



# Universal Service Administrative Company

## Lifeline Program Overview



Universal Service  
Administrative Co.

# Who is USAC?

## The Universal Service Administrative Company

As established by the Telecom Act of 1996, USAC is an independent, not-for-profit corporation designated by the FCC as the permanent administrator of the Universal Service Fund and its four programs

Works as a *partner with the FCC* to protect the integrity of universal service through:

- Informing and educating program audiences
- Collecting and distributing contributions
- Promoting program compliance

# The Mission of Universal Service

Ensuring that all people in the United States have access to quality, affordable connectivity services through these four universal service programs:

- Connect America Fund
- E-rate Schools and Libraries Program
- Lifeline Program
- Rural Health Care Program

# What is it?



Monthly discount on phone & (beginning December 2<sup>nd</sup>) broadband service

Subscribers prove eligibility through participation in qualifying program or demonstrating income at or below 135% of federal poverty guideline

Available in every state, territory, commonwealth & on Tribal lands

13 million U.S. households participate in the federal Lifeline program

# Program Rules

- Lifeline is available only to subscribers who can document their eligibility
- Only one Lifeline benefit is permitted per household
- Subscribers are required to recertify their eligibility every year

These rules have been enacted to protect the integrity of the program

# Who can get it?

Consumers are eligible for a Lifeline benefit if enrolled in:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps or SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit
- Income-based eligibility (at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines)

OR

Reside on Tribal lands and participate in a federal or state assistance program such as:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Head Start
- Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

# How does it work?

The federal Lifeline program provides a \$9.25 benefit per month to eligible low-income consumers, or up to \$34.25 to Tribal/Native land residents

Subscribers may receive a discount on either:

Current State	Beginning December 2, 2016
Fixed voice (home phone)	Fixed voice (home phone)
Mobile voice (cell phone)	Mobile voice (cell phone)
	Fixed broadband
	Mobile broadband
Bundled voice + broadband	

