

TAP, Lifeline, Link-Up:

Who Must Offer These Programs?

Three programs provide discounts to qualifying low income telephone consumers in Minnesota, including:

- 1) The Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP), a state program that offers a monthly discount on a consumer's phone bill;
- 2) Lifeline, a federal program that offers a monthly discount on a consumer's phone bill; and
- 3) Link-Up, a federal program that offers a discount on activation charges to qualifying residents of Tribal lands.

This document identifies which Minnesota telephone service providers are required to offer which programs - Lifeline, Link-Up, and/or TAP- to qualifying consumers within their service areas, as summarized in the chart below.

Provider	TAP	Lifeline	Link-Up
Wireless ETCs		X	X (Tribal Lands)
ILECs	X	X	X (Tribal Lands)
CLECs (non-ETCs)	X		
CLECs (ETCs)	X	X	X (Tribal Lands)

TAP

[Minn. Stat. §237.70](#) requires that all "local service providers" offer the Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP). [Minn. Rules pt. 7812.0100](#), subp. 34 defines "local service provider," as a "telephone company or telecommunications carrier providing local service in Minnesota pursuant to a certificate of authority granted by the Commission, and states that a "local service provider includes both local exchange carriers and competitive local exchange carriers."

All Minnesota Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (ILECs) and Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (CLECs) must offer TAP discounts to qualifying customers. Wireless carriers do not meet the definition of "local service provider" and are not required to offer TAP.

Lifeline and Link-Up

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Minnesota Rules require that all carriers that have been designated as Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs) must offer Lifeline to qualifying consumers within their designated service areas, and must offer Link-Up to qualifying customers residing on Tribal Lands.

All Minnesota ILECs have been designated as ETCs and must offer Lifeline and Link-up to qualifying consumers.

Some, but not all, Minnesota CLECs have been designated as ETCs. CLECs that are ETCs must offer Lifeline and Link-Up to qualifying consumers. CLECs that have not been designated as ETCs are not required to offer the programs.

Several wireless carriers have been designated as ETCs and must offer the Lifeline and Link-Up programs. Wireless carriers that are not ETCs are not required to offer the programs.