

As more patient care is moving in the telehealth/phone visit direction, we want to be prepared to assist patients in having access to cellular services. Attached is North Dakota specific information on the Lifeline program. Lifeline is the FCC's program to help make communications services more affordable for low-income consumers. Lifeline provides subscribers a discount on monthly telephone service, broadband Internet access service, or voice-broadband bundled service purchased from participating providers. Get [more information on the program](#).

North Dakota Lifeline

To qualify for Lifeline you must meet any of the following qualifications (you will need to show a card, letter, or official document, as proof that you participate in one of these programs when you apply and there is a limit of one per household):

- Your income is 135% or less than the federal poverty guidelines. The table below reflects 135% of the 2020 Federal Poverty Guidelines for North Dakota:

Household Size	North Dakota
1	\$17,226
2	\$23,274
3	\$29,322
4	\$35,370
5	\$41,418
6	\$47,466
7	\$53,514
8	\$59,562
For each additional person, add	\$6,048

- You or your child or dependent participates in any of the following programs:
 - Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps
 - Medicaid
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPA)
 - Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit
 - Tribal Programs (and live on federally-recognized Tribal Lands) – to qualify under the Tribal Lifeline you or someone in your household must participate in:
 - Any of the federal assistance programs listed above
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
 - Head Start (only households meeting the income qualifying standard)
 - Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF)
 - Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

The Center for Rural Health has contacted Verizon, Sprint, AT&T, and T-Mobile to find out their processes for applying for Lifeline. Here is what we found out for each of them:

AT&T:

- Lifeline is not available throughout the whole state, you will need to call on an individual bases to determine availability in your specific location.
- To sign up:
 - Online: www.checklifeline.org/lifeline
 - Call 800.377.9450 and specify mobile or home phone
- Health facilities can help patients sign up – name listed as the beneficiary has to be the qualifying individual (patient).

Verizon:

- Lifeline is available in all North Dakota counties except: Burleigh, Cass, Grand Forks and Morton.
- To sign up: verify online at www.checklifeline.org or print an [application](#) at: <https://www.verizonwireless.com/solutions-and-services/lifeline-availability/>
 - Once approved, call Verizon at 800.417.3849 to verify you're in a location where it is available
- Hospitals/clinics can help sign people up if Verizon is aware that is what is happening.
- To get late fees waived, go to: <https://www.verizonwireless.com/support/covid-19-faqs/>, scroll down to #1 under "Important policy information and special offers" and fill out the form where it says "To qualify, you must let us know that you are experiencing hardship by completing this [short form](#)."

1. If I can't pay my bill on time because of COVID-19, will I be charged a late fee or have my service disconnected?

If you are experiencing hardship because of COVID-19 and cannot pay your bill in full, we will not charge you a late fee or terminate your service during this difficult period. This policy is currently in effect through May 13, 2020.

To qualify, you must let us know that you are experiencing hardship by completing this [short form](#).

Once you have submitted your hardship form, your account will be protected from late fees and service termination through May 13, 2020. There's no need to contact us to confirm receipt of your form, your account will be updated accordingly.

Note: If you are currently registered for Auto Pay and want to temporarily pause this feature, you can do so by managing your [Auto Pay settings](#).

Sprint:

- Lifeline is no longer available through this carrier.

T-Mobile:

- Does not offer Lifeline in North Dakota, but they have rolled out a level (started 3/25/20) in response to the pandemic called Connect that is comparable.
 - Connect is a new level of value at \$15 per month plus tax – half the price of T-Mobile's lowest priced plan – for unlimited talk and text plus 2GB high-speed smartphone data, including access to T-Mobile's nationwide 5G network. For \$25 per month plus tax, customers get 5GB of high-speed smartphone data. And T-Mobile Connect also has an Annual Data Upgrade, giving customers an additional 500MB of monthly data, every year, at no additional cost, for the next five years.