



Lifeline Program:

An Overview of the Lifeline Benefit for Low Income
Native and Tribal Consumers



Universal Service
Administrative Co.

Agenda

- USAC & Lifeline: Who We Are
- Lifeline Program Details
- Lifeline Application Process
- National Verifier
- Working in Partnership

USAC & Lifeline: Who We Are



Who is USAC?

The Universal Service Administrative Company

- People across the United States rely on phone and internet services to stay connected to family, work, education, quality health care, and public safety services
- The Universal Service Fund exists to ensure that all people in the United States have access to quality, affordable connectivity services
- USAC is an independent, not-for-profit organization designated by the FCC as the permanent administrator of the Universal Service Fund and its four programs

The Mission of Universal Service

USAC works to ensure that all people in the United States have access to quality, affordable connectivity services through these four programs:

- Connect America
- Lifeline Program
- Rural Health Care Program
- Schools and Libraries Program (E-Rate)

Lifeline Overview

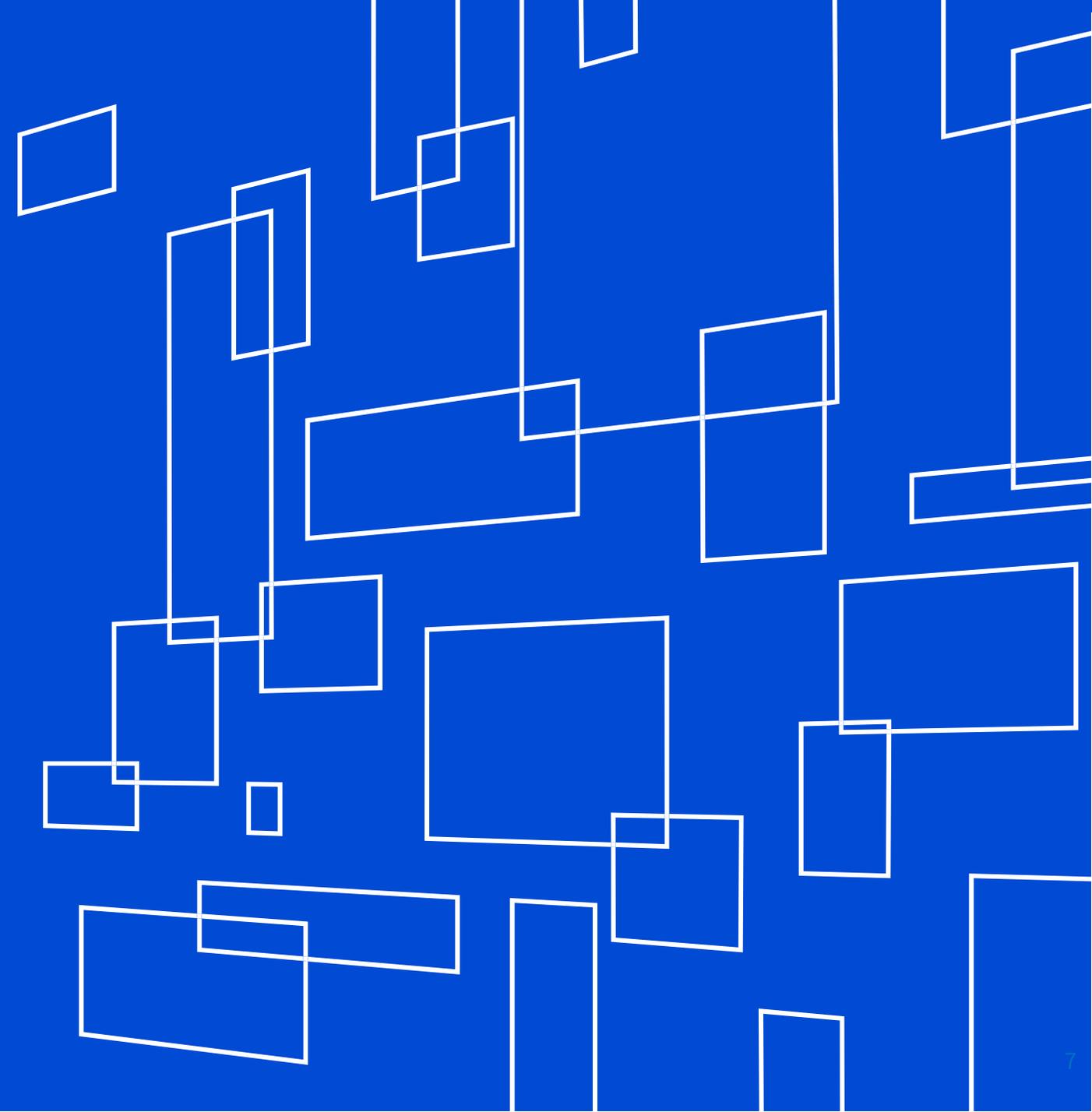


LIFELINE PROGRAM

Provides reduced rates for telecom services to eligible low-income consumers

