

LIFELINE DISCOUNT PROGRAM for Orange County REMC

The Lifeline Service Program (“Lifeline”) is a federally funded program established to provide monthly assistance to low income households. The program is available to qualified low-income consumers and provides a discount on the qualified customer’s monthly service.

To participate in the program, customer’s must either have an income that is at or below 135% of the federal Poverty Guidelines or participate in certain assistance programs. You can see if you are eligible with the Lifeline Eligibility Pre-Screening Tool on the Universal Service Administrative website at www.lifelinesupport.org.

I. Lifeline Program

- a. Qualified Orange County REMC and Fiber customers may receive a Lifeline discount on their voice service, broadband service, or as part of a bundled voice and broadband package. Terms and conditions of service are located in our Master Services Agreement. Once an application has been processed and accepted, a qualified Lifeline customer will have the Lifeline subsidy applied to their selected service.
- b. The Federal credit amount provided to qualified Lifeline subscribers will be the maximum amount authorized by the FCC.
- c. FCC rules prohibit more than one Lifeline service per household. The definition of a “household” is anyone living at an address (including children, relatives, people not related to the account holder, etc.) who share income(s) and household expenses. A household is not permitted to receive lifeline benefits from multiple providers.

II. Eligibility

- a. To qualify for Lifeline service, a subscriber must meet certain state and federal eligibility requirements. These requirements are determined by the state in which the customer resides. These state and federal eligibility requirements include program-based eligibility or income-based eligibility.
- b. Program Based Eligibility. To be eligible for Lifeline services, individuals or families must show a card, letter, or official document as proof that they participate in and receive benefits under one of the following public assistance programs:
 - i. Medicaid
 - ii. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps or SNAP)
 - iii. Supplemental Security Income
 - iv. Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA/Section 8)

- v. VA Veterans Pension (Supplemental Income for Wartime Veterans)
- vi. VA Survivors Pension

c. Income Based Eligibility. Consumers may also qualify for Lifeline services under the income-based eligibility criteria, if their total combined household income is at or below 135% of Federal Poverty Guidelines.

III. Application

a. Customers can apply for the Orange County REMC and Fiber Lifeline program by contacting our office at 812-865-2229. Customers must provide the supporting documentation that they meet the eligibility requirements; and certifying, under penalty of perjury, that they:

i. Are eligible for and currently receive benefits from the public assistance program(s) identified in the application form, or that they have income at or below the designated poverty level.

ii. Do not currently receive Lifeline support serving their household and no other resident in their household participates in the Lifeline program.

iii. Have reviewed the information contained in their application and it is true and correct to the best of their knowledge and belief, and that they understand that providing false or fraudulent information to obtain Lifeline benefits is punishable by law.

b. If a subscriber is applying based on state or federal program-based eligibility, they will be required to provide a copy of a document or program card showing proof of their participation in the qualifying program (Section II. b. Program Based Eligibility). This document or card must include the participant's name, address, program name and effective date of the award. For example, if you are eligible for the Lifeline program because you participate in the Medicaid program, you will need to submit a copy of your Medicaid benefit card with your application.

c. If a subscriber is applying based on their household income being at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, they must provide Orange County REMC with income documentation. Acceptable documentation includes: current income statement from an employer; prior year's federal income tax return; a Social Security statement of benefits; a Veterans Administration statement of benefits; a retirement or pension statement of benefits; an Unemployment or Workers' Compensation statement of benefits; a federal notice letter of participation in General Assistance; a divorce decree; a child support award; or other official document containing income information.

d. A customer's application for Lifeline services will be evaluated by Orange County REMC and/or any applicable state or federal agencies to confirm and verify the customer's eligibility to receive the Lifeline support. Once approved, the Lifeline subsidy shall be applied to the customer's account on the first billing cycle after their acceptance

into the program. No refunds will be provided for charges prior to enrollment and approval of the program.

e. The Lifeline program is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (“USAC”) and in some states by state agencies. By applying for Lifeline services, a subscriber consents and agrees to the disclosure of all information submitted by the subscriber to USAC, USAC’s agents, the National Lifeline Accountability Database and/or applicable state agencies to ensure the proper administration of the Lifeline program, and failure to provide such consent will result in the subscriber being denied the Lifeline service.

