



November 9, 2016



Darrell Nitschke
North Dakota Public Service Commission
State Capitol
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Dept 408
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

Dear Mr. Nitschke,

To adhere to the upcoming changes in the Federal Lifeline Program, the local tariffs have been revised for SRT Communications, Inc. ("SRT") and North Dakota Network Co. (dba SRT Wireless).

The main change to the Federal Lifeline Program is allowing fixed and mobile broadband service to be eligible for the Lifeline benefit. Also, minimum service standards are now required for all Lifeline eligible services, which include voice and broadband. These revisions are set to become effective December 2, 2016.

The revision pages of the tariffs are enclosed for filing.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Lizotte".

Julie Lizotte
Director of Regulatory Affairs

Enclosures

1 **PU-16-693** Filed: 11/9/2016 Pages: 17
General Exchange Tariff revisions - Lifeline Service

SRT Communications, Inc. / North Dakota Network Co.
Julie Lizotte, Director Reg. Affairs

1 **PU-16-692** Filed: 11/9/2016 Pages: 17
General Exchange Tariff revisions - Lifeline Service

SRT Communications, Inc. / North Dakota Network Co.
Julie Lizotte, Director Reg. Affairs

LOCAL SERVICE
LIFELINE SERVICE – FIXED VOICE AND FIXED BROADBAND
NON TRIBAL LANDS

A. General

1. The Federal Communications Commission and the North Dakota Public Service Commission require that an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier must offer Lifeline assistance to non-Tribal Land customers, and Enhanced Lifeline and Link-up assistance for Tribal Land customers. Tribal Lands include any federally recognized Indian tribe's reservation, pueblo, or colony.
2. Lifeline service means qualifying low income subscribers pay reduced charges for residential local telecommunications service; either wireline voice, wireless voice, wireline (fixed) broadband or wireless broadband service. A subscriber can receive a Lifeline discount on only one service.
3. Lifeline assistance is not available when a subscriber is already receiving one or more Lifeline services concurrently, or one or more subscribers in a household are receiving Lifeline services concurrently.
4. Voice Lifeline service includes voice grade access to the public switched network, minutes of use for local service provided at no additional charge to end users, access to emergency 911 and enhanced 911 service to the extent the local government in an eligible carrier's service area has implemented 911 or enhanced 911 systems, and toll limitation at no charge to qualifying low-income consumers.
5. Fixed Broadband Lifeline will provide, at a minimum, usage allowance of 150 GB per month at 10/1 Mbps upload/download speeds for home internet plans. In those areas where 10/1 Mbps download/upload speeds are not offered, the highest performing speeds available will be offered, but no less than 4/1 Mbps.
6. A service deposit shall not be collected in order to initiate Lifeline service if the qualifying low income subscriber voluntarily elects toll blocking.
7. All Lifeline customers will be required to recertify on an annual basis.

LOCAL SERVICE
LIFELINE SERVICE – FIXED VOICE AND FIXED BROADBAND
NON TRIBAL LANDS

B. Lifeline Benefit Port Freeze

1. Lifeline customers will be required to remain with their service provider for a minimum period before they can transfer their benefit to another provider.
 - a. Voice only customers must remain with their service provider for sixty (60) days before transferring their benefit to another provider.
 - b. Voice with broadband, where broadband does not meet the minimum service standards, must remain with their provider for sixty (60) days before transferring their benefit to another provider.
 - c. Broadband only customers must remain for twelve (12) months before transferring their benefit to another provider.
 - d. Broadband with voice, where voice does not meet the minimum service standards, must remain with their provider for twelve (12) months before transferring their benefit to another provider.
 - e. Bundle, where both voice and broadband meet the minimum service standards, must remain with their provider for twelve (12) months before transferring their benefit to another provider.
2. If a subscriber cancels service or is de-enrolled for non-usage during the benefit port freeze, the customer still cannot re-enroll in the program with another provider until the port freeze period ends.
3. Customers may transfer their Lifeline benefit to another service from the same provider at any time.

