

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
LIFELINE/LINK UP ADVERTISING/OUTREACH  
ANNUAL REPORT  
JUNE 1, 2009**

Company: Valley Telecommunications Cooperative Association, Inc.

Address: PO Box 7

Herreid, SD 57632-0007

Telephone number: 605-437-2615

Company contact: Bea Odde or Marcia Huber

Study Area Code: 391685

Lifeline/Link Up Advertising/Outreach Activities:

- Advertise in media of general distribution.\* (See attached advertisement(s).)
  
- Letter to existing and new customers regarding the availability of Lifeline/Link Up.\* (See attached letter.)
  
- Company's Lifeline/Link Up information in directory.
  
- Company's Lifeline/Link Up information available on Company website. (www.valleytel.net)
  
- Company's information posted on USAC website.

     Other (describe): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*Required

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM YOUR  
COMMUNITY BASED TELECOM PROVIDER

Residents of Indian reservations or tribal lands qualify if they participate in any of the programs listed inside, have a household income that is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines, or participate in one of these programs:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) general assistance
- Head Start (income eligible)
- Tribal TANF

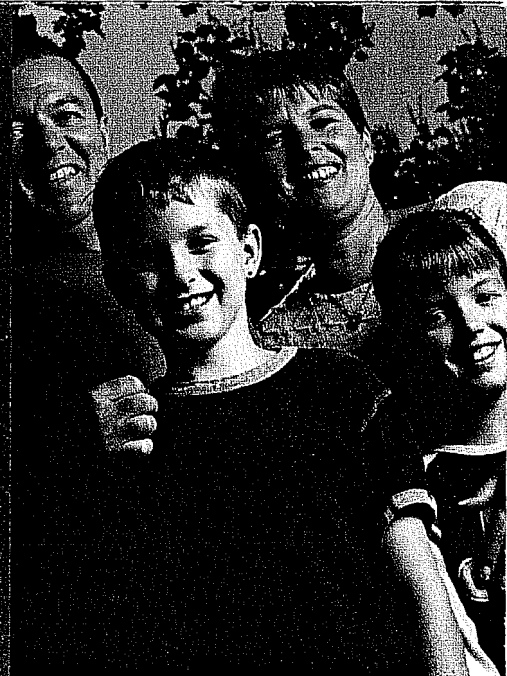
## How do I apply to receive Lifeline, Link Up and TLS support discounts?

Contact your local telephone company. Consumers must apply for Lifeline, Link Up and TLS discounts through their local telephone company. The Universal Service Administrative Company's (USAC) web site contains state-specific Lifeline contact information for many companies at [www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org). You also may call USAC toll free at 1-888-641-8722 with any questions about Lifeline, Link Up and TLS discounts.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM YOUR  
COMMUNITY BASED TELECOM PROVIDER

*you can afford*

TELEPHONE  
SERVICE



Every person in America should have access to quality, affordable telecommunications service. This principle of "Universal Service" has been the goal of the telecommunications industry for decades. In 1934, the federal government codified the goal and reaffirmed it in 1996 by establishing policies for the "preservation and advancement of Universal Service."

To achieve the Universal Service goal, carriers have access to a fund that is generated by contributions from the telecommunications providers in the United States. Telecommunications companies draw from the fund to provide four programs that support telecommunications services nationwide. Link-Up America (Link-Up) and the Lifeline Assistance Program (Lifeline) are part of the Fund's Low-Income Program and are described in detail below. Toll Limitation Service is another program available to low income subscribers to help them control what they spend on telephone service.

**Lifeline, Link Up, and Toll Limitation Service** support provide discounts to eligible low-income consumers to help them establish and maintain telephone service.

## What type of discount is available?

**Lifeline** assistance lowers the cost of basic monthly local telephone service. Eligible consumers can receive up to \$10 per month in discounts. Additional state support also may be available.

Eligible residents of Indian reservations or tribal lands can receive up to an additional \$25 in Lifeline support, but must pay at least \$1 for basic monthly service.

**Link Up** reduces the cost of initiating new telephone service. Eligible consumers can receive a 50% discount off of the one-time costs associated with initiating telephone service, up to a maximum of \$30. Eligible consumers also qualify for a deferred payment schedule for remaining costs of up to \$200.

