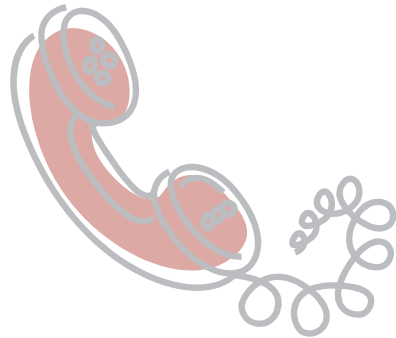


- ▶ *Do you need a phone?*
- ▶ *Would you qualify for discounts on your current telephone bill?*

MINNESOTA TELEPHONE SERVICE



DISCOUNT PROGRAMS

Information provided by the
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 Seventh Place East, Suite 350
Saint Paul, MN 55101-2147

**ADDRESSING THE PUBLIC NEED ► TELEPHONE SERVICE DISCOUNT PROGRAMS: ►
LINK-UP ► LIFELINE ► TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PLAN (TAP)**

Residential telephone service furthers many public interest goals – providing access to emergency services and providing a ready means of communicating with family members and friends, schools, medical providers, and social service agencies.

Whether through landline or wireless telephones, it is important that consumers have affordable access to reliable residential telephone service to safeguard the public interest and to improve quality of life.

Minnesota local service providers are authorized to provide two federally-funded and one state-funded telephone service discount programs. The programs are designed to promote universal service by providing low-income individuals with new telephone service installations and monthly telephone service discounts.

For customers to be eligible, the telephone service must be in their name and they must either participate in at least one of several public assistance programs OR can provide required proof that income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines.

(See reverse side for more details.)



APPLY FOR ONE, TWO, OR ALL THREE PROGRAMS...



USING ONE SIMPLE APPLICATION!

FOR INSTALLATION DISCOUNTS:

► **LINK-UP** - Provides a discount for installing new telephone service, including cell phone service. (federally-funded)

Link-Up discounts half the installation charge up to \$30*. You may ask for a payment plan to pay off the other half of the charge, without interest.

For residents of tribal lands, Link-Up will discount up to half the first \$60 of installation charges and provide an additional discount of up to \$70 for charges above \$60. The maximum total discount is \$100*.

Link-Up will NOT cover the cost of purchasing a phone or wiring your home for service.

* Based on 2007 rates

ADDRESSING THE PUBLIC NEED ► TELEPHONE SERVICE DISCOUNT PROGRAMS: ► LINK-UP ► LIFELINE ► TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PLAN (TAP)

FOR MONTHLY DISCOUNTS:

► **LIFELINE** - Provides a monthly discount on your local telephone service, including cell phone service. (federally-funded)

Lifeline is offered by many (but not all) phone companies. Discounts usually range from \$8-10.00* and may change without notice. You can check with your phone company to see what they offer.

► **TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PLAN (TAP)** - Provides a monthly discount of \$1.75* on your local telephone service. (state-funded)

* Based on 2007 rates

DEPOSITS

If you have financial or credit problems, you may be required to pay a deposit before setting up telephone service. Consumers who are eligible for the Link-Up, Lifeline and TAP programs do not have to pay a deposit if they agree to block long distance service on their phone.

TOLL BLOCKING

This is called “toll limitation” or “toll blocking.” Customers using this service can still use pre-paid calling cards or dial-around services to place long-distance calls from their homes.

If your phone company is threatening to disconnect your service because of late or non-payment of bills, you can ask your company to apply “toll limitation” or “toll blocking” restricting your phone calls to local numbers only.

ONE LINE PER HOUSEHOLD

Telephone service discount programs are available on only one line per household.

BILLING

Telephone service discounts cannot be applied to past due telephone bills.

It can take up to two months for the discounts to show up on your bill, but you must pay the phone bill until that time.

RESOURCES

MINNESOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION
121 Seventh Place East, Suite 350
Saint Paul, MN 55101-2147

CONSUMER ASSISTANCE
651-296-0406
Toll Free: 1.800.657.3782
Fax: 651.297.7073
Email: consumer.puc@state.mn.us

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e. large print or audio tape) by calling 651.201.2202 (voice).

Citizens with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through Minnesota Relay at 1.800.627.3529 or by dialing 711.

If you have a complaint against your local service telephone company regarding the TAP program, contact the:
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Telecommunications Division / 85 7th Place East, Suite 500 / St. Paul, MN 55101-2198 / 651.296.1255
Email: telecom.commerce@state.mn.us

The website www.lifeline.gov provides more information about the federal telephone assistance programs Lifeline and Link-Up.

▶ WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

1. Telephone service must be in your name
2. You must participate in at least one of the qualifying public assistance programs
OR
have income at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines

▶ QUALIFYING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

- Medicaid/Medical Assistance
- Food Support (food stamps)
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
- National School Free Lunch Program
(the phone must be in an adult's name)

▶ ADDITIONAL QUALIFYING PROGRAMS FOR PERSONS LIVING ON A RESERVATION

- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribally-administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Head Start (only those meeting its income qualifying standard)
- Tribal National School Free Lunch Program

OR ▶ INCOME AT OR BELOW 135% OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY INCOME GUIDELINES

If you do not participate in any of the qualifying programs, you may still qualify if you prove your income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty income guidelines.

Provide any one of the following documents for proof of income level:

- Last year's State, Federal or Tribal Tax Return
- Social Security Benefits Statement
- Current annual income statement from employer
- Retirement/Pension Benefits Statement
- Three consecutive months of most recent paycheck stubs
- Divorce Decree
- Child Support Document
- Veterans Administration Benefits Statement
- Unemployment/Workmen's Compensation Statement of Benefits

APPLICATION FORM AND PROOF OF INCOME ARE SENT DIRECTLY TO YOUR PHONE COMPANY

- One application form may be used to apply for one, two or all three programs
- Contact your phone company for an application form
Or forms may also be downloaded at <http://www.puc.state.mn.us/consumer/assist/tsdapp05.pdf>
- Once you are receiving the telephone service discounts, you will be asked periodically to verify that you remain eligible. If you do not respond, the phone company is required to stop the discounts. You may reapply and submit proof of income if qualifying by income level.