C. Lifeline Benefit Port Freeze Exemptions

1. In limited situations, which are listed below, customers may be exempt from their benefit port freeze period and transfer their Lifeline benefit to a different provider.
 - a. Customer moves (changes their residential address); or,
 - b. The service provider ceases operations, or otherwise fails to provide service; or,
 - c. The service provider has imposed late fees greater than or equal to the monthly end-user charge for the supported service; or,
 - d. The service provider is found to be in violation of Lifeline Program rules and the subscriber is impacted by the violation.

**LOCAL SERVICE
LIFELINE SERVICE – FIXED VOICE AND FIXED BROADBAND
NON TRIBAL LANDS**

D. Program Based Eligibility

1. A subscriber can receive the Lifeline assistance by providing SRT their current or prior year's statement of benefits from a qualifying assistance program, a notice or letter of participation in a qualifying assistance program, program participation documents, or another official document demonstrating that the prospective subscriber, one or more of the prospective subscriber's dependents or the prospective subscriber's household receives benefits from a qualifying assistance program. Applicant must complete SRT's Lifeline Assistance Application. Eligible programs include:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8) (FPHA)
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Program
- HEAD Start

E. Income Based Eligibility

2. A qualifying low income subscriber is eligible to receive Lifeline assistance by certifying under the Income-Based method. The subscriber's household income must be at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The Universal Service Administration Company (USAC) will be the point of reference to determine the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The subscriber must complete SRT's Assistance Application, provide SRT income documentation, and certify the number of household members. The income of all household members will be used to determine eligibility. Acceptable income documentation includes:

- Prior year's state, federal, or tribal tax return
- Current income statement from an employer
- Paycheck stub (must present three consecutive months)
- Social security statement of benefits
- Veterans administration statement of benefits
- Child Support
- Divorce Decree
- Other official document

**LOCAL SERVICE
LIFELINE SERVICE – FIXED VOICE AND FIXED BROADBAND
NON TRIBAL LANDS**

F. Lifeline Support Amount

1. Monthly Federal Lifeline support for Fixed Voice-only and Fixed Broadband are as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Fixed Voice Only</u>	<u>Fixed Broadband</u>
12/1/16	\$9.25	\$9.25
12/1/17	\$9.25	\$9.25
12/1/18	\$9.25	\$9.25
12/1/19	\$7.25	\$9.25
12/1/20	\$5.25	\$9.25
12/1/21	\$0.00	\$9.25

**LOCAL SERVICE
LIFELINE SERVICE – FIXED VOICE AND FIXED BROADBAND
TRIBAL LANDS**

A. General

1. The Federal Communications Commission and the North Dakota Public Service Commission require that an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier must offer Lifeline assistance to non-Tribal Land customers, and Enhanced Lifeline and Link-up assistance for Tribal Land customers. Tribal Lands include any federally recognized Indian tribe's reservation, pueblo, or colony.
2. Lifeline service means qualifying low income subscribers pay reduced charges for residential local telecommunications service; either wireline voice, wireless voice, wireline (fixed) broadband or wireless broadband service. A subscriber can receive a Lifeline discount on only one service.
3. Lifeline assistance is not available when a subscriber is already receiving one or more Lifeline services concurrently, or one or more subscribers in a household are receiving Lifeline services concurrently.
4. Voice Lifeline service includes voice grade access to the public switched network, minutes of use for local service provided at no additional charge to end users, access to emergency 911 and enhanced 911 service to the extent the local government in an eligible carrier's service area has implemented 911 or enhanced 911 systems, and toll limitation at no charge to qualifying low-income consumers.
5. Fixed Broadband Lifeline will provide, at a minimum, usage allowance of 150 GB per month at 10/1 Mbps upload/download speeds for home internet plans. In those areas where 10/1 Mbps download/upload speeds are not offered, the highest performing speeds available will be offered, but no less than 4/1 Mbps.
6. A service deposit shall not be collected in order to initiate Lifeline service if the qualifying low income subscriber voluntarily elects toll blocking.
7. All Lifeline customers will be required to recertify on an annual basis.