Eligible low-income consumers living on tribal lands are eligible for an additional discount of up to \$70 to cover 100% of the charges between \$60 and \$130.

**Toll Limitation Service** (TLS) support allows eligible consumers who wish to avoid incurring large long distance fees to choose toll blocking or toll control at no cost.

## How do I know whether I am eligible?

Eligibility for Lifeline, Link Up and TLS support varies by state. Individuals who reside in states that have their own discount programs qualify for federal Lifeline, Link Up and TLS support if they meet the eligibility criteria established by their state. In states that do not provide state support, an individual is eligible if he or she participates in one of the following programs:

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8
- Medicaid
- Food Stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- National School Lunch free lunch program

In addition, a consumer may be eligible if his or her household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines:

### 2008 Estimated Income Requirements for a Household at or Below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines

Persons in Family Unit	48 Contiguous States and D.C.	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$14,040	\$17,550	\$16,146
2	18,900	23,625	21,735
3	23,760	29,700	27,324
4	28,620	35,775	32,913
5	33,480	41,850	38,502
6	38,340	47,925	44,091
7	43,200	54,000	49,680
8	48,060	60,075	55,269
For each additional person, add	4,860	6,075	5,589



## Foundation for Rural Service

This brochure was produced by the Foundation for Rural Service, the philanthropic arm of the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association. Its mission is to promote, educate and advocate rural telecommunications in order to sustain and enhance the quality of life within communities throughout rural America. For additional information on the Foundation, visit [www.frs.org](http://www.frs.org). This advocacy campaign also is supported by the Rural Telephone Finance Cooperative, based in Herndon, VA.

Dear Customer:

Thank you for contacting Valley Telecommunications regarding the Lifeline Telephone assistance program. Lifeline assistance is available to participants in one or more of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- Food Stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Low Income Housing Energy Assistance
- Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF)
- National School Lunch (NSL) free lunch program.

Or

- Individuals whose household income is at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines are also eligible for Lifeline assistance.

If you are eligible for Lifeline/Linkup assistance under any of the programs listed above, please complete the enclosed application and provide supporting documentation (such as a copy of your Medicaid card) to us in the enclosed return envelope.

If you qualify for Lifeline/Linkup assistance based on household income, please complete the enclosed application and Income Certification Form, attach the required documentation\*, and return it to our office in the enclosed return envelope.

\*Documentation of income eligibility includes the previous year's state or federal tax return, a current income statement from an employer or paycheck stub, a Social Security statement of benefits, or other such official documents. If your documentation does not cover an entire year, please provide three consecutive month's worth of the same type of document. Please note that *income* is all income actually received by all members of the household. Income includes salary before deductions for taxes, public assistance benefits, Social Security payments, pensions, unemployment compensation, veteran's benefits, inheritances, alimony, child support payments, worker's compensation benefits, gifts and lottery winnings. The only exceptions are student financial aid, military housing and cost-of-living allowances and irregular income from occasional small jobs such as baby-sitting or lawn mowing.

If you require assistance completing the forms, please feel free to stop by our office at 102 Main St in Herreid, and we will be happy to assist you.

Please note that Federal Communications Commission (FCC) guidelines require telephone companies, like ours, to annually verify a sample of Lifeline customers' for continued eligibility in the program. You may be required to complete the application and/or provide additional information on a yearly basis for random sampling purposes.

You may contact our business office at 437-2615 with any questions regarding the application form or the Lifeline/Linkup programs.

Sincerely,

Billing Department  
Valley Telecommunications Coop., Assn., Inc.

Enclosures



Lifeline and Link-Up Assistance Application
(Please Print)

Name (Last) (First) (Middle)

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

Valley Telco Assigned Telephone Number: ( ) -

Number where you can be reached : ( ) -

Please answer the following questions (check appropriate lines):

- 1. I am applying for: Lifeline monthly telephone service discount
Link-Up telephone connection charge discount

NOTE: TELEPHONE SERVICE MUST BE IN APPLICANT'S NAME.