# Inclusion of Broadband

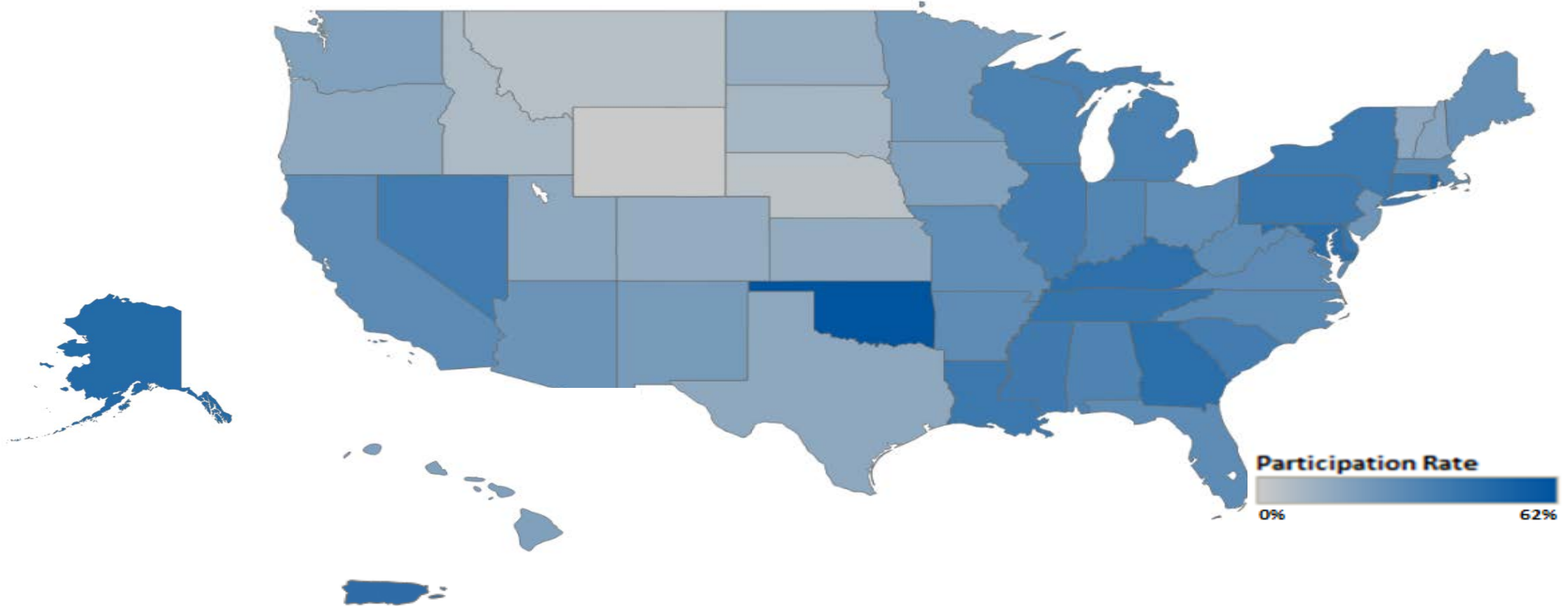


# Inclusion of Broadband Internet Access Service

- Broadband service is subject to minimum service standards
- The discount cannot be applied to equipment
- Service providers must determine eligibility until National Verifier
- Broadband subscribers must stay with service provider for 1 year through benefit port freeze (60 days for voice)

# Lifeline Participation

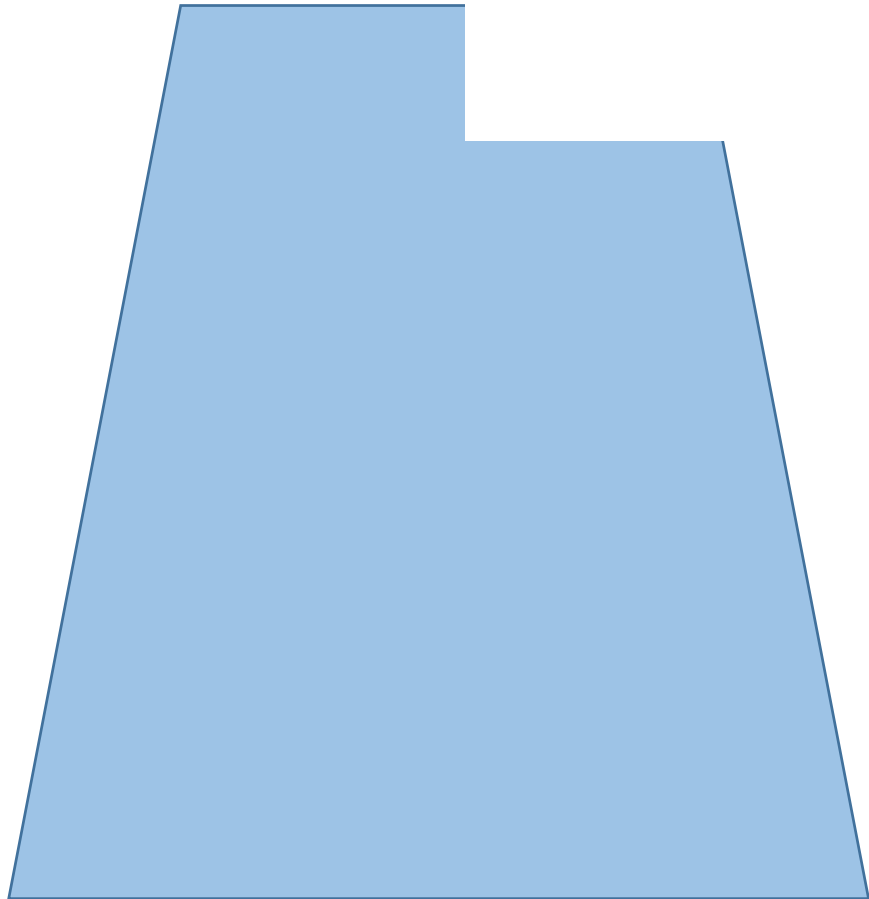
# Current Lifeline Participation



**Lifeline Household Participation Rate - 33%**

\* Numbers derived from data in the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS), U.S. Census Bureau

