

19.8 TEL-ASSISTANCE AND VERIZON'S ENHANCED TEL-ASSISTANCE PLAN

I. Introduction - Tel-Assistance

The Tel-Assistance Program allows reduced rate telephone service to qualified low-income households/customers. The monthly cost for Tel-Assistance is lower than other local telephone services offered. The Department of Health and Human Resources establishes procedures

- ! to inform persons of their eligibility for Tel-Assistance service,
- ! to assist applicants for this service in proving their eligibility,
- ! to determine on a continuing basis, the eligibility of persons receiving Tel-Assistance services, and
- ! to inform the telephone company of such.

A. State Administration

The program is administered at the State level by the Office of Family Support, Policy Unit. The State Office will have the final responsibility of program planning, implementation, operation and management.

B. Area Administration

The local offices will administer the program by assisting the individual in completing the application for Tel-Assistance and the certification of those applications which are service related (WV WORKS, A, D, B, FS) by including the appropriate case number. Those who are customers of Verizon should be referred to Verizon Customer Service.

C. Eligibility Requirements

NOTE: Definition of Disabled (Tel-Assistance): The inability to do any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determined physical or mental impairment which can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than thirty days.

1. The individual must be sixty years or older or be disabled, and receive Food Stamps, WV WORKS, or SSI; or

2. The individual must be sixty years or older or be disabled and whose household income is at or below the income level established for Social Security Supplemental Income eligibility.
 - Monthly gross income not to exceed current SSI income maximum for one or two person households, plus the \$20 allowance for unearned income disregard.
3. All income in the household is counted toward eligibility.
4. The telephone bill does not have to be in the name of the payee of the benefit program.
 - Any adult member of the AG may apply for this service.

D. Application Process

1. Mail-Out Application Kits

Computer-generated application form ES-CG-TA-1 and an instruction sheet (ES-TA-3) which is automatically mailed to all new approvals and re-opened categorically eligible households, including Medicaid-Disability Related income eligible and incapacity cases (nursing home cases are excluded).

- ES-CG-TA-1 is mailed directly to the client who will complete it and return it to the appropriate telephone company.
- After certification of service, the telephone company will forward the approved application to the State Office of Income Maintenance.
- Approved applications are entered into RAPIDS at the State Office by a tape match.

2. Walk-In Applications

The local offices are supplied with Walk-In Application form ES-TA-2 and instruction sheet (ES-TA-3) for distribution to any individual who makes a request for a Tel-Assistance application.

- ES-TA-2 and ES-TA-3 are picked up by the client from the local office and completed.
- The completed ES-TA-2 and verification of income are taken to the local office by the individual for verification.
- The local office makes certification by checking:
 - * Name, address, telephone number, social security number, and telephone company.
 - * Age (accepted as declared by client).
 - * Income (accepted as declared by client).
 - * Disability.

Disability is verified by use of the form ES-TA-4 unless disability can be verified from existing office files such as receipt of SSI or an award notice from Social Security, or the Veteran's Administration for disability.

NOTE: The ES-TA-4 does not have to be completed for anyone over sixty years of age.

- Application is referred to the telephone company.
 - * The client is responsible for sending or taking the application to the appropriate telephone company.
 - * The telephone company gives "Certification of Service", and forwards the application to the State Office of Family Support.

These applications are entered into the Tel-Assistance System on the State Office level.

E. Redetermination Process

1. Categorically Eligible Households

Redetermination of eligibility is established within existing program policy for the category.

2. All other Tel-Assistance Households

Redetermination of eligibility will be completed annually by use of the Redetermination Form ES-TA-6.

- Form ES-TA-6 will be mailed from the State Office of Family Support with a stamped return envelope.
- The redetermination form is to be returned by the Tel-Assistance recipient within thirty days.

F. Closure Process

1. Categorically Eligible Households

The Tel-Assistance Case will be closed upon closure of the Assistance or Food Stamp Case, and notification will be sent to the appropriate telephone company by the State Office.

2. All other Tel-Assistance Households

The Tel-Assistance Case will be closed for failure to return redetermination form or when the household circumstances change, making the household ineligible. Notification will be sent to the appropriate telephone company by the State Office.

G. Telephone Company Responsibility

1. Notification Eligibility

Participating telephone companies will be responsible for notifying the applicant of Tel-Assistance regarding eligibility, amount of benefit, denials, or termination of benefits.

2. Question of Eligibility

The telephone companies have the responsibility for answering all questions of eligibility regarding the receipt of Tel-Assistance benefits.

3. Hearing Process

Establishing, maintaining, and conducting any hearings which might result from the denial of Tel-Assistance benefits are the responsibility of the participating telephone companies.

H. Forms

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|----|------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | ES-CG-TA-1 | Application (computer-generated) |
| 2. | ES-TA-2 | Walk-in Application |
| 3. | ES-TA-3 | Eligibility Information |
| 4. | ES-TA-4 | Request for Medical Verification |
| 5. | ES-TA-5 | ES-TA number register |
| 6. | ES-TA-6 | Redetermination Form |

I. Participating Phone Companies:

Alltel/Mountain State Telephone Company
(Citizens Telecom)

Armstrong Telephone Company

Bell Atlantic - West Virginia

Citizens Communications

War Telephone Company

West Side Telephone Company

I. Introduction - Verizon's Enhanced Tel-Assistance Plan

Verizon will offer an Enhanced Tel-Assistance Plan to eligible West Virginians in Verizons service area beginning July 1, 2002 and ending June 30, 2005 eligible households/customers will have more options for discounted low-cost telephone services.

A. State Administration

This program is administered at the State level by the Office of Family Support.

B. Area Administration

The local offices will administer the program by referring the individual to Verizon Phone Company. If customer would like to apply for any of the enhanced Tel-Assistance options, they may call there Verizon Business Office at 954-6200.

C. Eligibility Requirements

The customers who receive benefits from the Department of Health and Human Resources for any of the following programs may be eligible for Enhanced Tel-Assistance Service.

Food Stamp
WV WORKS
Medicaid
SSI
CHIP
LIEAP
Emergency Assistance
TRIP

D. Application Process

Computer generated tape matches will be made between the Department and Verizon.

E. Closure Process

Notification of closure of the Enhanced Tel-Assistance Service will be completed by a yearly computer generated tape match between the Department and Verizon.

F. Verizon Responsibility

Verizon has the responsibility for answering all questions of eligibility regarding the receipt of Enhanced Tel-Assistance Services including customer notification and any hearings which might result from adverse action of the telephone company.