IV. Restrictions and Requirements

a. **Lifeline Service Areas.** Orange County REMC Lifeline services are only available for activation by subscribers who reside in certain census blocks in which Orange County REMC is designated an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC). To receive a subsidized Lifeline discount, a subscriber’s principal residence address must be within at designated census block in the Orange County REMC ETC service area. Subscribers should call 812-865-2229 to check whether they reside in an eligible area.

b. Usage is unlimited minutes at the fixed rate for Voice Services on the website.

c. The current charge is \$ 34.95 per month.

b. **Toll Calls.** Orange County REMC does not allow calls to 900, 976, and 1010 number and will not accept collect calls. Customers can utilize 911 and 411 services as part of a customer’s local and long- distance services.

d. International services are not available.

e. **Nontransferable and Non-assignable.** Eligibility for Orange County REMC Lifeline services is personal and relates to the subscriber individually. Lifeline customers may not transfer to any third party, including a third party that is eligible for Lifeline services, any of the customer’s rights or benefits received under the Lifeline services.

f. **Changes to Eligibility.** A qualified customer receiving Lifeline services must notify Orange County REMC within 30 days if they no longer qualify for any of the public assistance programs identified in their application form, no longer meet the criteria for income eligibility, if another member of their household receives Lifeline benefits, or if they no longer qualify for Lifeline services for any other reason. Once a customer informs Orange County REMC that they are no longer eligible for Lifeline services, Orange County REMC shall unenroll the customer for Lifeline services and discontinue the customer’s Lifeline discount as of the first billing cycle following the effective date of the loss of benefits.

g. Change of Address. A qualified customer receiving Lifeline services must notify Orange County REMC and Fiber - within 30 days of any change of address and continued service upon a change of service address is subject to availability of service at the new address and continued receipt of the Lifeline subsidy from Orange County REMC is subject to the location of the new service address. A change of service address that is not currently serviced by Orange County REMC may be subject to an early termination fee upon disconnect.

h. Annual Recertification. Orange County REMC and Fiber customers receiving Lifeline services must certify annually that:

1) They are still eligible to receive the Lifeline subsidy

2) No one else in the household is receiving Lifeline services.

3) If re-certification process is not completed prior to the expiration of the one-year anniversary of the last approved certification they will lose their Lifeline services discount.

i. Unenrollment. If Orange County REMC determines during the re-certification process, or at any other time, that a customer fails to continue to qualify for Lifeline services, such customer will immediately be deemed ineligible to participate in the Lifeline service and will be unenrolled from the Lifeline service. If a qualified customer fails to complete their recertification by the deadline, they will be unenrolled from Lifeline service. A customer may choose to voluntarily unenroll from the Lifeline service at any time by contacting Orange County REMC at 812-865-2229. Upon unenrollment from the Lifeline program for any reason, the customer shall no longer receive the Lifeline discount as of the first billing cycle following the effective date of their unenrollment. Unenrollment from Lifeline Services for any reason will not terminate a customer's service with Orange County REMC and termination of a customer's Orange County REMC broadband Internet service may be subject to an early termination fee.

j. Right to Terminate Service. Orange County REMC reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of any customer and/or permanently deactivate any customer's service for fraud, misrepresentation or other misconduct as determined solely by the Company. Customer agrees Orange County REMC' service will not be used for any other purpose that is not allowed by this agreement, the terms and conditions of Orange County REMC' voice service, or that is illegal. Orange County REMC can, without notice, limit, suspend or end a customer's service and unenroll a customer from Lifeline services for violating this provision or for any other good cause.