



Lifeline Assistance

Helping consumers obtain or keep local telephone service

Keeping your telephone service connected is important to stay in touch with not only close family and friends but with emergency services as well. If you are having difficulty paying your monthly local charges you may be eligible for assistance.

Traditional Home Telephone Programs

- **Federal Lifeline Assistance** - A federally-funded discount program that helps income eligible consumers keep monthly local telephone service connected.
- **Link-Up** - A federally-funded program designed to assist income-eligible consumers obtain new telephone service by waiving initial connection charges.
- **Service Connection Assistance** - An Ohio program designed to assist income-eligible consumers obtain new telephone service by waiving initial connection charges.
- **State Programs** - Several Ohio telephone companies also offer a state Lifeline program with higher levels of assistance provided. These companies are:

- ▶ AT&T Ohio
1-800-335-8721 (toll free)
- ▶ CenturyLink (includes CenturyTel and Embarq)
1-800-201-4099 (toll free)
- ▶ Chillicothe Telephone
1-800-500-3134 (toll free)
- ▶ Cincinnati Bell Telephone
1-513-565-5433
- ▶ Champaign Telephone Company (CTC)
1-937-653-4000
- ▶ McClure Telephone
1-419-748-8008
- ▶ Telephone Service Company (TSC)
1-419-739-2200
- ▶ Verizon
1-888-579-1877 (toll free)
- ▶ Windstream Ohio/Windstream Western Reserve
1-800-347-1991 (toll free)

Wireless Telephone Programs

Some wireless companies have begun offering Lifeline telephone programs throughout the nation. The option for income-eligible customers in Ohio is:

- ▶ TracFone: SafeLink Wireless
1-800-723-3546 (toll free)
www.safelink.com

Qualifying Criteria:

You can qualify for Federal Lifeline Assistance, Link-Up or Service Connection Assistance if your income is at or below 135 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. You also can qualify if you are enrolled in one of the following programs:

- Medicaid,
- Food Stamps,
- Supplemental Security Income,
- Federal public housing assistance,
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) or Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP),
- National School Lunch Program or
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

You can qualify for a state program or a wireless Lifeline program if your income is at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. You also may qualify for one of the state programs if you are enrolled in one of the federal qualifying programs or one of the following:

- Ohio Works First,
- Disability Assistance or
- Social Security Disability Income

Customers cannot have both traditional home telephone Lifeline service and wireless Lifeline service. Consumers should compare the two choices to determine which service best meets their needs.

To sign up for these programs or obtain more information about telephone assistance programs, contact your local telephone company or the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, at 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) to request an application.

For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:

Call: 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) toll free or (614) 466-8574
Write: 10 West Broad Street, Suite 1800, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3485
E-mail: occ@occ.state.oh.us • Internet Address: www.pickocc.org