

Docket Number: TC17-055
Subject Matter: First Data Request
Request to: West River Cooperative Telephone Company
Request from: South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Staff
Date of Request: July 17, 2017
Responses Due: July 31, 2017

- 1-1. Refer to the Lifeline/Tribal Link Up Advertising/Outreach Annual Report. Provide a copy of the letter which is sent to new customers within their first 30 days of service regarding the availability of Lifeline/Tribal Link Up. **Refer to Attached Document "West River TC17-055 #1-1"**

- 1-2. Refer to the "Notes to the Operating Report for Telecommunications Borrowers" on pages 19 and 20 of the "Attachments to Form 481 Confidential" pdf. Have the losses suffered by West River Cooperative Telephone Company's wholly owned subsidiary, West River CATV, impacted past, present, or future infrastructure spending by West River Cooperative Telephone Company? Please explain. [REDACTED]

- 1-3. Refer to Appendix B – Progress Report on Two-Year Plan.
 - a. Explain the circumstances that accounted for 2016 actual spending coming up short of projected spending for Land & Building, Support Assets, and Switching Equipment. **Spending on Switching and General Support upgrades were part of the old 5-year plan (no longer required) and were not expected to be completed until 2017 and 2019 respectively. Therefore, those expenditures were not part of the Two-Year Plan**
 - b. [REDACTED]

- 1-4. Does the "broadband services to approximately 10 customer locations" on page 1 of the Annual ETC Certification Filing refer to the number of communities the company serves? If this number does not represent the total broadband customer count, please provide. **Correct. 10 locations was meant to signify the number of broadband communities. Total Broadband Customers at year-end 2016 were 2,365.**

- 1-5. Refer to Appendix A – Five-Year Plan. Provide any necessary updates of any projects which have been added, revised, or removed for the years 2017, 2018, and 2019. This should include location, start and completion dates, dollar amount, and a description of the project. **There are no updates to the 5 year plan other than the 6-1-2017 through 6-30-2018 Fiber to the Home**

Project in Camp Crook may complete ahead of schedule. However, per *Paragraph #216 of the March 30th, 2016 FCC USF Reform Order*, the five-year plan is no longer necessary since companies have additional requirements to adhere to in place of the five-year plan. Please follow the excerpt below:

216. In conjunction with adopting the location reporting requirements above to track rate-of-return ETCs' build-out progress, we now eliminate the requirement for rate-of-return ETCs to file a service quality improvement plan. The purpose of the five-year plan and annual updates was to ensure that "ETCs [] use their support in a manner consistent with achieving the universal availability of voice and broadband." With the reforms adopted in this order, rate-of-return ETCs are now subject to detailed broadband buildout obligations, which provide a more defined yardstick by which to measure their progress towards the universal availability of voice and broadband service in their areas. We therefore, find that it is unnecessary for rate-of-return ETCs to file a five-year service quality improvement plan. Moreover, we conclude that because there is no longer a requirement to file a service quality improvement plan, we also should eliminate the obligation in our rules for rate of return ETCs to file updates on that plan under our authority to eliminate rules that are no longer applicable. We also modify, on the same basis, other rules to remove references to the service quality improvement plan.



West River Cooperative Telephone Company
PO Box 39
Bison, SD 57620

Dear Member,

Lifeline provides discounts to eligible low-income consumers to help them establish and maintain telephone and internet service. **Note:** One discount is available for either telephone or internet services but not both.

What type of discount is available?

Lifeline assistance lowers the cost of basic, monthly local telephone service or internet service. Eligible consumers can receive \$9.25 per month. Eligible residents of Tribal Lands can receive up to an additional \$25 in Lifeline support.

Link Up for Tribal Lands reduces the cost of initiating new telephone service. Eligible consumers can receive a 100% discount off of the one-time costs associated with initiating telephone service, up to a maximum of \$100. Eligible consumers also qualify for a deferred payment schedule for remaining costs of up to \$200.

Toll Limitation Service (TLS) support is also available to all eligible Lifeline consumers. TLS 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 or Link Up for Tribal Lands has a set of federal eligibility criteria to meet for the federal program. An individual is eligible if he or she or a dependent person in their household participates in one of the following programs or if your household income doesn't exceed 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

- Medicaid
- SNAP
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Veteran's Pension or Survivors Pension

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

Residents of Tribal Lands qualify if they participate in any of the programs listed above, 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
- Tribal Head Start (income eligible)
- Tribal TANF
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

How do I apply to receive Lifeline and Link Up?

To apply for Lifeline and Link Up (Tribal Lands only) discounts please contact:

West River Cooperative Telephone Company
PO Box 39
Bison, SD 57620
605-224-5213