

- BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF UTAH -

In the Matter of the Petition of CenturyLink for a Waiver to the Utah Lifeline Eligibility Requirements	<u>DOCKET NO. 16-049-16</u>
In the Matter of the Miscellaneous Correspondence and Reports Regarding Telecommunications Utility Services; 2016	<u>DOCKET NO. 16-999-03</u> <u>NOTICES OF FILING AND COMMENT PERIOD</u>

ISSUED: October 27, 2016

NOTICE OF FILING

On October 26, 2016, Qwest Corporation d/b/a CenturyLink QC (CenturyLink) petitioned the Commission for a waiver of Utah Administrative Code R746-341-3. This rule establishes the eligibility requirements for participation in the Utah Lifeline program. The rule lists several low-income assistance programs and requires an individual who wishes to qualify for the Lifeline program to demonstrate participation in one of the programs listed.

The state qualifying programs are currently the same as those that qualify individuals to participate in the federal Lifeline program. However, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has determined to add one new program—the Veterans Pension and Survivors Pension benefits program—and eliminate the following three programs:

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP);
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF); and
- National School Free Lunch Program.¹

In its petition, CenturyLink requests the waiver in order to use the same eligibility requirements for both the federal and state Lifeline programs. CenturyLink emphasizes that,

¹ The FCC's changes are scheduled to go into effect on December 2, 2016. However, the FCC is also evaluating a request to delay the effective date.

unless the eligibility requirements are aligned, a customer would have to complete a state application and a federal application in order to qualify for both programs.

NOTICE OF COMMENT PERIOD

Any interested party may submit comments on the above petition for waiver no later than **Wednesday, November 9, 2016**. Reply comments may be submitted by **Wednesday, November 16, 2016**. The Commission specifically seeks comment on the following questions:

1. Is it appropriate to eliminate eligibility requirements based on LIHEAP, TANF, and free school lunch in the interest of administrative efficiency for the carriers, even though such action might disqualify individuals who otherwise would qualify for the state Lifeline subsidy?
2. Is the Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit program eligibility based on income, or is it available to any veteran who receives a pension, or survivor? If the latter, is that criteria consistent with the Utah Lifeline rules,² which mandate that eligibility be based on income?

DATED at Salt Lake City, Utah, October 27, 2016.

/s/ Jennie T. Jonsson
Administrative Law Judge

Attest:

/s/ Gary L. Widerburg
Commission Secretary
DW#289758

² The Commission notes that the statute creating the Utah Universal Service Support Fund (UUSF) does not specifically create a Lifeline program. Rather, the state Lifeline program has been created by administrative rule as a mechanism for ensuring universal service. The Commission welcomes comments regarding whether there is statutory authority for the rules through which the Lifeline program has been implemented.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I CERTIFY that on October 27, 2016, a true and correct copy of the foregoing was served upon the following as indicated below:

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