NLIEC 2004: A LIFELINE FOR TELEPHONE CUSTOMERS

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OVERVIEW (1)

- Offers discount off monthly bill/install.
- Varies! [www.universalservice.org](http://www.universalservice.org)
- $8.23 (DE); $18.39 (MA); $100-200/yr.
- Tribal amounts higher: up to $25/mo.
- Total 2004 (est.) - $708M Lifeline
OVERVIEW (2)

- Link-up: up to $30/$70 (tribal); $33M
- States can adopt own programs
- Program eligibility (Now: income)
- Success varies highly
- 47 CFR 54.400 et seq.; 47 USC 254
OVERVIEW (3)

• Fed. default program eligibility: Medicaid, FS, SSI, fed. pub. hsg., LIHEAP --- or criteria set by state.

AND

TANF, NSL
The (Very) Good (NCLC est./2002) est./2002)

- CA 91%; VT 86%; ME 84%; RI 74%
- NY 53%; CT 45%; MA 31%; ND 30%
The (Not So) Bad

- SD 28%; WA 26%; UT 25%; AK 24%
- ID 23%; DC 22%; OH 21%; NM 20%
The (VERY) Ugly

• MD 1.4%; DE 1.6%; LA 3.3%; WY 3.9%
• WV 3.9%; AR 4.2%; KS 5.3%; NJ 5.6%
• IN 5.7%; AL 6.2%; VA 6.2%; IA 6.3%
Lifeline penetration rates

By state (%)
FCC 04-87/WC 03-109  4/29
4/29
• New income rule: 135% poverty
• TANF, NSL added
• Not self-implementing!!!
• Further comments on 150%, advertising
• Stricter cert./recert. rules →
FCC 04-87/WC 03-109  4/29

• States must develop inc. cert. rules
• Program cert. rules may remain same
• Inc. elig. HH’s must provide HH#
• Inc. elig. must provide supporting doc., covering at least 3 mos.
• All HH’s must recertify eligibility
Issues in Success

- Relation to LIHEAP agencies
- Phone co’s philosophy: mid-Atl, e.g.
- Training of CSRs
- Outreach issues: web page, phone books
- Ease of app./auto enrollment
- Cooperation w. state agencies
Specific Successes

- CA: Auto enrollment
- ME: Easy app./coop w. state agencies
- RI: Small state, tight network, coop.
- NY: Auto enrollment
- MA: Use of LIHEAP agencies
Issues for State Programs

• Add in income elig.
• Outreach: who’s responsible? Tools?
• Who takes apps? Cert/recert rules?
• Utility buy-in/PUC support
• Getting/increasing state support
Fone Facts (Phone Phacts?)

94.9% of all HH’s have phones
98%+, if inc. > $35K
82% to 90%, $0 to $12.5K
Only 88.1% MS (1 in 8 don’t!)
91.4% AR
Emerging Issues

- Cell carriers as ETC’s
- Broadband access
- VOIP
- Political support for the $$ support
LIFELINE WORKS!!!!!