



*Speak
and you'll be
heard*

alliancecom.net
alliancecom.net

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ALLIANCE
COMMUNICATIONS

TC05-058

RECEIVED

JUN 10 2005

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

In response to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission request, Alliance Communications would share the following information in the revised Lifeline & Link-Up program.

As an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier, Alliance Communications Cooperative, Inc., Splitrock Properties dba Alliance Communications, and Hills Telephone dba Alliance Communications have added new the eligibility requirements as well as new certification and verification procedures to the Lifeline and Link-Up Program for our exchanges.

Alliance Communications created one simple piece that explains the program and the form that would have to be filled out to receive the benefits of the Lifeline & Link-Up program. Attachment A is the promotional brochure and Lifeline & Link-Up form that a customer fills out. These forms are available in all the Alliance Communications offices and are also inserted in the New Customer packet that every new customer receives.

Alliance Communications advertises once a year in a newspaper that in many cases is distributed free of charge to every household in the exchange. The following is a list of the free newspapers by exchange: Baltic - Baltic Beacon, Brandon & Valley Springs - Brandon Valley Challenger, Crooks - Colton Shopper and in Garretson - Garretson Weekly. The following is a list of the subscription newspapers by exchange: Alcester & Hudson - Alcester Union and in Howard, Oldham & Ramona - Miner County Pioneer. Attachment B is a copy of the advertisement that was run one time in our local papers last year. This advertisement will be placed one time in our local papers in October 2005.

Alliance Communications has changed its eligibility requirements to reflect the new changes in the Lifeline & Link-Up program. The new programs include Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), National School Lunch (NSL) free lunch program and 135% Household income at or below Federal Poverty Guidelines. TANF and NSL have been added to the list of eligible programs like Food Stamps, Medicare, SSI, Federal Public Housing Assistance and Low Income Home Energy Assistance. Household Income at or below 135% of Federal Poverty Guidelines requires some form of documentation from the participant.

The consumer must provide at enrollment a prior year's tax return, a current income statement from an employer or paycheck stub, a Social Security statement of benefits, a Veterans Administration statement of benefits, a retirement/pension statement of benefits, Unemployment/Workmen's Compensations statement of benefits, federal or tribal notice of letter of participation in General Assistance, a divorce decree, child support or other official document. If the consumer presents documentation that does not cover a full year, such as pay stubs, the consumer is required to present three consecutive months worth of the same types of documentation within that calendar year. In addition, an appointed officer of Alliance Communications will certify, under the penalty of perjury that procedures are in place to review income documentation. And to the best of the officer's knowledge, the documentation presented that the consumer's income is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Attachment C is a chart of the Federal Poverty income Guidelines by the number of members in the household.

Alliance Communications will annually verify the continued eligibility of a statistically valid sample of the Lifeline-Link-Up subscribers. The surveyed subscriber must prove their continued eligibility (e.g. by sending a copy of their Medicare card or a tax return) and self certify the number of members in the family and that the documentation accurately represents their annual household income. Any subscriber that does not respond in 60 days will not be eligible for the program and will be removed. Alliance Communications will report to USAC the number of subscribers surveyed, the number of subscribers found ineligible and the number of subscribers that did not respond to the survey. In addition to the results Alliance Communications will send USAC a Carrier Certification Regarding Income Documentation form (attachment D) and a Carrier Certification Regarding Verification Procedures form (attachment E).

Attachment F is the form that was sent with an addressed and stamped return envelope to the statistically valid sample of subscribers. Alliance Communications plans in 2006 to survey all Lifeline & Link-Up subscribers to verify continued eligibility.

Attachment A

NOTICE TO ALL ALLIANCE COMMUNICATIONS CUSTOMERS

Changes brought about by the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 have resulted in low-income assistance programs. Low-income subscribers may qualify to receive reduced monthly and installation charges for basic telephone service. Details regarding Lifeline, Link-Up and the Telephone Assistance Program are included in this notice.

If you qualify, you may complete the enclosed application form and return it to our office at:

Alliance Communications
P.O. Box 349
Garretson, SD 57030

It is required in signing and submitting the application that you certify under penalty of perjury that you, in fact, qualify for Lifeline, Link-Up or TAP benefits, and if you become ineligible, you will notify Alliance Communications.