# Utah's Lifeline Opportunity

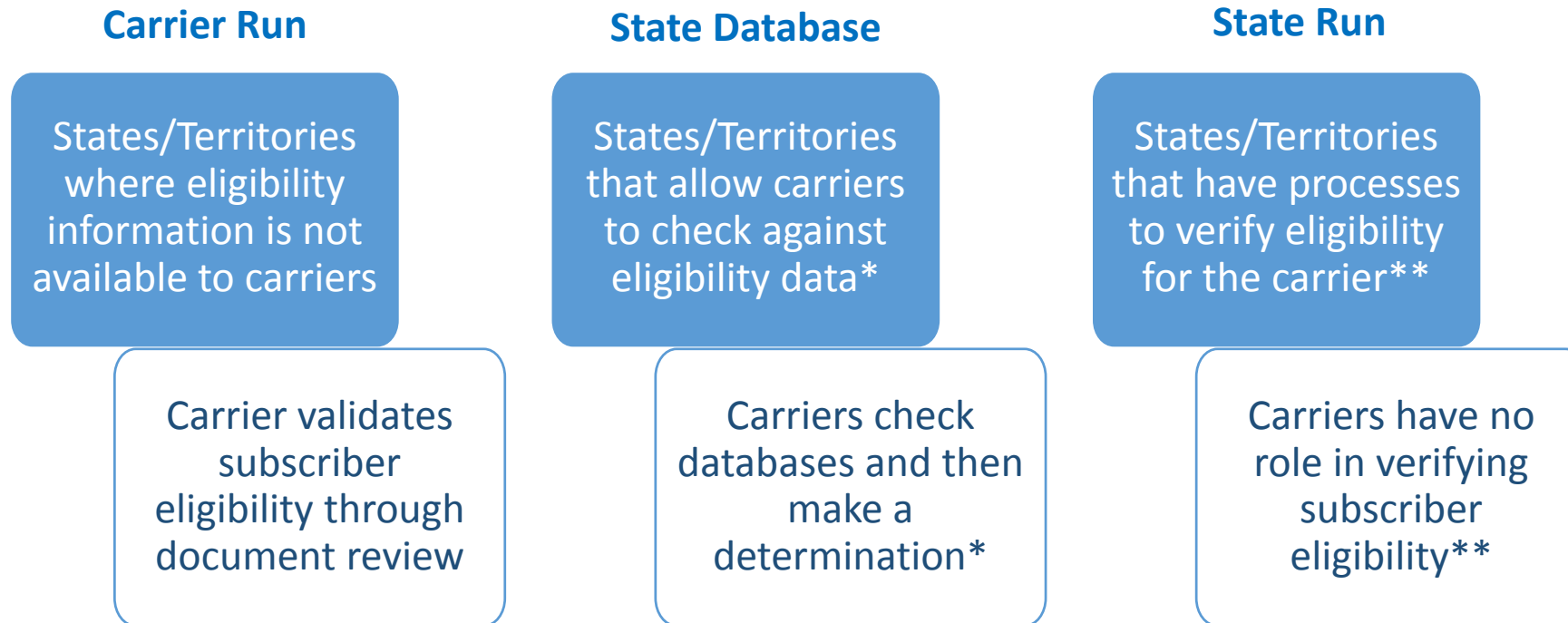


- 236,000 Eligible Households
- 32,053 Current Lifeline Subscribers
- 28 Utah Carriers Participate in Lifeline

# Introducing the National Verifier

# Current State of Eligibility Verification

Through our discussion with states/territories and carriers, today's eligibility processes appear to fall into three general models.



