



TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

CHARLES M. PALMER, DIRECTOR

September 1, 1998

HUMAN SERVICES CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 47Z-124-EA/MS

ISSUED BY: Bureau of Family Investment, Division of Economic Assistance
Bureau of Eligibility, Division of Medical Service

SUBJECT: Application for Low-Income Telephone Assistance Programs

Summary

The federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 enables many telephone companies in the United States to offer Low-Income Connection Assistance (Link-up) and Low-Income Lifeline Assistance programs to any customer currently participating in any of the following programs:

- ◆ Medicaid
- ◆ Food stamps
- ◆ Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- ◆ Federal public housing assistance
- ◆ Low-Income Home Energy Assistance program (LIHEAP).

Note: Participation in the Family Investment Program alone does not establish eligibility for these telephone assistance programs. The legislation does not identify the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program (FIP here in Iowa) as a qualifying program.

The Low-Income Connection Assistance (Link-up) program enables eligible telephone companies to offer either or both of the following with regard to connection charges for installing basic residential service (excluding security deposits):

- ◆ A reduction of 50% of all connection charges or \$30, whichever is less.
- ◆ A deferred payment schedule of equal payments of charges (up to \$200) assessed for commencing services. There is no interest for the deferral period, which cannot exceed one year.

A customer may receive benefits under the Link-up program more than once. However, it must be for service at a different address each time.

The Low-Income Lifeline Assistance program enables eligible telephone companies to reduce monthly service charges for eligible, participating customers by \$5.25.

Administrative rules adopted by the Iowa Utilities Board for purposes of implementing the Telecommunications Act of 1996 further require telephone companies offering these programs to provide applications and informational brochures for the programs to:

- ◆ County DHS offices
- ◆ County community services offices
- ◆ Area agencies on aging
- ◆ Community action agency offices

Human Services Circular Letter No. 47Z-121-EA/MS, issued May 26, 1998, to describe the Link-Up and Lifeline programs, indicated that all telephone companies operating in the state were required to offer these programs.

The Iowa Telecommunications Association and Iowa Utilities Board have since clarified that while a majority of telephone companies in the state do offer these programs, not all companies do so or are required to. Contact your local telephone companies to determine whether they offer these programs.

The role of the county office is limited to making the application forms available to persons who may be eligible to participate in these programs. The county office is not responsible for completing the forms or seeing that they are sent to the local phone company. The county office is also not required to provide any kind of verification of eligibility for DHS programs.

There is no specified enrollment period. Applications may be filed any time. A copy of the application form, which includes a description of the programs, is attached. Obtain additional copies of the application form by contacting:

- ◆ Your local telephone company.
- ◆ The Iowa Telecommunications Association at 1601 22nd Street, Suite 209, West Des Moines, Iowa 50266, phone (515) 225-2091.

The telephone customer is responsible for completing and returning the application form to the telephone company. The customer self-certifies eligibility for the program through participation in one or more of the low-income assistance programs specified. The customer is also responsible for informing the telephone company when participation in all qualifying low-income assistance programs ends.

Effective Date

Upon receipt

Material Superseded

Remove Human Services Circular Letter No. 47Z-121-EA/MS, dated May 26, 1998, from the file and destroy it.

Additional Information

Please contact your benefit payment administrator if you need additional information.

Low-Income Telephone Assistance Programs Include:

- **Link-up** is a plan that assists qualified low-income Iowans to obtain basic telephone service by providing:
 - Reduced connection charges for basic phone service by 50% or \$30.00, whichever is less.
 - Deferred payment of connection charges, without interest.
- **Lifeline** is a plan that assists qualified low-income Iowans by providing:
 - A \$5.25 monthly credit on the telephone bill.

Low-Income Telephone Assistance does not cover the cost of a telephone set or the cost of wiring inside your home.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for assistance in either or both of the plans, an applicant must participate in one of the following:

- Medicaid
- Food Stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LHEAP)

To Sign Up For Either Or Both Of The Low-Income Telephone Assistance Programs:

Fill out the application form on the other side of this brochure and return it to your local telephone company business office. The address can be found in the telephone directory for your community. This information may be shared with the public assistance program.



LOW-INCOME TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS



Low-Income Telephone Assistance Programs

Sponsored by:

**Iowa Utilities Board
Iowa Telecommunications Association
Your Local Telephone Company**

(over)

Revised 01-01-98

LINK-UP AND LIFELINE RATE ASSISTANCE APPLICATION
(Please Print)

Name _____
(Last) (First) (Middle) (Social Security #)

Address _____
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Phone Number where you may be reached or receive messages () -

Please answer the following questions (indicate by check mark):

1. By filling out this application I (the applicant) request:

a) New Service:

_____ low-income telephone connection assistance (Link-up) and/or
_____ low-income telephone Lifeline assistance

b) Existing Service:

_____ low-income telephone Lifeline assistance

Phone number() -

Billing Name _____

2. Have you received Link-up assistance at the above address in the past?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If the answer is "yes," you are not eligible for Link-up assistance.

3. Are you participating in any of the following programs:

_____ Medicaid (e.g. Title XIX/Medical, State Supplemental Assistance)

_____ Food Stamps

_____ Supplemental Security Income

_____ Federal Public Housing Assistance

_____ Low-Income Home Energy Assistance

I understand completion of this application does not constitute immediate acceptance into this program. I agree to notify the telecommunications carrier if I cease to participate in any of the public assistance programs I checked above.

I certify under penalty of perjury the above information is true. I have read the information on this application and understand I must meet the above qualifications to receive assistance from these programs.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____