



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Board Report

File #: 20-786, Version: 1

Approve a letter to internet service providers in Monterey County requesting their participation in the California LifeLine Program.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors approve a letter to internet service providers in Monterey County requesting their participation in the California LifeLine Program.

SUMMARY

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) California LifeLine Program provides discounted home phone and cell phone services to eligible households. The California LifeLine discounts help consumers lower the cost of their phone bills. Only one discount per household is allowed (except for teletypewriter users and for Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program participants). Each household must choose to get the discount either on a home phone or on a cell phone, but not on both.

Internet service providers are not required to participate in the program. This Board Report seeks approval of a letter from the Board of Supervisors to local internet service providers (ISPs) encouraging them to participate in California LifeLine program.

DISCUSSION

In Monterey County, similarly to the State as a whole, the California LifeLine program is significantly underutilized. Within the 30th Assembly District there are a total of 122,490 residents that currently qualify for this program, yet only 14% are enrolled. The 30th Assembly District includes the Salinas Valley (Salinas, Soledad, Gonzales, Greenfield and King Cities), all of San Benito County, the Cities of Gilroy and Morgan Hill in Santa Clara County, and the City of Watsonville in Santa Cruz County.

With the current pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people working from home, and school children participating in distance learning, it is now more important than ever to ensure our most vulnerable populations have access to affordable and reliable broadband, and that California end the digital divide.

On its October 8, 2020 agenda, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) will consider the California LifeLine proposed decision. The proposed decision focuses on improving affordable broadband offerings without raising California LifeLine subsidy levels (which would increase surcharges). This proposed decision also prioritizes access to emergency services through voice and bundled wireline services. The Board of Supervisors sent a letter of support regarding the proposed decision to the CPUC on September 21, 2020.

Currently internet service providers are not required to participate in the California LifeLine program. This Board Report seeks approval of a letter to local ISP providers encouraging them to participate in the California LifeLine program to help reduce the digital divide in Monterey County. - **EXHIBIT A**

To qualify for California LifeLine someone in your household needs to be enrolled in one of the following public assistance programs or meet the annual income limitations below:

- Medicaid/Medi-Cal
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8
- CalFresh, Food Stamps or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC)
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Tribal TANF
- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Head Start Income Eligible (Tribal Only)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- Federal Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit Program
-

LifeLine Income Guidelines*	
Household Size	Annual Income Limit
1-2	\$28,700
3	\$32,600
4	\$39,700
Each Additional Member	\$7,100
* Effective June 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021	

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The County Administrative Office-Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs Division prepared this report in consultation with the County's state legislative advocacy firm (Nossaman LLP), and the Information Technology Department.

FINANCING

Approval of the recommendation included in this report will not result in additional General Fund contributions.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives

X Economic Development

X Administration

X Health & Human Services

X Infrastructure

X Public Safety

Prepared by: Annette D'Adamo, MAIII
Approved by: Nicholas E. Chiulos, Assistant CAO

September 21, 2020

Attachment: EXHIBIT A - DRAFT LETTER