- 2. I am currently participating in the following program(s):
(check all that apply )

- Medicaid(ex.Title XIX/Medical, State Supplemental Assistance)
Food Stamps
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
Federal Public Housing Assistance
Low-Income Home Energy Assistance
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
National School Lunch (NSL) free lunch program

OR

- 3. My household income is at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. (documentation required)

I agree to notify Valley Telecommunications Cooperative Assn., Inc. if/when I no longer qualify based on the above criteria.

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

Your signature Social Security Number Date

Return to: Valley Telco, PO Box 7, Herreid, SD 57632-0007

Dear Customer,

If you qualify for the Lifeline discount based on income criteria, you MUST complete this form. If you qualify based on program criteria, you DO NOT need to complete this form.

Customer Name	Customer Telephone Number	Date	Time
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**\*\*Please complete the following section and return to Valley with supporting income documentation. The documentation will be verified and certified, and may be returned to you upon your request.**

### Self Certification for Lifeline/Link Up Under Income-Based Criteria

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify under penalty of perjury that I qualify  
(Customer requesting Lifeline/Link-up Assistance)

for Lifeline/Link-Up assistance based on my household income that is at, or below, 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

I further certify under penalty of perjury that there are \_\_\_\_\_ members in my household and that the supporting income documentation presented to Valley Telecommunications Coop., Assn., Inc. accurately represents the annual income of all members of my household. I agree to notify Valley Telecommunications Coop., Assn., Inc., if/when I no longer qualify for Lifeline/Link-up assistance under the income based criteria.

Customer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Customer's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the following information for all household members, including yourself.

FULL NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	AMOUNT OF INCOME CONTRIBUTED TO HOUSEHOLD	SOURCE OF INCOME
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

**(FOR COMPANY USE ONLY – CUSTOMER DO NOT COMPLETE)**

### Company Certification for Receipt of Income Supporting Documentation

I acknowledge that Valley Telecommunications Coop., Assn., Inc. has received self-certification and income documentation from the applicant as listed above. I certify that the documentation provided by this applicant is proprietary and for the sole purpose of verifying income-based eligibility in the Lifeline/Link-Up telephone assistance programs.

Customer Service Representative, Valley Telecommunications Coop., Assn., Inc.

Witness

Date and Time

Date and Time

**Lifeline/Link-Up Income Based Self-Certification  
Income Certification and Company Certification for Receipt of Income Documentation**

REV 05/2005

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Telephone service must be in the applicants name. The applicant must participate in at least one of the following public assistance programs to be eligible (documentation required):

- Food Stamps Program
- Federal Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance
- Medicaid (Title XIX/Medical, State Supplemental Assistance)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- National School Lunch (NSL) free lunch program

## OTHER WAYS TO QUALIFY

A recent FCC ruling has added an additional eligibility criterion that is purely "income-based," and is not tied to subscriber participation in the previously mentioned government assistance programs. You are now eligible to participate in Lifeline and Link-Up if the your income is at ,or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Size of Family Unit	2008 Req.
1	\$14,040
2	\$18,900
3	\$23,760
4	\$28,620
5	\$33,480
6	\$38,340
7	\$43,200
8	\$48,060
For Each Additional Person, Add	\$ 4,860

## THE TRANSITION TO DIGITAL TV

After February 17, 2009, a television receiver with only an analog broadcast tuner will require a converter box to receive full power over-the-air broadcasts with an antenna because of the Nation's transition to digital broadcasting.

Analog-only TVs should continue to work as before to receive low power, Class A or translator television stations and with cable and satellite TV services, gaming consoles, VCRs, DVD players and similar products.

The DTV transition will have no effect on Valley Video TV subscribers. Analog sets not connected to a cable/video tv service may need additional equipment (i.e. converter box) or may have to be replaced.

Information about the DTV transition is available from [www.DTV.gov](http://www.DTV.gov) and from [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov) or 1-888-DTV-2009 for information about subsidized coupons for digital-to-analog converter boxes.

Updated 04/2008

## LIFELINE AND LINK-UP TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



# VALLEY

Valley Telecommunications Coop Assn In  
PO Box 7 ~ 102 Main St S  
Herreid SD 57632-0007  
[www.valleytel.net](http://www.valleytel.net)

Phone: 437-2615  
Toll Free: 1-800-437-2615  
Fax: 437-2220

# WHAT IS LIFELINE?

## THE PROGRAM

Changes brought about by the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 have resulted in the introduction of low-income assistance programs in South Dakota. Low-income subscribers may qualify to receive reduced monthly and installation charges for basic telephone service.