**LOCAL SERVICE
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TRIBAL LANDS**

B. Lifeline Benefit Port Freeze

1. Lifeline customers will be required to remain with their service provider for a minimum period before they can transfer their benefit to another provider.
 - a. Voice only customers must remain with their service provider for sixty (60) days before transferring their benefit to another provider.
 - b. Voice with broadband, where broadband does not meet the minimum service standards, must remain with their provider for sixty (60) days before transferring their benefit to another provider.
 - c. Broadband only customers must remain for twelve (12) months before transferring their benefit to another provider.
 - d. Broadband with voice, where voice does not meet the minimum service standards, must remain with their provider for twelve (12) months before transferring their benefit to another provider.
 - e. Bundle, where both voice and broadband meet the minimum service standards, must remain with their provider for twelve (12) months before transferring their benefit to another provider.
2. If a subscriber cancels service or is de-enrolled for non-usage during the benefit port freeze, the customer still cannot re-enroll in the program with another provider until the port freeze period ends.
3. Customers may transfer their Lifeline benefit to another service from the same provider at any time.

C. Lifeline Benefit Port Freeze Exemptions

1. In limited situations, which are listed below, customers may be exempt from their benefit port freeze period and transfer their Lifeline benefit to a different provider.
 - a. Customer moves (changes their residential address); or,
 - b. The service provider ceases operations, or otherwise fails to provide service; or,
 - c. The service provider has imposed late fees greater than or equal to the monthly end-user charge for the supported service; or,
 - d. The service provider is found to be in violation of Lifeline Program rules and the subscriber is impacted by the violation.

**LOCAL SERVICE
LIFELINE SERVICE – FIXED VOICE AND FIXED BROADBAND
TRIBAL LANDS**

D. Program Based Eligibility

1. A subscriber can receive the Lifeline assistance by providing SRT their current or prior year's statement of benefits from a qualifying assistance program, a notice or letter of participation in a qualifying assistance program, program participation documents, or another official document demonstrating that the prospective subscriber, one or more of the prospective subscriber's dependents or the prospective subscriber's household receives benefits from a qualifying assistance program. Applicant must complete SRT's Lifeline Assistance Application. Eligible programs include:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8) (FPHA)
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit Program
- HEAD Start
- Tribally-administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Food Distribution on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance

E. Income Based Eligibility

1. A qualifying low income subscriber is eligible to receive Lifeline assistance by certifying under the Income-Based method. The subscriber's household income must be at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The Universal Service Administration Company (USAC) will be the point of reference to determine the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The subscriber must complete SRT's Assistance Application, provide SRT income documentation, and certify the number of household members. The income of all household members will be used to determine eligibility. Acceptable income documentation includes:

- Prior year's state, federal, or tribal tax return
- Current income statement from an employer
- Paycheck stub (must present three consecutive months)
- Social security statement of benefits
- Veterans administration statement of benefits
- Child Support
- Divorce Decree
- Other official document

**LOCAL SERVICE
LIFELINE SERVICE – FIXED VOICE AND FIXED BROADBAND
TRIBAL LANDS**

F. Enhanced Lifeline Support Amount

1. Monthly Federal Lifeline support for Fixed Voice-only and Fixed Broadband are as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Fixed Voice Only</u>	<u>Fixed Broadband</u>
12/1/16	\$9.25	\$9.25
12/1/17	\$9.25	\$9.25
12/1/18	\$9.25	\$9.25
12/1/19	\$7.25	\$9.25
12/1/20	\$5.25	\$9.25
12/1/21	\$0.00	\$9.25

2. In addition to the Lifeline support indicated above, Enhanced Lifeline Assistance for residents of Tribal Lands are eligible to receive an additional \$25 in support. The total amount of Enhanced Lifeline support cannot exceed the amount of the Residential Local Line Charge.

G. Enhanced Linkup Support Amount

1. A resident of Tribal Lands who is eligible to receive Enhanced Lifeline is also eligible to receive Expanded Link Up.
2. A 100 percent reduction, up to \$100, of the customary charge for commencing telecommunications service for a single telecommunications connection.
3. An eligible resident of Tribal lands may receive the benefit of the Enhanced Tribal Link Up program for a second or subsequent time only for otherwise qualifying commencement of telecommunications service at a principal place of residence with an address different from the address for which Tribal Link Up assistance was provided previously.