- A monthly discount on phone, broadband, or bundled service
- Nine million U.S. households participate in Lifeline today
- Of those, 274,000 are Tribal households
- All eligible consumers can receive a discount of \$9.25 per month
- **Consumers who live on qualifying Tribal lands can receive up to \$34.25 per month**

Lifeline Program Details



Lifeline Benefit

Consumers can apply the Lifeline discount to one of the following services:

- Home phone
- Home internet
- Mobile phone
- Mobile internet
- Bundled services
- Service must meet minimum service standards
- Benefit cannot be used to pay for equipment

Applicants qualify if they participate in one of the following:

Applicants qualify if they participate in one of the following:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
- Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit

Applicants qualify through income:

- At or below 135 percent Federal Poverty Guidelines

Applicants living on Tribal lands can also qualify if they participate in one of the following:

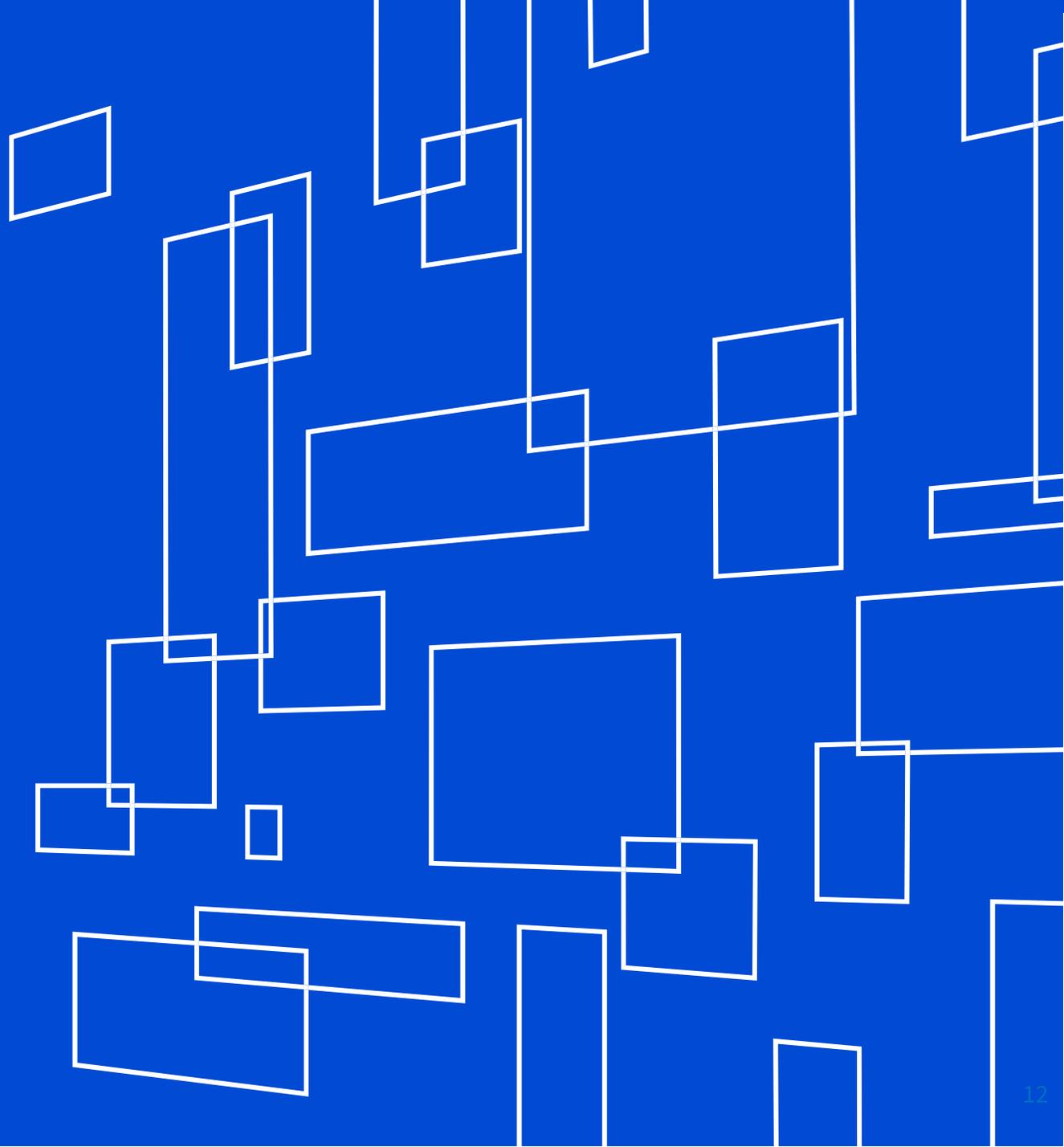
- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance (BIA-GA)
- Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance of Needy Families (TTANF)
- Head Start (must meet qualifying income standard)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