\*Databases do not include programs the state/territory does not administer.

\*\*Processes may not be available to wireless carriers, and may not include verification of programs that aren't state/territory administered.

# National Verifier Overview

## Objectives:

1. Increase program integrity
2. Facilitate consumer choice
3. Improve the enrollment process

## Functions:

1. Determine subscriber eligibility - *no eligibility decisions made by carriers, National Verifier makes decisions in coordination with state, territory, and federal agencies*
2. Populate the Lifeline Eligibility Database (LED) – *with any consumer checked and deemed eligible, not with copies of qualifying program data*
3. Default basis for determining support payments – *phase out of self-claiming Form 497*

# Individual Consumer Applies Through National Verifier

1. Applicant applies through NV consumer interface (or other means, e.g. mail)
2. National Verifier performs identity and address verification (as done in NLAD today)
3. National Verifier “pings” state, federal or territory sources to verify eligibility
4. National Verifier checks for duplicates (as done in NLAD today)
5. If any steps 2 – 4 fail, National Verifier will perform manual check based on customer supplied documentation
6. National Verifier communicates eligibility check result to customer with a confirmation number
7. Applicant may now sign up with service provider, using the confirmation number



# Consumer Recertification

1. National Verifier will conduct automated checks where possible from state, territory, and federal databases
2. If verified, the process concludes
3. If not verified, the National Verifier will communicate this to the consumer and offer the self-certification process
4. If the consumer does not successfully recertify, they will be de-enrolled as they are in today's processes

# The Roll-out Will Occur in Several Phases

1. USAC is mandated by the FCC to deploy the National Verifier framework in phases to accommodate the unique nature and specifics of each state/territory databases and processes
2. We will coordinate closely with state agencies during these periods to identify the best timing based on each state or territory's needs
3. USAC is working with federal and tribal agencies such as HUD, the VA, and BIA to verify eligibility for programs not administered by the state/territory agencies

# Consultation in Progress

1. USAC is reaching out to relevant state and territory agencies who administer Lifeline qualifying programs to discuss the National Verifier
2. USAC and state/territory agency teams have held discussions on how we might verify eligibility in the respective state or territory
3. Agencies have provided insights to USAC about their needs around verification processes, including privacy requirements, data storage and use provisions, and technical standards
4. There is ongoing discussion across all states and territories at various levels of detail based on the feedback received around the state's capacity and ability to coordinate

# Thank You!

Please contact [LifelineProgram@usac.org](mailto:LifelineProgram@usac.org) if you have additional questions about the Lifeline Program

To sign up for emails about the Lifeline Program including news, updates, and events

- Go to [www.usac.org](http://www.usac.org) and click “subscribe” in the upper-right corner

