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## **Lifeline Assistance Makes Telephone and Broadband Service More Affordable For Eligible Consumers**

**WASHINGTON – Sept. 10, 2018** – The National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA) encourages consumers to learn more about the Lifeline program which provides a discount on vital communications services for eligible consumers. The week of September 10, 2018 marks the ninth “Lifeline Awareness Week” during which NASUCA joins the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) in promoting public awareness of this important telephone and broadband assistance program.

NASUCA encourages consumers, local agencies and organizations, including non-profit and community-based groups, to learn more about the federal Lifeline program and how it makes communications services more affordable for income-eligible households.

For more than two decades, the federal Lifeline program has helped income-eligible households afford and keep vital communications services, to stay in touch with family, friends, doctors, schools and employers. For some American families with limited resources, affording and keeping telephone service – whether landline or wireless – is a challenge. Other families with limited resources need help to afford a broadband internet connection to help their family connect with family, healthcare providers, employers, schools and government agencies.

“Consumers need to know about the Lifeline program, especially since it has expanded to support broadband connections,” said Elin Swanson Katz, President of NASUCA. “The federal Lifeline program provides a discount to eligible consumers to make telephone or a broadband internet connection more affordable. We encourage households to learn more about the Lifeline program and how to keep Lifeline service once approved.”

The federal Lifeline assistance program can help these households obtain reduced cost voice and/or broadband internet access service, subject to eligibility requirements. An eligible household may receive federal Lifeline assistance, up to \$9.25 in value, for one telephone or broadband service connection or bundle of services. Providers of wireless Lifeline broadband service may choose to offer a Wi-Fi enabled handset at no charge to the Lifeline enrolled consumer.

Lifeline telephone assistance is available in every state and territory. The availability of Lifeline assistance for a broadband internet connection or wireless data service may vary, depending on the location of approved providers.

Some Lifeline service plans may require a monthly payment, reduced by the federal \$9.25 Lifeline credit. Consumers should shop wisely and decide which type of service best suits the needs of their household and budget. A household may only have Lifeline assistance for one service connection at a time.

Changes to improve the ease and efficiency of the Lifeline enrollment process are underway. The FCC and the Universal Service Administrative Corporation (USAC), as the federal administrator of the Lifeline program, are rolling out a new electronic platform – the National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier (National Verifier) – which will help provide consumers, Lifeline service providers, and social service organizations with a secure and streamlined way to check whether a household is eligible for Lifeline service.

NASUCA is a strong supporter of the Lifeline assistance program as a tool to help low-income households get and stay connected. This mission is particularly important in today's world of digital based communications, e-government, on-line learning, e-commerce, and e-health.

To find out additional information about the Lifeline assistance program, residential consumers can visit [www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org) for information about eligibility, applying and services available in their area.

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***About the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA)***

NASUCA is a non-profit, national organization of consumer advocates in 43 states and the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. NASUCA members are designated by the laws of their respective jurisdictions to represent the interests of utility consumers before state and federal regulators and the courts. Some NASUCA member offices are separately established consumer advocate organizations while others are divisions of larger state agencies (e.g., the State Attorney General's office). NASUCA's associate and affiliate members also serve utility consumers but are not created by state law or do not have statewide authority.