Consumer Eligibility

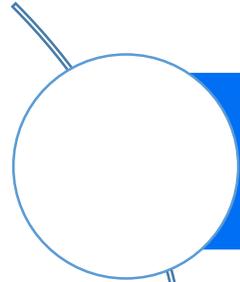
| Household size | 48 Contiguous States, D.C., and Territories | Alaska | Hawaii |
|----------------------|---|----------|----------|
| 1 | \$16,862 | \$21,060 | \$19,413 |
| 2 | \$22,829 | \$28,526 | \$26,271 |
| 3 | \$28,796 | \$35,991 | \$33,129 |
| 4 | \$34,763 | \$43,457 | \$39,987 |
| 5 | \$40,730 | \$50,922 | \$46,845 |
| 6 | \$46,697 | \$58,388 | \$53,703 |
| 7 | \$52,664 | \$65,853 | \$60,561 |
| 8 | \$58,631 | \$73,319 | \$67,419 |
| For each person, add | \$5,967 | \$7,466 | \$6,858 |

* Guidelines are adjusted annually, usually in January. The above chart reflects guidelines for 2019.

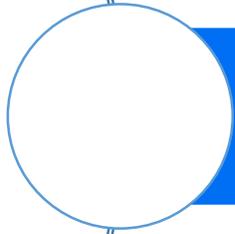
Lifeline Application Process



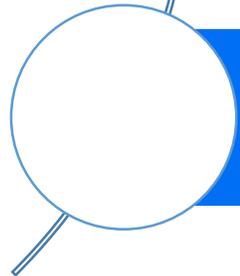
Program Rules



Lifeline is available only to subscribers who can document their eligibility



Only one Lifeline benefit is permitted per independent economic household



Subscribers are required to recertify their eligibility every year

Application Process– (for States not yet in the National Verifier)

1. Gather documents

- Consumers need either a card, letter, or document that proves their eligibility.

2. Choose a phone company

- Consumers can use the “[Companies Near Me](#)” tool at LifelineSupport.org or call USAC’s customer service center at 800-234-9473
- Participating phone companies will help consumers through the application process

3. Receive the benefit

- Phone companies will notify consumers of their enrollment status. If approved, consumers will receive the Lifeline discount toward their monthly bill.

“Companies Near Me” Tool

Companies Near Me

See the [Do I Qualify?](#) page to find out if you qualify for a Lifeline Program discount.

Find a Company

Enter Your Zip Code OR Enter Your City and State

Example: 12345

[Clear Results](#)

Note: The search results may not show every company that is near you. A company may still offer Lifeline even if it is not on this list. Please ask the service provider if they offer Lifeline in your area.

“Companies Near Me” Tool

Companies near Illiopolis, IL

The order of this list is random and may change next time you search. The results will still be the same.

