



# PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500  
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>  
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

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## WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES THAT THE NATIONAL LIFELINE ACCOUNTABILITY DATABASE WILL BEGIN ACCEPTING SUBSCRIBER DATA IN DECEMBER

### *New Database A Key Part Of FCC Reform Efforts To Cut Fraud And Abuse In The Lifeline Program*

WC Docket No. 11-42

The Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) releases this public notice to inform eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs) receiving Lifeline support that the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD) will be ready to accept subscriber information by December 2013.<sup>1</sup> For December 2013 and thereafter, ETCs must provide information for existing subscribers to the NLAD by state, pursuant to a state schedule that will be issued by USAC, and for new subscribers upon initiation of service.<sup>2</sup> We direct USAC to provide additional guidance regarding the format and timing of the transmission of subscriber data to the NLAD.<sup>3</sup> We also remind ETCs of their ongoing duty to eliminate duplicative support within their company (intra-company duplicates) using all information available to them.<sup>4</sup>

In the 2012 *Lifeline Reform Order*, the Commission established the NLAD to detect, prevent and eliminate duplicative support in the Lifeline/Link Up program.<sup>5</sup> The Commission stated that the NLAD would only be effective if ETCs (or states where enrollment is performed by a state agency or third party)

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<sup>1</sup> The first five states that will have subscribers loaded into the NLAD are Arkansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Oklahoma, and Washington. State agencies or administrators may interact with the database in lieu of ETCs. *See Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization et al.*, WC Docket No. 11-42 et al., Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 27 FCC Rcd 6656, 6735, para. 182 n.482 (2012) (*Lifeline Reform Order*); *see also Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization*, WC Docket No. 11-42, Order, DA 13-1853, para. 9 (Wireline Comp. Bur. rel. Aug. 30, 2013) (reminding states that they must provide ETCs all of the necessary information required for ETCs to transmit the information to the NLAD if they do not populate the database on their own).

<sup>2</sup> *See Lifeline Reform Order*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6736, para. 184.

<sup>3</sup> USAC will announce the dates for loading additional states in the near future.

<sup>4</sup> The Bureau expects that the ETCs' subscriber information transmitted to USAC will be free of intra-company duplicates. *See Lifeline Reform Order*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6749, para. 215; *see also Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization et al.*, WC Docket No. 11-42, et al., Report and Order, 26 FCC Rcd 9022, 9027, para. 8 (2011) (*Lifeline Duplicates Order*).

<sup>5</sup> *See Lifeline Reform Order*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6734, para. 179.

populate the NLAD with subscriber information.<sup>6</sup> Specifically, ETCs are required to collect and provide to the NLAD the following information for each new and existing Lifeline subscriber:

- a. The subscriber's full name;
- b. Full residential address;
- c. Date of birth;
- d. 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;
- e. The telephone number associated with the Lifeline service;
- f. The date on which the Lifeline service was initiated;
- g. The date on which the Lifeline service was terminated, if it has been terminated;
- h. The amount of support being sought for that subscriber; and
- i. The means through which the subscriber qualified for Lifeline.<sup>7</sup>

With this information, the NLAD will serve its purpose of detecting and eliminating duplicative support and preventing waste in the Universal Service Fund.

Over the last few months, the Bureau and USAC held three webinars and workshops on the implementation and technical features of NLAD.<sup>8</sup> On October 31 and November 20, 2013, the Bureau and USAC will hold two more workshops to further discuss NLAD implementation.<sup>9</sup>

We remind ETCs receiving federal universal service support from the Lifeline program of their obligation to collect subscriber information necessary to detect duplicative support. Pursuant to section 54.410 of the Commission's rules, ETCs must confirm that their subscribers are qualifying low-income consumers, eligible under the Commission's rules for Lifeline service.<sup>10</sup> This includes the obligation to eliminate any instances of intra-company duplicative support.<sup>11</sup> Section 54.405(e) of the Commission's rules states that, if an ETC "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

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<sup>6</sup> See *id.* at 6736, para. 184.

<sup>7</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 54.404(b)(1)(6); see also *Lifeline Reform Order*, 27 FCC Rcd at 6736, para. 184. In the *Lifeline Reform Order*, the Commission suggested that ETCs could obtain updated address information and the other subscriber information required for the NLAD during the recertification process. See *id.* at 6717, para. 134.

<sup>8</sup> These workshops were held on June 19, August 27, and September 18, 2013, with hundreds of attendees participating. See USAC Trainings and Outreach, Online Learning Library, <http://www.usac.org/li/about/outreach/online-learning.aspx> (last visited Oct. 18, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Registration information for the October 31, 2013, workshop can be found on USAC's website. Participants can attend in person or via a webcast link that will be provided upon registration. See USAC Trainings and Outreach, NLAD Workshop, <http://www.usac.org/li/about/outreach/training/103113.aspx> (last visited Oct. 18, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 54.410 (a)(1)-(2).

<sup>11</sup> See *Lifeline Duplicates Order*, 26 FCC Rcd at 9027, para. 8; see also *Wireline Competition Bureau Reminds Eligible Telecommunications Carriers of Their Obligation to Eliminate Duplicative Lifeline Support*, Public Notice, 27 FCC Rcd 12325, 12326 (Wireline Comp. Bur. 2012).

subscriber of impending termination of his or her Lifeline service.”<sup>12</sup> ETCs should use all information available to them, including the information collected as part of their obligation to transmit information to the NLAD, to identify and eliminate household duplicates.

For further information, please contact Anita Patankar-Stoll, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, Wireline Competition Bureau at (202) 418-7121 or TTY (202) 418-7340; Anita.Patankar-Stoll@fcc.gov.

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<sup>12</sup> See 47 C.F.R. §54.405 (e)(1).