



# Public Service Commission Chairman Lane's Column



August 31, 2020

## A Lifeline to Keep You Connected

Try to imagine how it would feel if you needed to call for the police or an ambulance, but you didn't have a phone. What if you couldn't get a new job because there was no way for a potential employer to call you for an interview? Think how it would be if you needed a prescription refilled, but couldn't call the pharmacy. For too many low-income people, this is their reality, but it doesn't have to be that way.

There is a federal program called Lifeline that helps make phone and broadband internet services more accessible. All the information you need to get started is on the Public Service Commission's website at [www.psc.state.wv.us](http://www.psc.state.wv.us) when you click on the Lifeline link. Lifeline provides a discount of up to \$9.25 per month off your monthly wireline or wireless phone service, broadband, or bundled voice and broadband service bill from participating providers. For some low-income consumers, that Lifeline discount is the one factor that enables them to maintain vital connections to emergency responders, health care services, potential employers, and family members.

You may qualify for Lifeline if you participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, or Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Programs, or if your income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines.

If you are experiencing new hardships due to COVID-19, the federal government has temporarily waived the requirement that applicants seeking to qualify for the program based on their income must provide at least three consecutive months of income documentation. This makes it easier for individuals who have lost their jobs during the coronavirus pandemic, and who qualify for Lifeline benefits, to enroll in the program.

The Public Service Commission wants every West Virginian to have access to emergency services and essential community resources. More information on Lifeline eligibility and rules is available at [www.psc.state.wv.us/LifeLine](http://www.psc.state.wv.us/LifeLine), including a link to find participating providers in your area.

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