Showing 6 of 6 companies

 Print List

Download List:



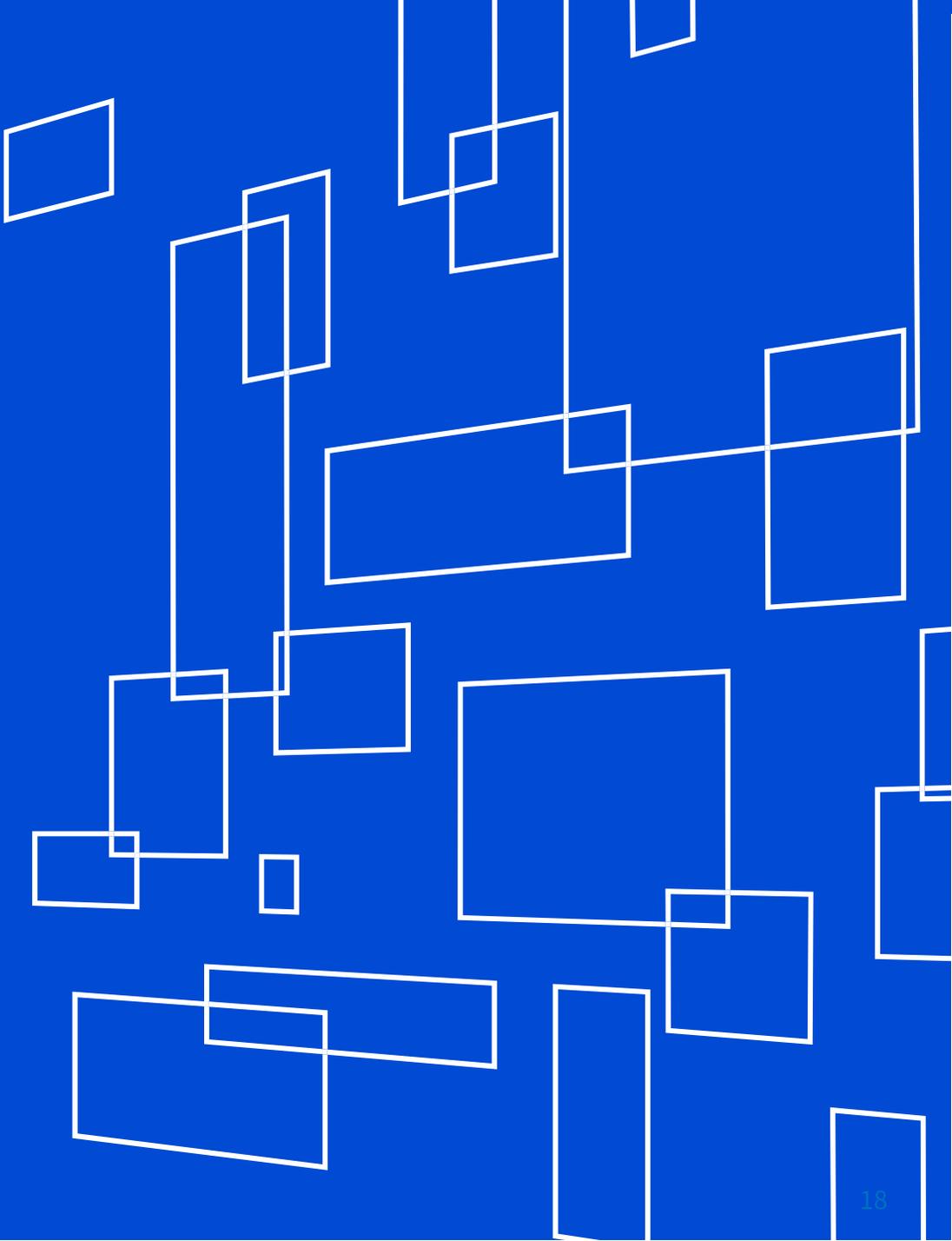
| Company Name | Phone | Type of Service ▲ | State |
|---|--------------|-------------------|-------|
| AT&T | 855-301-0355 | Home Phone | IL |
| Frontier Communications | 800-921-8101 | Home Phone | IL |
| Consolidated Communications of Illinois Company | 844-968-7224 | Home Phone | IL |
| Life Wireless | 888-543-3620 | Mobile | IL |
| Access Wireless | 866-594-3644 | Mobile | IL |
| Safelink Wireless | 800-723-3546 | Mobile | IL |

If you want to see more companies, [see the list of companies in IL.](#)

Annual Recertification

- To maintain the Lifeline benefit, consumers must recertify their eligibility each year
- The phone company or USAC will send reminders about the upcoming recertification window to ensure consumers maintain their eligibility
- **If consumers do not recertify their enrollment status, they will lose their benefit**

National Verifier



National Verifier

- The National Verifier:
 - Determines subscriber eligibility
 - Conducts annual recertification
- USAC partners with states, federal and tribal agencies to utilize existing data sources that contain Lifeline eligibility information (e.g. participation in SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing, Tribal TANF etc.)