Please read this material carefully. If you have any questions regarding these programs, please call Alliance Communications by dialing 811.

LOW-INCOME ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Alliance Communications is authorized to provide three federal telephone assistance programs that were developed in response to concerns about the affordability of telephone service for low-income citizens.

The **Lifeline** program provides reduced monthly charges to telephone subscribers who qualify.

The **Link-Up** program provides reduced connection charges to telephone subscribers who qualify.

The **Telephone Assistance Program** provides a monthly discount on telephone service for Minnesota residents who qualify.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Telephone service must be in the applicant's name. The applicant must participate in at least one of the following public assistance programs to be eligible:

Food Stamps

Federal Housing Assistance

Low Income Home Energy Assistance

Medicaid

Minnesota Family Investment Program

National School Lunch Program

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Have an income at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines

WHAT DO THE PROGRAMS PROVIDE?

Lifeline provides eligible subscribers with a credit each month on the basic service portion of their telephone bill. The credit applies on the main telephone line listed in the name of the eligible telephone company subscriber. Lifeline subscribers may also receive blocking of long distance calls on their telephone at no charge.

Link-Up provides eligible subscribers with reduced connection charges for their basic home telephone service. This reduction is 50 percent of the applicable charges or \$30.00, whichever is less. Link-Up also provides for deferred payment of connection charges without interest. It does not cover the cost of wiring inside your home and is limited to one time per home address per subscriber.

The **Telephone Assistance Program (TAP)** is available for Minnesota residents and is designed to make telephone service accessible to qualifying low-income residential households. Through this program, eligible households will receive a monthly discount on their telephone service.

HOW DO I APPLY?

If you meet the eligibility requirements, completely fill out and sign the application form provided and mail it to:

Alliance Communications
P.O. Box 349
Garretson, SD 57030

COULD I BECOME INELIGIBLE?

When you no longer participate in any of the qualifying public assistance programs, you are no longer eligible for Lifeline, Link-Up or TAP. You are obligated by law to advise Alliance Communications that you are ineligible.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions about Lifeline, Link-Up or TAP, the application form or your telephone service, contact Alliance Communications by dialing 811 for more information.

Lifeline, Link-Up and TAP Assistance Application

(Please print)

Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Address _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Telephone Number (if existing service): (____) _____

Number where you can be reached or receive messages: (____) _____

Please answer the following questions (check appropriate lines):

1. I am applying for:

- _____ Lifeline monthly telephone service discount
- _____ Link-Up telephone connection charge discount
- _____ TAP monthly telephone service discount for Minnesota residents

Note: Telephone service MUST be in applicant's name.

2. I am currently participating in the following program(s):

Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> National School Lunch Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Stamps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid (e.g. Title XIX/Medical, State Supplemental Assistance) | <input type="checkbox"/> Supplemental Security Income |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Assistance for Needy Family or Minn. Family Investment Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Public Housing Assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have an income at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines | <input type="checkbox"/> Low-Income Home Energy Assistance |

I agree to notify Alliance Communications when I no longer participate in any of the above qualifying public assistance programs.

I certify under the penalty of perjury that the above information is true. I have read the information on this application and understand I must meet the above qualifications to receive Lifeline, Link-Up and TAP assistance on my primary residential line.

Your signature

Social Security No.

Date

Attachment B

Notice to all Alliance Communications customers

Changes brought about by the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 have resulted in low-income assistance programs. Alliance Communications is authorized to provide three federal telephone assistance programs that were developed in response to concerns about the affordability of telephone service for low-income citizens.

What assistance is available?

- The **Lifeline** program provides reduced monthly charges to telephone subscribers who qualify.
- The **Link-Up** program provides reduced connection charges to telephone subscribers who qualify.
- The **Telephone Assistance Program** provides a monthly discount on telephone service for Minnesota residents who qualify.

Who is eligible?

Telephone service must be in the applicant's name. The applicant must participate in at least one of the following public assistance programs to be eligible:

Food Stamps, Federal Housing Assistance, Low Income Home Energy Assistance, Medicaid, National School Lunch Program, Minnesota Family Investment Program, Supplemental Security Income or have an income at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

For more information – Call Alliance Communications by dialing 811 for more information or to receive an application.

