

TC97-069

**GOLDEN WEST TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
COOPERATIVE, INC.**  
A Golden West Company

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October 10, 1997

Mr. Camron Hoseck, Staff Attorney  
Public Utilities Commission  
State Capitol Building  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501-5070

**RECEIVED**  
OCT 14 1997  
SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC  
UTILITIES COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Hoseck:

As per your request, the following information should answer the questions you have regarding Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc., as listed in your letter dated October 1, 1997.

1. Yes, we do provide single-party service throughout the Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. exchange areas
2. Golden West does not currently offer Lifeline and Link Up local service discounts within exchange areas, but will be offering it beginning January 1, 1998. Therefore, the Lifeline and Link Up program discounts will be offered in all of Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc., exchange areas beginning January 1, 1998, in accord with the FCC rules, 47 CFR 54.400 - 54.417, and any PUC decisions concerning implementation of the expanded programs. It is our understanding that while providing the Lifeline and Link Up services is a requirement imposed on ETCs pursuant to 47 CFR 54.405 - 54.411, it is not actually a pre-condition which must be met before ETC status can properly be granted by the Commission 47 CFR 54.101, which lists the service obligations that must be met before a carrier can receive federal universal service support, does not specifically reference Lifeline and Link Up services.
3. See below.

If you have further questions, feel free to contact me at 1-605-279-2161. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
  
Jack Brown  
General Manager  
Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc.

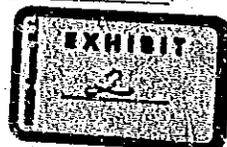
**Acknowledgment**

Jack Brown, being first duly sworn, states that he is the general manager for the responding party, that he has read the initial ETC application and the foregoing, and the same are true to his own best knowledge, information and belief.

State of SOUTH DAKOTA  
County of Pennington  
Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me this 10th day of October, 1997 by Jack Brown

(seal)   
Notary Public Camron Hoseck My commission expires March 17, 2001

"Bringing It All Together"



TC97-069

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SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

**LIFELINE AND LINK UP PLAN  
OF GOLDEN WEST TELECOMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE, INC.**

The Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. submits this plan pursuant to 47 CFR § 54.401(d). Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. has been designated as an eligible telecommunications carrier by the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission ("SDPUC") and, as such, must make Lifeline and Link Up service available to qualifying low-income consumers as set forth in the Commission's Final Order and Decision; Notice of Entry of Decision dated November 18, 1997, issued in Docket TC97-150 (In the Matter of the Investigation into the Lifeline and Link Up Programs), which is attached as Exhibit A, and consistent with the criteria established under 47 CFR §§ 54.400 to 54.417, inclusive.

**A. General**

1. The Lifeline and Link Up programs assist qualified low-income consumers by providing for reduced monthly charges and reduced connection charges for local telephone service. The assistance applies to a single telephone line at a qualified consumer's principal place of residence.
2. A qualified low-income consumer is a telephone subscriber who participates in at least one of the following public assistance programs:
  - a. Medicaid
  - b. Food Stamps
  - c. Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
  - d. Federal Public Housing Assistance
  - e. Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LHEAP)
3. A qualified low-income consumer is eligible to receive either or both Lifeline and Link Up assistance
4. Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. will advertise the availability of Lifeline and Link Up services and the charges therefore using media of general distribution and in accord with any rules that may be developed by the SDPUC for application to eligible telecommunications carriers.
5. In addition, Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc., as required by the Final Order and Decision; Notice of Entry of Decision of the SDPUC (Exhibit A), will indicate in it's annual report to the SDPUC the number of subscribers within it's service area receiving Lifeline and/or Link Up assistance. In addition, this information will be provided to the Universal Service Administrative Company ("USAC").
6. Information as to the number of consumers qualifying for Lifeline and/or Link Up assistance cannot currently be provided by Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc because it has no access to the government information necessary to determine how many of its telephone subscribers are participating in the above referenced public assistance programs. Without this information, Golden West

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Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. cannot provide, at this time, even a reasonable estimate of the number of its subscribers who, after January 1, 1998, will be receiving Lifeline and/or Link Up service. Information as to the number of its low-income subscribers qualifying for Lifeline and/or Link Up can be provided after applications for Lifeline and Link Up assistance have been received by Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc.

7. In accord with the SDPUC's Final Order and Decision; Notice of Entry of Decision, Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. will make application forms available to all of its existing residential customers, to all new customers when they apply for residential local telephone service, and to other persons or entities upon their request.

**B. Lifeline**

1. Lifeline service means a retail local service offering for which qualified low-income consumers pay reduced charges.

2. Lifeline service includes voice grade access to the public switched network, local usage, dual tone multi-frequency signaling or its functional equivalent, single-party service or its functional equivalent, access to emergency services, access to operator services, access to interexchange service, access to directory assistance, and toll limitation.

3. Qualified low-income subscribers are required to submit an application form in order to receive Lifeline service. In applying for Lifeline assistance, the subscriber must certify under penalty of perjury that they are currently participating in at least one of the qualifying public assistance programs listed in Section A.2, above. In addition, the subscriber must agree to notify Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. when they cease participating in the qualifying public assistance program(s).

4. The total monthly Lifeline credit available to qualified consumers is \$5.25. Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. shall provide the credit to qualified consumers by applying the federal baseline support amount of \$3.50 to waive the consumer's federal End-User Common Line charge and applying the additional authorized federal support amount of \$1.75 as a credit to the consumer's intrastate local service rate. The federal baseline support amount and additional support available, totaling \$5.25, shall reduce Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc.'s lowest tariffed (or otherwise generally available) residential rate for the services listed above in Section B.3. Per the attached SDPUC Final Order and Decision; Notice of Entry of Decision, the SDPUC has authorized intrastate rate reductions for eligible telecommunications carriers making the additional federal support amount of \$1.75 available. The SDPUC did not establish a state Lifeline program to fund any further rate reductions. (Exhibit A, Findings of Fact VII and VIII; and Conclusions of Law II and III).

5. Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. will not disconnect subscribers from their Lifeline service for non-payment of toll charges unless the SDPUC, pursuant

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to 47 CFR § 54.401(b)(1), has granted the company a waiver from the non-disconnect requirement.

6. Except to the extent that Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. has obtained a waiver from the SDPUC pursuant to 47 CFR § 54.101(c), the company shall offer toll limitation to all qualifying low-income consumers when they subscribe to Lifeline service. If the subscriber elects to receive toll limitation, that service shall become part of that subscriber's Lifeline service.

7. Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc. will not collect a service deposit in order to initiate Lifeline service if the qualifying low-income consumer voluntarily elects toll blocking on their telephone line. However, one month's local service charges may be required as an advance payment.

**C. Link Up**

**1. Link Up means:**

(a) A reduction in the customary charge for commencing telecommunications service for a single telecommunications connection at a consumer's principal place of residence. The reductions shall be 50 percent of the customary charge or \$30.00, whichever is less; and

(b) A deferred schedule for payment of the charges assessed for commencing service, for which the consumer does not pay interest. The interest charges not assessed to the consumer shall be for connection charges of up to \$200.00 that are deferred to a period not to exceed one year.

2. Charges assessed for commencing service include any charges that are customarily assessed for connecting subscribers to the network. These charges do not include any permissible security deposit requirements.

3. The Link Up program shall allow a consumer to receive the benefit of The Link Up program for a second or subsequent time only for a principal place of residence with an address different from the residence address at which the Link Up assistance was provided previously.

Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, Inc.  
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By *Gwen Davis* Administrative Assistant  
Gwen Davis Position