

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION**  
**Workforce Policy and Service Delivery Branch**  
**Technical Assistance Bulletin 226**

**Program:** All Programs

**Subject:** Universal Service Administrative Company's Low Income Program: Phone Service Discounts

**Date:** July 26, 2010

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This Technical Assistance (TA) Bulletin provides Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) with information on the Universal Service Administrative Company's (USAC) Low Income Program for providing discounts for telephone service.

In 1984, the Federal Communications Commission developed this program, which was further enhanced by the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The Low Income Program of the Universal Service Fund, which is administered by USAC, is designed to ensure that quality telecommunications services are available to low-income customers at just, reasonable, and affordable rates. The Low Income Program includes Lifeline support—which reduces eligible consumers' monthly charges for basic telephone service—and Link Up support—which reduces the cost of initiating new telephone service.

Initially, communications companies offered discounts only on landline services. However, as part of the expansion of the Low Income Program, Lifeline and Link Up have been expanded to include discounts on wireless telecommunications services for qualified low-income residents in Texas.

An individual is qualified to receive a Lifeline or Link Up discount if the current total household income is at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. Residents also are qualified if they currently are receiving:

- Medicaid;
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program support;
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits;
- federal public housing assistance;
- Supplemental Security Income; or
- health benefit coverage under the Children's Health Insurance Program under Chapter 62 of the Texas Health and Safety Code.

The Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) certifies telecommunications providers to offer landline and wireless services to eligible participants of the Low Income Program. The telecommunications providers that are participating in the program may have brochures, pamphlets, applications, and other materials available for Boards to provide to Texas Workforce

Center customers. For more information on the program, including which providers have been certified by PUCT, visit [www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org).

Please distribute this information to appropriate staff. Direct all inquiries regarding this TA Bulletin to [wfpolicy.clarifications@twc.texas.gov](mailto:wfpolicy.clarifications@twc.texas.gov).