.

For more information, please visit the OCC website at [www.occ.ohio.gov](http://www.occ.ohio.gov).



The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.

Consumers who show that they participate in at least one of the programs listed above are eligible to be automatically enrolled in their local wireline company's Lifeline program. For Lifeline programs based solely on income eligibility, any of the following documentation is sufficient to show proof of income:

- ▶ A prior year's state or federal income tax return;
- ▶ A current income statement from an employer or W-2 form;
- ▶ Three consecutive months of current pay stubs;
- ▶ Statement of Social Security benefits;
- ▶ Statement of benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs;
- ▶ Statement of benefits for retirement/ pension;
- ▶ Statement of unemployment or workers' compensation benefits;
- ▶ Divorce decree; or
- ▶ Child support documentation.

Lifeline customers of traditional wireline companies receive the following benefits:

- ▶ Waive service connection fees once per customer at a single address in a 12-month period;
- ▶ Do not pay a deposit to establish service;
- ▶ Receive a monthly basic service charge discount of \$9.25;
- ▶ Do not pay charges related to the Universal Service Fund and local number portability;
- ▶ Can receive free "toll blocking" and blocking for 900/976 telephone numbers to prohibit all outgoing long-distance calls; and
- ▶ Special payment arrangements (or can re-establish service if previously disconnected) by paying \$25 and the remaining balance over six months.



### 2018 Income Guidelines

Size of household*	Total Gross Annual Household Income			
	135% (Lifeline)	150% (PIPP Plus)**	175% (HEAP)**	200% (HWAP)
1	\$16,389	\$18,210	\$21,245	\$24,280
2	\$22,221	\$24,690	\$28,805	\$32,920
3	\$28,053	\$31,170	\$36,365	\$41,560
4	\$33,885	\$37,650	\$43,925	\$50,200
5	\$39,717	\$44,130	\$51,485	\$58,840
6	\$45,549	\$50,610	\$59,045	\$67,480
7	\$51,381	\$57,090	\$66,605	\$76,120
8	\$57,213	\$63,570	\$74,165	\$84,760

\* For families/households with more than 8 persons, please contact your local community action agency.

\*\* PIPP Plus and HEAP guidelines follow the state fiscal year and are updated in July.