



# Consumer Alert

## Lifeline and Link-up Program Update: Seven Wireless Telephone Companies Now Offer Discounts

The Michigan Public Service Commission urges qualifying low-income residents to apply for the Lifeline Telephone Assistance and Link-Up America Programs. These programs make basic local telephone service more affordable for income-eligible families throughout Michigan. Those who qualify could receive discounts for monthly telephone bills and/or initial installation costs of telephone service.

**And now, the following seven wireless companies offer a Lifeline discount: AllTel Communications, Centennial Michigan, Cingular Wireless (AT&T Mobility), SprintCom Wireless, Nextel West, Thumb Cellular, and TracFone Wireless (prepaid).**

### What are the benefits?

**Lifeline** provides discounts for basic local landline telephone service (and wireless service provided by the seven companies above) to eligible low-income customers.

- Eligible low-income customers under age 65 can receive a minimum discount of \$8.25 per month (the current average discount is \$10.00 per month and varies depending on the provider).
- Eligible low-income customers 65 years of age or older can receive a minimum discount of \$12.35 per month.

**Link-Up** reduces the installation charge for landline phone service by 50%, up to \$30, for those customers meeting income eligibility guidelines. Customers can request a deferred payment schedule for the remaining installation charges.

The rate reductions for both Lifeline and Link-Up cannot be greater than the cost of the basic service.

### How do you apply?

Contact your local landline telephone company to apply. The phone number and information on Lifeline and Link-Up can generally be found in the front of your telephone book. If you are a customer of one of the seven participating wireless companies, contact the company directly. You may be asked to provide documentation to demonstrate your eligibility.

### Who is eligible?

To qualify for Lifeline and/or Link-Up, a customer's household income must be at or below the guidelines listed in the chart below, or the customer must participate in one of the following assistance programs:

- Medicaid,
- Food Stamps,
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI),
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8),
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP),
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, or
- The National School Lunch Program's Free Lunch

| <u>150% of Poverty Guideline's<br/>Maximum Income</u> |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| <u># of Household Members</u>                         | <u>Annual Income</u> |
| 1   | \$16,245             |
| 2   | \$21,855             |
| 3   | \$27,465             |
| 4   | \$33,075             |
| 5   | \$38,685             |
| 6   | \$44,295             |
| 7   | \$49,905             |
| 8   | \$55,515             |
| For each Additional Household Member,<br>Add          | \$5,610              |

*Telephone companies may require annual re-enrollment and verification of income eligibility.*

