

## 19.8 TEL-ASSISTANCE/LIFELINE

### A. Introduction

The Tel-Assistance/Lifeline Program allows reduced rate telephone service to qualified low-income individuals. The monthly cost for Tel-Assistance/Lifeline service is lower than other local telephone services offered. Only one Tel-Assistance/Lifeline service is permitted per household and the household is not allowed to receive services from multiple providers. For example, a household may have Tele-Assistance/Lifeline service on their landline OR their wireless phone, but not both.

The Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) has the following responsibilities for the programs:

- To inform individuals of their eligibility;
- To assist applicants in verifying their eligibility;
- To determine continuing eligibility of individuals; and
- To inform the telephone company of an individual's eligibility.

### B. STATE ADMINISTRATION

The Tel-Assistance/Lifeline Program is administered at the State level by the Division of Family Assistance (DFA), Policy Unit. The DFA has the final responsibility of program planning, implementation, operation and management.

### C. LOCAL OFFICE RESPONSIBILITY

The local offices are responsible for distributing an Application form, DFA-TA-2, and a Fact Sheet, DFA-TA-3, to any individual who makes a request.

### D. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for Tel-Assistance/Lifeline service the individual must be receiving at least one of the following benefits:

- Emergency Assistance (EA)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8

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Emergency And Special Assistance Programs

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- Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)
- Medicaid
- National School Lunch Program, free program only
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- School Clothing Allowance (SCA)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- WV Children's Health Insurance Program (WV CHIP)
- Any other means-tested state or federal program

**NOTE:** To qualify for Tel-Assistance/Lifeline service, the telephone bill must be in the name of the individual receiving the service.

NOTE: Any adult member of the AG may apply for Tel-Assistance/Lifeline service.

#### E. APPLICATION PROCESS

##### 1. eRAPIDS Issued Applications

eRAPIDS includes a notice on each approval letter informing the customer that, if interested in applying for Tel-Assistance/Lifeline, they may obtain an application from their local Department of Health and Human Resources office or by using their My Benefits account at [www.wvinroads.org](http://www.wvinroads.org).

##### 2. Walk-In Applications

Local offices are supplied with the DFA-TA-2 and DFA-TA-3 for distribution to any individual who makes a request for a Tel-Assistance/Lifeline application. The following procedure is used when an application is received:

- The DFA-TA-2 and DFA-TA-3 are obtained by the individual from the local office and completed.

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**Emergency And Special Assistance Programs**

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- The application is forwarded to the telephone company.
  - The individual is responsible for sending or taking the application to their selected telephone company.
  - The telephone company certifies service and forwards the application to the Tel-Assistance/Lifeline Coordinator.

**F. CLOSURE PROCESS**

It is the responsibility of the customer to notify the telephone company if he ceases to receive benefits from DHHR or any other means-tested state or federal program that deemed them eligible for Tel-Assistance/Lifeline service or if their annual income exceeds the income guidelines.

**G. TELEPHONE COMPANY RESPONSIBILITY****1. Notification Of Eligibility**

Participating telephone companies are responsible for notifying the applicant of eligibility, cost of service, denials, or termination of benefits.

**2. Question Of Eligibility**

The telephone companies are responsible for answering all questions of eligibility.

**3. Hearing Process**

Establishing, maintaining, and conducting hearings which may result from the denial of benefits are the responsibility of the participating telephone companies.

**H. FORMS**

One or more of the following forms may be used to determine eligibility:

- Application, DFA-TA-2
- Fact Sheet , DFA-TA-3

I. PARTICIPATING TELEPHONE COMPANIES

Each participating telephone company may offer its own individual enhanced plan.