



PUBLIC NOTICE

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WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES EFFECTIVE DATES OF LIFELINE RULES FOLLOWING APPROVAL BY THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

WC Docket Nos. 11-42, 09-197, 10-90

On June 22, 2015, the Federal Communications Commission released a Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Order on Reconsideration, Second Report and Order, and Memorandum Opinion and Order that modified the reporting requirements of the Lifeline program (*2015 Lifeline Reform Order*).¹ The *2015 Lifeline Reform Order* built upon the successful reforms from the *2012 Lifeline Reform Order*, which substantially strengthened protections against waste, fraud, and abuse and improved program administration and accountability.² The Commission also wanted to ensure that adequate controls are in place before implementing any further changes to the Lifeline program.³ As part of these efforts, the Commission adopted several rules in the *2015 Lifeline Reform Order* to strengthen the document retention requirements, ensure that only ETCs directly serving low-income customers receive reimbursement under the Lifeline program, and require ETCs to use a uniform snapshot date to request reimbursement from USAC for the provision of Lifeline support.⁴

On January 5, 2016, the Commission received Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval of modified information collection requirements under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA).⁵ The announcement of OMB approval of the rules will be sent to the Federal Register on February 4, 2016. As ordered in the *2015 Lifeline Reform Order*, all adopted rules contained in the order will take effect upon announcement in the Federal Register of OMB approval.⁶ Therefore, parties should expect these rules to become effective on or after February 4, 2016.

¹ See *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization* et al., WC Docket No. 11-42, et al., Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, Order on Reconsideration, Second Report and Order, and Memorandum Opinion and Order, 30 FCC Rcd 7818 (2015) (*2015 Second Reform Order*).

² See *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization* et al., WC Docket 11-42, et al., Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 27 FCC Rcd 6656 (2012) (*2012 Lifeline Reform Order*).

³ *2015 Second Reform Order*, 30 FCC Rcd at 7820-21, para. 3.

⁴ *Id.* at 7925-29, Appx. B.

⁵ Public Law No. 104-13, 109 Stat. 163 (May 22, 1995), codified at 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501 et seq.

⁶ *2015 Second Reform Order*, 30 FCC Rcd 7917, para. 299.

Specifically, the following rules will take effect:

- Updating the definition of eligible telecommunications carriers, direct service, and Lifeline;⁷
- Updating instructions and number of respondents for FCC Forms 497 and 481;⁸
- Retaining eligibility documentation for enrollment and dispute resolution;⁹
- Revising the burden for consumer recertification;¹⁰
- Revising FCC Form 555 for annual reporting of subscriber recertification;¹¹
- Requiring a uniform snapshot date for payment of low-income support;¹²
- Revising the subscriber usage requirement;¹³
- Requiring marketing and outreach plans;¹⁴
- Updating the ETC audit requirements;¹⁵
- Allowing electronic signatures for Lifeline subscriber certifications;¹⁶

For further information, please contact Christian Hoefly, Wireline Competition Bureau, Telecommunications Access Policy Division, at (202) 418-3607 or via e-mail at christian.hoefly@fcc.gov.

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⁷ 47 CFR §§ 54.403, 54.400, 54.401.

⁸ 47 CFR §§ 54.403, 54.313(a)(8)

⁹ 47 CFR §§ 54.404(b)(11), 54.410(b)(1)(ii), 54.410(c)(1)(ii), 54.410(c)(2)(ii), 54.417.

¹⁰ 47 CFR § 54.410(f).

¹¹ 47 CFR § 54.416(b).

¹² 47 CFR § 54.407.

¹³ 47 CFR § 54.405(e)(3).

¹⁴ 47 CFR § 54.405(c).

¹⁵ 47 CFR §§ 54.420(a), (b).

¹⁶ 47 CFR § 54.419.