# Appendices

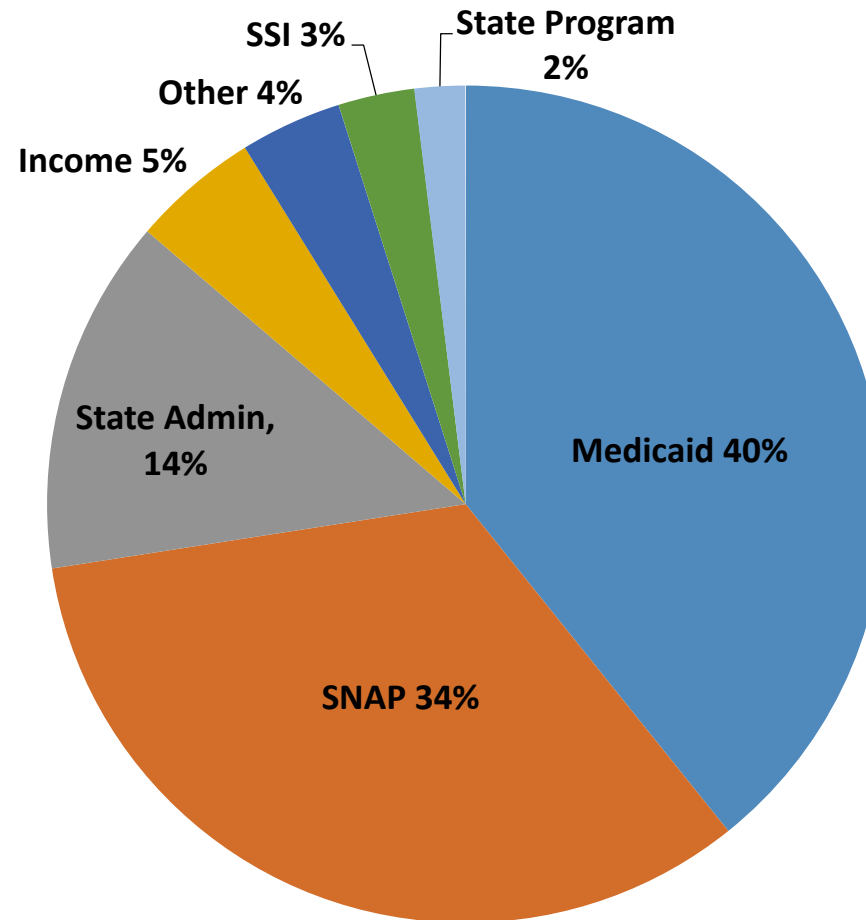
# Authorization of USAC

## The Universal Service Administrative Company

1. In 1997, the FCC established the mandates for the Universal Service and identified USAC as the permanent administrator of the Universal Service Fund
2. Resources:
  - [FCC 97-157](#)
  - [ERR 97-157](#)
  - [DA 97-2477](#)
  - [FCC 97-253](#)
  - [Part 54 of Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#)

# Program Breakdown in Utah

Program	Subscriber Count
Medicaid	12,795
State Assistance Program	505
Income	1,499
State Administrator	4,400
SNAP	10,766
SSI	917
<b>Other</b>	
LIHEAP	346
TANF	51
NSLP	307
Tribal TANF	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,053</b>



# Inclusion of Broadband & Minimum Service Standards

BIAS supported service

- Voice
- Broadband
- Bundled

Date	Mobile Voice	Mobile Broadband	Fixed Broadband
12/2/2016	500 Minutes	<b>Speed:</b> 3G or better <b>Usage Allowance:</b> 500 MB	<b>Speed:</b> 10/1 <b>Usage Allowance:</b> 150 GB
12/1/2017	750 Minutes	<b>Speed:</b> 3G or WCB Updated Standard <b>Usage Allowance:</b> 1 GB	<b>Speed:</b> Updating Mechanism <b>Usage Allowance:</b> CAF Standard or Bureau Determination
12/1/2018	1000 Minutes	<b>Speed:</b> 3G or WCB Updated Standard <b>Usage Allowance:</b> 2 GB	<b>Speed:</b> Updating Mechanism <b>Usage Allowance:</b> CAF Standard or Bureau Determination
12/1/2019	1000 Minutes	<b>Speed:</b> 3G or WCB Updated Standard <b>Usage Allowance:</b> Updating Mechanism	<b>Speed:</b> Updating Mechanism <b>Usage Allowance:</b> CAF Standard or Bureau Determination
12/1/2020	1000 Minutes	<b>Speed:</b> 3G or WCB Updated Standard <b>Usage Allowance:</b> Updating Mechanism	<b>Speed:</b> Updating Mechanism <b>Usage Allowance:</b> CAF Standard or Bureau Determination
12/1/2021	1000 Minutes	<b>Speed:</b> 3G or WCB Updated Standard <b>Usage Allowance:</b> Updating Mechanism	<b>Speed:</b> Updating Mechanism <b>Usage Allowance:</b> CAF Standard or Bureau Determination