LOCAL SERVICE
LIFELINE SERVICE – MOBILE VOICE AND MOBILE BROADBAND
NON TRIBAL LANDS

A. General

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2. Lifeline service means qualifying low income subscribers pay reduced charges for residential local telecommunications service; either wireline (fixed) voice, wireless (mobile) voice, wireline (fixed) broadband, or wireless (mobile) broadband service. A subscriber can receive a Lifeline discount on only one service.
3. Lifeline assistance is not available when a subscriber is already receiving one or more Lifeline services concurrently, or one or more subscribers in a household are receiving Lifeline services concurrently.
4. Mobile Voice Lifeline service includes, at a minimum, 500 Minutes per month.
5. Mobile Broadband Lifeline includes, at a minimum, 500 MB per month at 3G speeds for cell phone data plans.
6. A service deposit shall not be collected in order to initiate Lifeline service if the qualifying low income subscriber voluntarily elects toll blocking.
7. All Lifeline customers will be required to recertify on an annual basis.

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B. Lifeline Benefit Port Freeze

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 - c. Broadband only customers must remain for twelve (12) months before transferring their benefit to another provider.
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 - e. Bundle, where both voice and broadband meet the minimum service standards, must remain with their provider for twelve (12) months before transferring their benefit to another provider.
2. If a subscriber cancels service or is de-enrolled for non-usage during the benefit port freeze, the customer still cannot re-enroll in the Lifeline program with another provider until the port freeze period ends.
3. Customers may transfer their Lifeline benefit to another service from the same provider at any time.

C. Lifeline Benefit Port Freeze Exemptions

1. In limited situations, which are listed below, customers may be exempt from their benefit port freeze period and transfer their Lifeline benefit to a different provider.
 - a. Customer moves (changes their residential address); or,
 - b. The service provider ceases operations, or otherwise fails to provide service; or,
 - c. The service provider has imposed late fees greater than or equal to the monthly end-user charge for the supported service; or,
 - d. The service provider is found to be in violation of Lifeline Program rules and the subscriber is impacted by the violation.

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D. Program Based Eligibility

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LIFELINE SERVICE – MOBILE VOICE AND MOBILE BROADBAND
NON TRIBAL LANDS**

F. Lifeline Support Amount

1. Monthly Federal Lifeline support for Mobile Voice-only and Mobile Broadband are as follows:

<u>Effective Date</u>	<u>Mobile Voice</u>	<u>Mobile Broadband</u>
12/2/16	\$9.25	\$9.25
12/1/17	\$9.25	\$9.25
12/1/18	\$9.25	\$9.25
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4. Mobile Voice Lifeline service includes, at a minimum, 500 Minutes per month.
5. Mobile Broadband Lifeline includes, at a minimum, 500 MB per month.
6. A service deposit shall not be collected in order to initiate Lifeline service if the qualifying low income subscriber voluntarily elects toll blocking.
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LIFELINE SERVICE – MOBILE VOICE AND MOBILE BROADBAND
TRIBAL LANDS**

F. Enhanced Lifeline Support Amount

1. Monthly Federal Lifeline support for Mobile Voice-only and Mobile Broadband are as follows:

Effective Date	Mobile Voice	Fixed Broadband
12/2/16	\$9.25	\$9.25
12/1/17	\$9.25	\$9.25
12/1/18	\$9.25	\$9.25
12/1/19	\$7.25	\$9.25
12/1/20	\$5.25	\$9.25
12/1/21	\$0.00	\$9.25

2. In addition to the Lifeline support indicated above, Enhanced Lifeline Assistance for residents of Tribal Lands are eligible to receive an additional \$25 in support. The total amount of Enhanced Lifeline support cannot exceed the amount of the Residential Local Line Charge.

G. Enhanced Linkup Support Amount

1. A resident of Tribal Lands who is eligible to receive Enhanced Lifeline is also eligible to receive Expanded Link Up.
2. A 100 percent reduction, up to \$100, of the customary charge for commencing telecommunications service for a single telecommunications connection.
3. An eligible resident of Tribal lands may receive the benefit of the Enhanced Tribal Link Up program for a second or subsequent time only for otherwise qualifying commencement of telecommunications service at a principal place of residence with an address different from the address for which Tribal Link Up assistance was provided previously.