



May 18, 2005

Pam Bonrud, Executive Director
South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
Capitol Building, 1st Floor
500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501-5070

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SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

Dear Ms. Bonrud:

In response to South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (SDPUC) Docket TC 05-058, Tri-County Telcom, Inc. is enclosing the following:

- a revised Lifeline/Link Up application form reflecting the additional eligibility criteria established in FCC 04-87, released April 29, 2004;
- a copy of Tri-County Telcom, Inc. promotional materials;
- a copy of Tri-County Telcom, Inc. latest Lifeline/Link Up advertisement;
- documents pertaining to Tri-County Telcom, Inc. income-based criterion certification procedures; and
- a copy of the verification letter sent to a random sample of Tri-County Telcom, Inc. Lifeline participants.

Tri-County Telcom, Inc. has Lifeline/Link Up brochures available at our business office.

Please call with any questions regarding the enclosed Lifeline/Link Up materials or Tri-County Telcom, Inc. Lifeline/Link Up procedures.

Yours truly,

Bryan K. Roth
General Manager

Enclosures

Tri-County Telcom - Lifeline and Link-Up Assistance Application

Name _____

Address _____

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.

Note: Telephone Service **MUST** be in applicant's name.

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

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

_____ Food Stamps

_____ Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (Does not mean Social Security)

_____ Federal Public Housing Assistance

_____ Low-Income Home Energy Assistance

_____ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program

_____ National School Lunch (NSL) free lunch program

3. Or,

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

I agree to notify Tri-County Telcom, Inc. when I no longer participate in any of the above qualifying public assistance programs.

I certify under penalty of perjury the above information is true. I have read the information on this application and understand 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

Tri-County Telcom - Lifeline and Link-Up Assistance Application

LOW-INCOME ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Tri-County Telcom, 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 reduced monthly charges to telephone subscribers who qualify.
- The **Link-Up** program provides reduced connection charges to telephone subscribers 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 Energy Assistance
- Medicaid (Does not include Medicare)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (Does not mean Social Security)

WHAT DO THE PROGRAMS PROVIDE?

Lifeline provides eligible subscribers with a credit of \$6.75 each month on the basic service portion of their telephone bill. The credit applies on the main home 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 line 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.

HOW DO I APPLY?

If you meet the eligibility requirements, completely fill out and sign the application form provided in this mailing and send to: Tri-County Telcom, Inc., PO Box 630, Salem, SD 57058.

COULD I BECOME INELIGIBLE?

When you no longer participate in any of the qualifying public assistance programs, you are no longer eligible for Lifeline or Link-Up. You are obligated by law to notify Tri-County Telcom, Inc. and advise the company that you are no longer eligible for **Lifeline** and **Link-Up**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions about Lifeline and Link-Up, the application form or your telephone service, contact Tri-County Telcom, Inc. at 605-425-2238 for more information.

Get Connected: Afford-A-Phone

For questions about eligibility or participation, contact your local telephone company or your state's regulatory agency, like the Public Utilities Commission.

To find out how to reach your state's regulatory agency, visit the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners' Web site at:

www.naruc.org

For more information about *Get Connected: Afford-A-Phone*, visit our Web site at:

[www.fcc.gov/cgb/
getconnected](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/getconnected)

Or call or write us at:

1-888-CALL-FCC
(1-888-225-5322) voice
1-888-TELL-FCC
(1-888-835-5322) TTY

FCC Get Connected

445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554



Get Connected: Afford-A-Phone



**Federal
Communications
Commission**

Get Connected: Afford-A-Phone

What are Lifeline and Link-Up?

Lifeline and Link-Up are federal programs offering telephone discounts to low-income consumers in all U.S. states and territories. The discounts cover both wireline and wireless phones.

Those who qualify may receive discounts of up to \$30 on telephone hook-up charges (Link-Up) and between \$6.75 and \$9.50 on monthly basic phone service (Lifeline), depending on where you live. Additionally, some states give matching discounts, so you may save even more.





Who Qualifies?

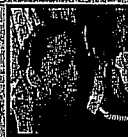
Different states have different rules about eligibility, but generally, if you receive one of the following, you may qualify: Medicaid, food stamps, Supplemental Security Income, federal public housing assistance, or Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP). Call your local telephone company or state regulatory agency (like the Public Utilities Commission) to see if you qualify.

How Can I Sign Up?

To apply for Lifeline and/or Link-Up, call your local telephone company. For more information, contact the FCC at 1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice, 1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY, or by mail at FCC, 445 12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20554. You may also visit the FCC's Web site:
www.fcc.gov/cgb/getconnected.

Get Connected: Afford-A-Phone Facts

-  The *Lifeline and Link-Up* programs provided more than \$550 million in support to qualified low-income consumers in 2002.
-  More than 5 million consumers benefit from *Lifeline and Link-Up* discounts each year.
-  More than 1,500 telephone companies in the United States and U.S. territories participate in *Lifeline and Link-Up*.
-  Both wireline and wireless companies participate in *Lifeline and Link-Up*. Contact your local wireless or wireline phone company for more information.



For more information on programs to help you afford phone service contact the Federal Communications Commission by phone or visit our Web site:
www.fcc.gov/cgb

CARRIER CERTIFICATION REGARDING INCOME DOCUMENTATION

I, _____, an officer of *Tri-County Telcom, Inc.*, hereby certify under penalty of perjury that *Tri-County Telcom, Inc.* 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 from those subscribers who have qualified for Lifeline and/or Link-Up based on the income-based criterion (that their household income be at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines).

Signature: _____

Date: _____

CARRIER CERTIFICATION REGARDING VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

I, _____, an officer of *Tri-County Telcom, Inc.*, hereby certify under penalty of perjury that *Tri-County Telcom, Inc.* 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 continued eligibility of a statistically valid sample of its Lifeline subscribers been presented with documentation of household income from those subscribers who have qualified for Lifeline and/or Link-Up based on the income-based criterion (that their household income be at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines).

Signature: _____

Date: _____

**SELF-CERTIFICATION FOR LIFELINE/LINK-UP APPLICANTS
QUALIFYING UNDER INCOME-BASED CRITERION**

I, _____, certify under penalty of perjury that I qualify 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 of my household and that the supporting income documentation presented to my telecommunications provider accurately represents the annual income of all members of my household.

Signature: _____

Date: _____



March 17, 2005

Dear Tri-County Telephone Lifeline Customer:

Tri-County Telcom, Inc., in compliance with the FCC, needs to verify the continued eligibility of our Lifeline customers. Subscribers who qualify under the assistance-based eligibility criteria must prove their continued eligibility by presenting in person or sending **a copy of your Medicaid card or other Lifeline qualifying public assistance card**, and self certifying under penalty of perjury that you continue to participate in the Lifeline qualifying assistance program.

Enclosed is a new Lifeline application that you must complete and return to us with the necessary documentation, such as, your Medicaid card, to re-apply and recertify your eligibility for the discounted service.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office at (605) 425-2238.

Sincerely,

Tri-County Telcom, Inc.