Letters/Cont

wants a PlayStat name is Kristin. spends time with me because she her friends. She time with her fr
Ma

Dear Santa,
Merry Chri
is your coat red
favorite reindeer
and Rudolph. I'm
I want a new com
DVD player and a
My dad wants a cl
new computer. M
a new counter. M
more rings, dolls
Can you eat 100
What do elves lo
they small? Who
sied? Elves or rei
No

Dear Santa,
Hi, I think I ha
How are the reind
at the North Pole?
grade. I would like
CDs. My family
bunch of stuff.
would like tools
would like real ani
we have a lot of th
will like anything.
like anything, too.
will be hanging o
live by Steen. Merr
Santa!

Dalton I

• Classified Advertising •

First my dad Morris died in 96, then my sister Carol in 97 and now it is my mother Lola this December. It is time to thank the residents of Luverne & Hills for their expressions of sympathy. I want to give a special thank you to the professional people, the clergy at Grace Lutheran, doctors & nurses, ambulance drivers, and the staff at the Tuff Home in Hills. The people

Nurse Aide

The Tuff Memorial Home has a part-time opening for Nurse Aide on the 10:30 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift. This would include working every other weekend and holidays. Pay differential of \$1.50 more.

- Friendly atmosphere
- Sick & Vacation benefits
- Pension benefits

Living at its finest

Tuff Apartments in Hills, MN presently has opening. Prices start at \$396 per month and includes the following:

1. All utilities except phone
2. Free use of washer and dryer

Attachment C

**2004 Estimated Income Requirements for a Household At or
Below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines**

| Size of Family Unit | 48 Contiguous States & DC | Alaska | Hawaii |
|--|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | \$12,569 | \$15,701 | \$14,445 |
| 2 | \$16,862 | \$21,074 | \$19,386 |
| 3 | \$21,155 | \$26,447 | \$24,327 |
| 4 | \$25,448 | \$31,820 | \$29,268 |
| 5 | \$29,741 | \$37,193 | \$34,209 |
| 6 | \$34,034 | \$42,566 | \$39,150 |
| 7 | \$38,327 | \$47,939 | \$44,091 |
| 8 | \$42,620 | \$53,312 | \$49,032 |
| For each additional person, add | \$4,293 | \$5,373 | \$4,941 |

Attachment D

**CARRIER CERTIFICATION REGARDING INCOME
DOCUMENTATION**

I, Mark Bahnson, an officer of Alliance Communications, hereby certify under penalty that Alliance Communications has established procedures to review income documentation of subscribers that are applying for Lifeline and/or Link-Up assistance, and further certify, to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, that through these procedures the carrier has been presented with documentation of household income-based criterion (that their household be at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines).

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Attachment E

**CARRIER CERTIFICATION REGARDING VERIFICATION
PROCEDURES**

I, Mark Bahnson, an officer of Alliance Communications, hereby certify under penalty that Alliance Communications has established income verification procedures, and further certify, to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, that through these procedures the carrier has in reviewing the continue eligibility of a statistically valid sample of it Lifeline subscribers been presented with documentation of household income from those subscribers who have qualified for Lifeline and/or Link-Up based of the income-based criterion (that their household be at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines).

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Attachment F

Lifeline and Link-Up Rate Assistance Verification Form

Failure to return this verification within 30 days may cause the customer to no longer be eligible for this subsidy.

Name _____

SSN _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I am currently receiving Low-income monthly telephone bill assistance (Lifeline) at the following:

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

I am currently participating in the following program(s)

_____ Medicaid (e.g., Title XIX/Medical, State Supplement Assistance);

_____ Food Stamps;

_____ Supplemental Security Income;

_____ Federal Public Housing Assistance Section 8;

_____ Low-Income Home Energy Assistance;

_____ Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program;

_____ National School Lunch Program's free lunch program;

_____ My income is at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

I agree to notify the telecommunications carrier if I cease to participate in any of the public assistance programs I checked above or if my income becomes greater than 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

I certify under penalty of perjury the above information is true. I have read the information on this application and understand I must meet the above qualifications to receive assistance from these programs.

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____