

Up, eligible telecommunications carriers operating in states that have not provided the Commission with a valid certification pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, must comply with the following requirements:

(1) Such eligible telecommunications carriers must query the Database to determine whether a prospective Link Up recipient who has executed a certification pursuant to § 54.410(d) has previously received a Link Up benefit at the residential address provided by the prospective subscriber.

(2) If the Database indicates that a prospective subscriber has received a Link Up benefit at the residential address provided by the subscriber, the eligible telecommunications provider must not seek Link Up reimbursement for that subscriber.

(3) An eligible telecommunications carrier is not required to comply with paragraphs (c)(1) through (c)(2) of this section, if it receives notice from a state Lifeline administrator or other state agency that the administrator or other agency has queried the Database about a prospective subscriber and that providing the prospective subscriber with a Link Up benefit would not result in duplicative support or support to a subscriber who had already received Link Up support at that residential address.

(4) All eligible telecommunications carriers must transmit to the Database in a format prescribed by the Administrator each new and existing Link Up recipient's full name; residential address; date of birth; and the last four digits of the subscriber's Social Security number, or Tribal identification number if the subscriber is a member of a Tribal nation and does not have a Social Security number; the telephone number associated with the Link Up support; and the date of service activation. Where two or more eligible telecommunications carriers transmit the information required by this paragraph to the Database for the same subscriber, only the eligible telecommunications carrier whose information was received and processed by the Database first, as determined by the Administrator, will be entitled to reimbursement from the Fund for that subscriber.

(5) All eligible telecommunications carriers must obtain, from each new and existing subscriber, consent to transmit the information required in paragraph (c) of this section. Prior to obtaining consent, the eligible telecommunications carrier must describe to the subscriber, using clear, easily understood language, the specific information being transmitted, that the information is being transmitted to the Administrator to ensure the proper administration of the Link Up program, and that failure to provide consent will result in the subscriber being denied the Link Up benefit.

[77 FR 12968, Mar. 2, 2012]

§ 54.405 Carrier obligation to offer Lifeline.

All eligible telecommunications carriers must:

(a) Make available Lifeline service, as defined in § 54.401, to qualifying low-income consumers.

(b) Publicize the availability of Lifeline service in a manner reasonably designed to reach those likely to qualify for the service.

(c) Indicate on all materials describing the service, using easily understood language, that it is a Lifeline service, that Lifeline is a government assistance program, the service is non-transferable, only eligible consumers may enroll in the program, and the program is limited to one discount per household. For the purposes of this section, the term "materials describing the service" includes all print, audio, video, and web materials used to describe or enroll in the Lifeline service offering, including application and certification forms.

(d) Disclose the name of the eligible telecommunications carrier on all materials describing the service.

(e) *De-enrollment*—(1) *De-enrollment generally*. If an eligible telecommunications carrier has a reasonable basis to believe that a Lifeline subscriber no longer meets the criteria to be considered a qualifying low-income consumer under § 54.409, the carrier must notify the subscriber of impending termination of his or her Lifeline service. Notification of impending termination must be sent in writing separate from the subscriber's monthly bill, if one is

provided, and must be written in clear, easily understood language. A carrier providing Lifeline service in a state that has dispute resolution procedures applicable to Lifeline termination, that requires, at a minimum, written notification of impending termination, must comply with the applicable state requirements. The carrier must allow a subscriber 30-days following the date of the impending termination letter required to demonstrate continued eligibility. A subscriber making such a demonstration must present proof of continued eligibility to the carrier consistent with applicable annual re-certification requirements, as described in § 54.410(f). An eligible telecommunications carrier must terminate any subscriber who fails to demonstrate continued eligibility within the 30-day time period. A carrier providing Lifeline service in a state that has dispute resolution procedures applicable to Lifeline termination must comply with the applicable state requirements.

(2) *De-enrollment for duplicative support.* Notwithstanding paragraph (e)(1) of this section, upon notification by the Administrator to any eligible telecommunications carrier that a subscriber is receiving Lifeline service from another eligible telecommunications carrier or that more than one member of a subscriber's household is receiving Lifeline service and therefore that the subscriber should be de-enrolled from participation in that carrier's Lifeline program, the eligible telecommunications carrier must de-enroll the subscriber from participation in that carrier's Lifeline program within five business days. An eligible telecommunications carrier shall not be eligible for Lifeline reimbursement for any de-enrolled subscriber following the date of that subscriber's de-enrollment.

(3) *De-enrollment for non-usage.* Notwithstanding paragraph (e)(1) of this section, if a Lifeline subscriber fails to use, as "usage" is defined in § 54.407(c)(2), for 60 consecutive days a Lifeline service that does not require the eligible telecommunications carrier to assess or collect a monthly fee from its subscribers, an eligible telecommunications carrier must provide the subscriber 30 days' notice, using

clear, easily understood language, that the subscriber's failure to use the Lifeline service within the 30-day notice period will result in service termination for non-usage under this paragraph. If the subscriber uses the Lifeline service within 30 days of the carrier providing such notice, the eligible telecommunications carrier shall not terminate the subscriber's Lifeline service. Eligible telecommunications carriers shall report to the Commission annually the number of subscribers de-enrolled for non-usage under this paragraph. This de-enrollment information must be reported by month and must be submitted to the Commission at the time an eligible telecommunications carrier submits its annual certification report pursuant to § 54.416.

(4) *De-enrollment for failure to re-certify.* Notwithstanding paragraph (e)(1) of this section, an eligible telecommunications carrier must de-enroll a Lifeline subscriber who does not respond to the carrier's attempts to obtain re-certification of the subscriber's continued eligibility as required by § 54.410(f); who fails to provide the annual one-per-household re-certifications as required by § 54.410(f); or who relies on a temporary address and fails to respond to the carrier's address re-certification attempts pursuant to § 54.410(g). Prior to de-enrolling a subscriber under this paragraph, the eligible telecommunications carrier must notify the subscriber in writing separate from the subscriber's monthly bill, if one is provided using clear, easily understood language, that failure to respond to the re-certification request within 30 days of the date of the request will trigger de-enrollment. If a subscriber does not respond to the carrier's notice of impending de-enrollment, the carrier must de-enroll the subscriber from Lifeline within five business days after the expiration of the subscriber's time to respond to the re-certification efforts.

[77 FR 12969, Mar. 2, 2012]

§ 54.407 Reimbursement for offering Lifeline.

(a) Universal service support for providing Lifeline shall be provided directly to an eligible telecommunications carrier, based on the number of