



Georgia Public Service Commission

Contact: Bill Edge
Phone 404-656-2316
www.psc.state.ga.us

244 Washington St S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Phone: 404-656-4501
Toll free: 800-282-5813

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS RELEASE

21-18

Commission Celebrates September 10-14, 2018 as Lifeline Awareness Week in Georgia

ATLANTA, September 6, 2018 –The Georgia Public Service Commission (Commission) wants to remind all Georgians that September 10-14, 2018 is National Lifeline Awareness Week in Georgia. Access to local emergency services and community resources is vital to our low-income and elderly residents. The Commission wants residents to “stay connected” and is reaching out to those who need telecommunications service but are unable to afford it. The Lifeline assistance program offers discounts to help residents have access to voice or broadband services and helps low income consumers connect to the nation’s communications networks, find jobs, access health care services, connect with family, and call for help in an emergency.

Governor Nathan Deal has also issued a proclamation declaring September 10-14, 2018 as Lifeline Awareness Week in Georgia. (See photo attached)

Under the federal Lifeline program, customers who participate in or are eligible for certain public assistance and veteran programs are entitled to receive a discount of \$9.25 per month off their monthly telecommunications bills. More information on program eligibility, rules and key messages is available at <https://www.fcc.gov/general/lifeline-program-low-income-consumers>.

“We want to make eligible Georgians aware of this program which can provide this crucial link to services and family in times of need,” said Commission Chairman Lauren “Bubba” McDonald. Lifeline Awareness Week is a nationwide campaign to publicize the Lifeline Program by the Commission, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Association of Consumer Utility Advocates (NASUCA).

As of June 30, 2018, there are approximately 350,000 Georgians who are receiving this credit, but there are thousands more who could qualify but are not enrolled. A consumer is automatically qualified to receive the Lifeline discount if he or she currently participates in any one of the following programs: Medicaid; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Supplemental Security Income; Federal Public Housing Assistance; Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit; or income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

The Lifeline program has undergone a transformation in recent years to improve program efficiency and combat waste, fraud and abuse to ensure that only those eligible are receiving this vital support. Program rules and requirements that consumers should know include:

- Lifeline is available only to eligible consumers.
- Only low-income consumers with proof of eligibility are qualified to enroll.

- Only one Lifeline benefit is permitted per household. If a consumer or his or her household currently has more than one Lifeline-discounted service, he or she must select a single provider immediately or be subject to penalties.
- Existing Lifeline subscribers must recertify their eligibility every year and should respond to their Lifeline providers' attempts to recertify eligibility. Subscribers who fail to recertify their eligibility will be de-enrolled from the Lifeline Program.

To enroll, consumers should contact their prospective telecommunications provider. Consumers should be aware that not all providers offer the Lifeline discount and should contact any potential provider before making a commitment.

NARUC is the national association representing the state public service commissioners who regulate essential utility services in their states. NARUC members are responsible for assuring reliable utility service at fair, just, and reasonable rates. Founded in 1889, the Association is an invaluable resource for its members and the regulatory community, providing a venue to set and influence public policy, share best practices, and foster innovative solutions to improve regulation.

The Georgia Public Service Commission is a five-member constitutional agency that exercises its authority and influence to ensure that consumers receive safe, reliable, and reasonably-priced telecommunications, electric and natural gas service from financially viable and technically competent companies.

For more information on the Commission, see the Commission web site at www.psc.state.ga.us.

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Taking part in the Proclamation Presentaton are:

Left to right: Terry Hobbs, Windstream Communications; Commissioner Tricia Pridemore; Governor Deal; Lynn Page, Executive Assistant to Commissioner McDonald; Bill Edge, PSC Public Information Officer; First Lady Sandra Deal