Valley Telecommunications Cooperative Assn, Inc. is authorized to provide two 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 a reduction in basic monthly telephone service equal to the residential subscriber line charge, plus an additional amount of \$1.75. The credit applies to the main home telephone line listed in the name of the subscriber. Lifeline subscribers may also receive blocking of long distance calls on their telephone line at no charge.
- The **Link-Up** program 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.

## INCOME CERTIFICATION

If you qualify under the income-based eligibility criteria, and wish to apply for Lifeline or Link-Up Assistance, you must provide our office with supporting documentation of income.\* Acceptable documentation of income eligibility includes the prior year's state, federal, or tribal tax return, a current income statements from an employer or paycheck stub, a Social Security statement of benefits, a Veterans Administration statement of benefits, a retirement/pension statement of benefits, and Unemployment/Workmen's Compensation statement of benefits, federal notice of letter of participation in General Assistance, a divorce decree, child support, or other official document. (*Subsection 54.410(a)*)

*\*Income for eligibility requirements is defined to include "all income actually received by all members of the household." Income is considered "gross" income, prior to taxes. Exceptions to income include student financial aid, military housing, and cost of living allowances, and irregular income from occasional small jobs.*

## COULD I BECOME INELIGIBLE?

If you no longer participate in any of the qualifying public assistance programs, you are no longer eligible for telephone assistance under the program based criteria.

By signing and submitting the application, you certify under penalty of perjury that you, in fact, qualify for Lifeline and Link-Up benefits, and if, at any time, you become ineligible, you will notify Valley Telecommunications Cooperative Assn., Inc.

In addition, Valley's compliance with the FCC Regulations will include annual verification of eligibility of program participants. Verification procedures may include random beneficiary audits, periodic submission of documents, or annual self-certification.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

If you meet the eligibility requirements, completely fill out and sign the application form provided with this brochure (include documentation) and mail it to:

Valley Telecommunications Cooperative

PO Box 7

Herreid SD 57632-0007

If you are applying for assistance under the income-based criteria, you must also include the supporting documentation of income as indicated.



From \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

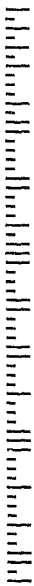
Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

LIFELINE ENCLOSED

**VALLEY TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

PO BOX 7

HERREID SD 57632-0007



# Affidavit of Publication

102 Main St S - PO Box 7  
 Herreid SD 57632-0007  
 605-437-2615 or 1-800-437-2615  
 www.valleytel.net



Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, "universal service" means basic telephone service is available to all customers. Universal service is voice grade access to the telecommunications network, including local usage, touch-tone calling, single-party service, access to emergency 911 service, access to operator service and discounted services to qualifying low-income consumers. All of these services are available from Valley Telco in: Eureka, Glenham, Herreid, Losmer, Ipswich, Leola, Long Lake, Mound City, and Pollock.

**2008 Monthly Charges for these Residential Services:**

Basic local resident service	\$15.50
(Including extended area service to designated nearby service areas.)	
Touchtone Service	No additional charge
Single Party Service	No additional charge
Access to emergency service	No additional charge
(Local government assesses a \$.75 tax to pay for special equipment.)	
Access to operator services	No additional charge
Access to directory assistance	No additional charge
(Charges for services provided by Directory Assistance vary and are determined by the long distance company who provided the service.)	
Federal Universal Service Charge	11.4% (changes quarterly)
Federal Access Charge	\$6.50
(Flat rate prescribed by Federal Communications Commission)	
Lifeline Low Income Discounts	\$8.25
LinkUp Low Income Discounts	50% or whichever is less

To prevent long distance calls made from your phone, toll blocking is available at no charge to low-income consumers.

