

Docket Number: TC21-048
Subject Matter: First Data Request
Request to: West River Telecommunications Cooperative (WRTC or Company)
Request from: South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Staff
Date of Request: July 2, 2021
Responses Due: July 16, 2021

PUBLIC REDACTED

- 1-1. Has WRTC's 2021 estimated capital expenditures been revised from the \$50,000 estimate reported last year in docket TC20-032? Explain.

Response:

WRT had some customer ONT's to convert and will upgrade its transport network. Additional fiber drops are also being placed upon customer request.

- 1-2. What are WRTC's estimated capital expenditures for the McLaughlin wire center for 2022 and 2023?

Response:

- 1-3. Refer to the letter to existing and new customers regarding the availability of Lifeline/Tribal Link Up. Provide the updated letter with the 2021 federal poverty guidelines.

Response: The 2021 Lifeline letter with updated 2021 federal poverty guidelines is attached.



April 26, 2021

Dear WRT Customer:

Lifeline, Tribal Lifeline/Link Up, and Toll Blocking support is available from WRT. These programs provide discounts to eligible low-income consumers to help them establish and maintain telephone or broadband service.

What type of discount is available?

Lifeline assistance lowers the cost of basic, monthly local telephone or broadband service. Eligible consumers can receive up to \$9.25 per month in discounts. In addition, the Federal Universal Service Charge is not assessed to consumers participating in Lifeline.

Tribal Lifeline provides up to an additional \$25.00 in federal support to qualifying residents of Tribal land and applies on the main home telephone line or broadband service listed in the name of the eligible telephone company subscriber. (The Tribal Lifeline discount cannot exceed \$34.25.)

Tribal Link Up is available to qualifying consumers residing on Tribal lands and covers 100% of the charges (up to \$100) of installing/connecting subscribers to our network.

Toll Blocking support allows eligible consumers who wish to avoid incurring large long distance fees to choose toll blocking or toll control at no cost. Also, by choosing this option, consumers are usually not charged a deposit.

How do I know whether I am eligible?

An individual is eligible if he or she participates in one of the following programs:

- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
- Medicaid
- Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TTANF)
- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribal Head Start (income eligible)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
- Veterans Pension or Survivors Benefit Program

(Continued on back)

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

**2021 Estimated Income Requirements for a Household at or Below
135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines**

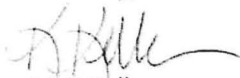
Persons In Family Unit	48 Contiguous States and D.C.
1	\$17,388
2	\$23,517
3	\$29,646
4	\$35,775
5	\$41,904
6	\$48,033
7	\$54,162
8	\$60,210
For each additional person, add	\$6,129

WRT's voice and broadband service is a Lifeline-supported service. Only eligible consumers may enroll in the Lifeline program. Lifeline applicants must present documentation demonstrating eligibility either through participation in one of the qualifying federal assistance programs or through income-based means. Lifeline recipients are required to recertify their eligibility every year. The Lifeline program is limited to one benefit per household, consisting of either wireline, wireless or broadband service. A household is defined, for purposes of the Lifeline program, as an individual or group of individuals who live together at the same address and share income and expenses. Lifeline is a government benefit program, and consumers who willfully make false statements in order to obtain the benefit can be punished by fine or imprisonment or can be barred from the program. WRT is required to access the FCC's National Lifeline Accountability Database to verify if a customer is currently receiving Lifeline, as well as provide information to the database regarding new Lifeline subscribers.

How do I apply to receive Lifeline, Link Up, and Toll Blocking discounts?

To apply for this low-income assistance, please contact WRT at 748-2211 or 845-3100 or go to the website checklifeline.org/lifeline and apply online.

Sincerely,



Kristi Keller

WRT Customer Service Manager