

DOCKET NO. 10-2528-01
CENTURYLINK'S COMMENTS REGARDING THE DRAFT ORDER
10/25/12

On October 18, 2012, the Commission issued an amended order seeking comment on the edited draft for final comments of the Division of Public Utilities' Lifeline (UTAP) Program draft. CenturyLink appreciates the Commission and DPU's inclusion of several items previously addressed by CenturyLink. After reviewing the edited draft attached to the amended order, there are a few areas that CenturyLink desires to address in these comments to provide additional detail and clarification.

Requirements of the Proposal (page 3):

The following language in the draft proposal may be confusing;

"Consumers are allowed to receive only one federal and one state discount per household."

CenturyLink believes that language should be replaced with the following language to provide additional clarity:

"A household is not permitted to receive Lifeline assistance from multiple telephone providers. This includes both wireless and wireline providers."

The Salt Lake Community Action Program (SLCAP) in its comments suggested a footnote to clarify that wireline and wireless carriers provide different discount benefits. Instead, the note was included in the body of this paragraph. CenturyLink suggests that the following sentence would fit better as a footnote to the suggested sentence above rather than included in the body of the paragraph. This is consistent with the request of the SLCAP.

"Currently some Lifeline providers participate only in the federal program and hence only offer their customers the federal discount."

Participants with Complete Information (page 4):

The draft proposal continues to anticipate that after the match process is completed between the carrier's subscriber list and the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) database, DWS will provide a file to the telecommunications carrier, denoting which participants are eligible or ineligible. Further, notice will then be provided by DWS to the ineligible participants in accordance with the Resolution Process outlined on page 5.

CenturyLink believes that DWS should wait until after it has completed the Resolution Process to send a complete "final" list of eligible and ineligible customers since CenturyLink cannot de-enroll ineligible customers from Lifeline until after the Resolution Process has been completed.

To send CenturyLink a list of ineligible customers prior to the completion of that process may cause confusion and the possible de-enrollment of Lifeline benefits to ineligible customers before they have been properly notified.

Eligible Participants (page 4):

The draft proposal states the following: *“For those participants who are eligible, a letter from DWS will be mailed to the participant and the participant’s telecommunications carrier, stating that the participant continues to meet the eligibility requirement for the Lifeline discount.”*

There is no need to copy carriers on the letters to the participants confirming the participant’s continued eligibility. The file from DWS that denotes participants they were able to verify in the database is sufficient information to carriers that they should continue to provide benefits to those participants.

Determining a “Household” (page 4):

Based upon the Utah Rural Telecom Association’s suggestion, a copy of USAC’s household worksheet was included in the draft proposal. This worksheet is to be utilized whenever Lifeline benefits have been identified as already in place at an address. However, it is not clear how the duplicate address process will actually work. How will DWS identify that a duplicate address exists so that they know to send out the form? Are duplicate addresses something that DWS will look for at the time they access their databases to check an applicant’s eligibility? CenturyLink agrees that until such time that the national duplicates database is functional or a state has a database as robust as the national database, there is an obligation to check for duplicate benefits at the same address, and the household worksheet is a reasonable approach to incorporate into that process. However, there needs to be clarity as to how DWS plans to approach this obligation.

Communication with Telecommunications Companies (page 9):

The draft proposal states the following: *“The PSC will need to receive a waiver of the requirement to provide a hard copy of the application and certification forms from the FCC with the understanding that the information will be safeguarded and maintained on behalf of the telecommunication carriers.”*

In addition to seeking a waiver for the documentation for new customers, it is also necessary for the PSC to seek a waiver for the documentation related to the annual recertification of customers, since DWS will also be maintaining this documentation as well. CenturyLink believes the following language should be added to the above statement in the proposal to address this issue:

“The PSC will also need to receive a waiver of the requirement to provide a hard copy of any documentation related to the annual recertification of Lifeline customers.”

The draft proposal does not make it clear that access to applicants' and participants' information will be available in the event of an audit. Language similar to what is shown on page 12 under "Annual Recertification Program", "*DWS will also need to archive information and make it available to the telecommunications carriers, consistent with FCC audit guidelines, in case of an audit.*" should also be shown in this section of the proposal.

The draft proposal states the following: "*On the first business day of the month, DWS will provide a written report to the telecommunications carriers, and the DPU, identifying the telecommunication carrier's participants who are eligible for the discount for the previous month.*"

The original draft did not contain the word "*written*", but simply said, "*report*". CenturyLink would prefer to continue to receive information in electronic format rather than in a paper form. CenturyLink suggests that either the word "*written*" be removed so that it simply states "*report*", or language should be added to reference the availability of the electronic file format.