Application Process – National Verifier

In addition to working with a phone or internet company, consumers in National Verifier states also have the option to apply for the Lifeline Program online or through the mail

By Mail

Consumers mail in their finished Lifeline Application, Household Worksheet, and copies of their proof of eligibility to:

Lifeline Support Center
PO Box 7081
London, KY 40742.

USAC will contact them by email from LifelineSupport@usac.org or mail from the Lifeline Support Center to let them know if they qualify for Lifeline.

Online

Consumers visit the consumer portal, [CheckLifeline.org](https://www.checklifeline.org), and create an account. They can fill out a Lifeline application online.

They will find out if they are eligible for Lifeline through the consumer portal immediately after applying online.

National Verifier

- The National Verifier has hard launched in Colorado, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, New Hampshire, North Dakota, and South Dakota
 - Service providers in these states and territory are required to use the National Verifier to check consumers' Lifeline eligibility
- The tool will continue to be launched by state, and has soft launched in Missouri, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Alaska, American Samoa, District of Columbia, Delaware, Maine, Northern Mariana Islands, Rhode Island, and Virgin Islands
 - Service providers in these states and territories have the option to use the National Verifier or their legacy methods

The screenshot shows the Lifeline National Verifier website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with "Lifeline National Verifier" on the left, "English | Español" in the middle, and a "Sign In" button on the right. Below the navigation bar is a large banner image of a woman talking on a phone while holding a child. The banner text reads "Qualify for Lifeline!" and "Lifeline is a federal benefit that lowers the monthly cost of phone or internet service. Qualifying is the first step to getting your Lifeline benefit." Below the banner is a "Get Started" button with a note: "If do not want to qualify online, you can use a paper form." Below this are two columns of text: "Do you need to recertify?" with a "Recertify" button, and "Are you a service provider?" with a "Sign In as a Service Provider" link. The main content area is titled "Three Steps for Getting Lifeline" and includes three numbered steps: 1. Qualify, 2. Choose a Company, and 3. Sign Up. Below the steps is a section titled "You may need to show other documents." with a note: "If the Lifeline National Verifier is not able to prove that you qualify with only the information you give us, we may ask you to show official documents as proof." Below this is a section titled "Lifeline Program Rules" with three bullet points: "Your household can only get one Lifeline benefit.", "Be honest on this form.", and "Do not give your Lifeline benefit to another person." At the bottom, there is a "Ready to Qualify?" section with a "Get Started" button and a note: "This Paperwork Reduction Act Notice describes the paperwork burden and provides notice associated with this information collection. The Privacy Act Statement explains how we are going to use the personal information you are entering into this form." The footer includes the copyright notice "© 2018, Universal Service Administrative Company. All Rights Reserved." and the logos for the FCC and the Universal Service Administrative Company.