SOUTH DAKOTA }  
 OF CAMPBELL } ss:

being first duly sworn under oath say: the **Prairie Pioneer** weekly newspaper of general circulation as required by Codified Laws, and any acts amendatory thereto, published and Leah Burke in said county and state, and has been published during the time hereinafter mentioned; that during time as an employee or officer of said newspaper, I have knowledge of the facts stated in this affidavit; that the attached:

Universal Telephone Service

of which is hereto attached, was printed and published in for 1 successive weeks upon the following dates, to

<u>125</u> , 20 <u>08</u> .....	20 .....
....., 20 .....	20 .....
....., 20 .....	20 .....
....., 20 .....	20 .....
....., 20 .....	20 .....

amount of the fees charged for publishing the same

to wit: the sum of \$ 9759

inures solely to the benefit of the publishers of said newspaper; that no agreement or understanding for any division of this sum has been made with any other person; and that no part of said sum has been agreed to be paid to any person whomsoever.

Leah Burke

subscribed and sworn to before me this 26th day of Dec., 2008

Gloria J. Soule

**GLORIA J. SOULE**  
 Notary Public  
 State of North Dakota  
 My Commission Expires May 7, 2009

## The "Lifeline" Telephone Assistance Plan is available to Valley Customers.

You may qualify for a discount of \$3.25 on your telephone bill if you participate in any of the following programs, or meet income guidelines...

- Food Stamps
- Federal Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance
- Medicaid (Title XIX/Medical)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- National School Lunch free lunch program



Call Valley's Business Office at 437-2615 for details.

# TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PLAN

## The Program

Changes brought about by the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 have resulted in the introduction of low-income assistance programs in South Dakota. Low-income subscribers may qualify to receive reduced monthly and installation charges for basic telephone service.

Valley Telecommunications Coop. Assn., Inc. is authorized to provide two federal telephone assistance programs that were developed in response to concerns about the affordability of telephone service for low-income citizens.

## Lifeline

The Lifeline program provides a reduction in basic monthly telephone service equal to the residential subscriber line charge, plus an additional amount of \$1.75. The credit applies to the main home telephone line listed in the name of the subscriber. Lifeline subscribers may also receive blocking of long distance calls on their telephone line at no additional charge.

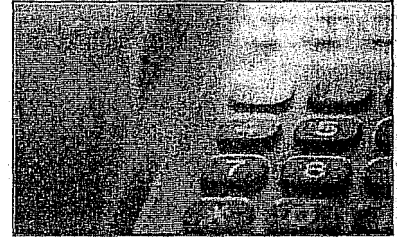
## Link-Up

The Link-Up program 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.

## 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 Program
- Federal Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance
- Medicaid (Title XIX/Medical, State Supplemental Assistance)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- National School Lunch (NSL) Free Lunch Program



## Other Ways to Qualify

A recent FCC ruling has added an additional eligibility criterion that is purely "income-based", and is not tied to subscriber participation in the previously mentioned government assistance programs. You are now eligible to participate in Lifeline and Link-Up if your income is at, or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Current guidelines may be obtained by contacting Valley Telecommunications Coop. Assn., Inc. or visit [www.universalservice.org](http://www.universalservice.org).

## Income Certification

If you qualify under the income-based eligibility criteria, and wish to apply for Lifeline or Link-Up Assistance, you must provide our office with supporting documentation of income.\* Acceptable documentation of income eligibility includes the prior year's state, federal, or tribal 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; and unemployment/workmen's compensation statement of benefits; federal notice of letter of participation in General Assistance, a divorce decree, child support, or other official document. (Subsection 54.410(a))

\* Income for eligibility requirements is defined to include "all income actually received by all members of the household." Income is considered "gross" income, prior to taxes. Exceptions to income include student financial aid, military housing, and cost of living allowances, and irregular income from occasional small jobs.

## Could I become ineligible?

If you no longer participate in any of the qualifying public assistance programs, you are no longer eligible for telephone assistance under the program based criteria.

By signing and submitting the application, you certify under penalty of perjury that you, in fact, qualify for Lifeline and Link-Up benefits, and if, at any time, you become ineligible, you will notify Valley Telecommunications Coop. Assn., Inc.

In addition, Valley's compliance with the FCC Regulations will include annual verification of eligibility of program participants. Verification procedures may include random beneficiary audits, periodic submission of documents, or annual self-certification.

## How to Apply

Contact Valley Telecommunications Coop. Assn., Inc. to obtain an application and income certification and verification form and provide all supporting documentation to Valley's business office at: PO Box 7, 102 Main St. S., Herreid, SD 57632; or call 437-2615.