Benefits

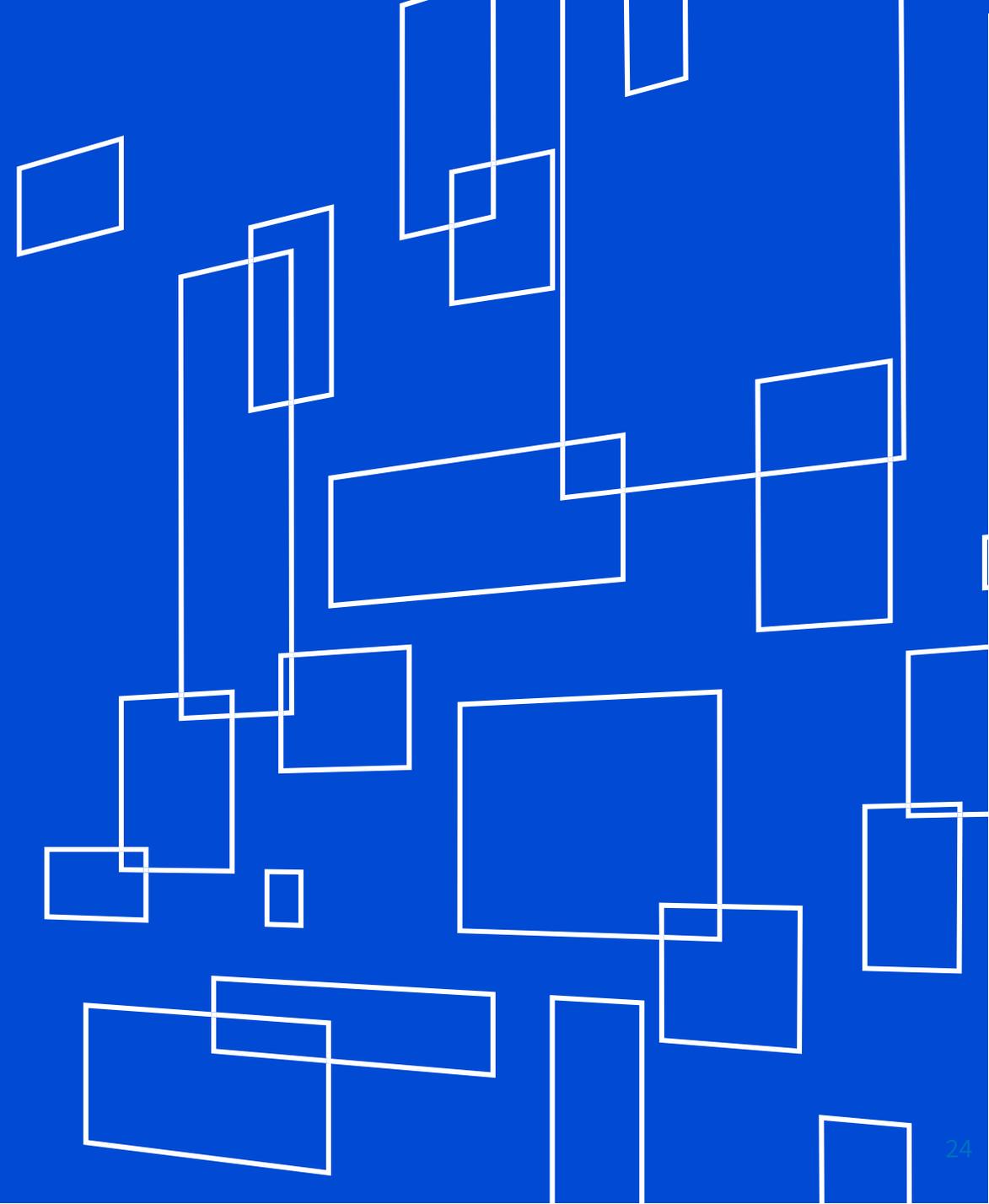
The automated connections are providing great benefits to the program

- Consumers can receive eligibility decisions more quickly
- Administrative costs are kept lower, which is important for American consumers' phone bills that fund the four USF programs
- Program integrity is strengthened through reliable data use
- Available federal connections (e.g., HUD, CMS, or others identified) can support states without their own data connections to offset otherwise manual reviews

Next Steps

- USAC is working closely with remaining states, territories, federal, and Tribal partners to bring more states and communities into the National Verifier in 2019
- USAC is continuing discussions with relevant federal partners to automate the verification process for consumers
- USAC will continue to establish connections to available data sources where it is cost effective

Working in Partnership



Partnering with Tribal Communities

- Identify opportunities to train Tribal agency caseworkers and other social service personnel to help Tribal communities access the Lifeline benefit
- Create a simplified application experience so consumers can sign up for federal benefit programs and Lifeline support simultaneously

We welcome your ideas on how to coordinate the application process to improve the consumer's enrollment experience

Tribal Outreach

Examples of how we can work more closely:

- Attend Powwows, community meetings, annual fairs, workshops, and other outreach events to increase awareness of the benefit
- Arrange discussions with your human service agency directors
- Schedule regular, in-person, targeted trainings about the Lifeline Program for staff, council members, and other leaders in tribal communities

Follow-Up Action Items

- Introduce us to your human service agency leaders who handle the social service programs
- Educate us about the unique challenges facing Tribal consumers who seek phone and internet access
- Help us increase awareness about the Lifeline benefit to improve the quality of life for individuals in native communities

Thank You!

Jessica Zufolo

Jessica.Zufolo@usac.org

202-572-5740

Forrest Cox

Forrest.Cox@usac.org

202-772-4530

Leah Sorini

Leah.Sorini@usac.org

202-772-6274



**Universal Service
Administrative Co.**