



# PUBLIC NOTICE

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## WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES INITIAL LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL LIFELINE ELIGIBILITY VERIFIER

*Six States to Deploy by December 31, 2017*

WC Docket No. 11-42

By this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) announces the states that will be part of the initial launch of the National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier (National Verifier).<sup>1</sup> The Commission established the National Verifier in the *2016 Lifeline Order* to make eligibility determinations and perform a variety of other functions necessary to enroll subscribers into the Lifeline program.<sup>2</sup> The National Verifier will verify Lifeline subscriber eligibility, conduct checks to prevent duplicate benefits, recertify subscriber eligibility, and calculate support payments to eligible telecommunications carriers (ETCs).

In the *2016 Lifeline Order*, the Commission set as an expectation that the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) would deploy the National Verifier in at least five states by December 31, 2017.<sup>3</sup> USAC has announced that the National Verifier will launch in six states – Colorado, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming – in December 2017.

The National Verifier will have a soft launch date of December 5, 2017, and a hard launch date of March 13, 2018. During the soft launch beginning December 5, 2017, ETCs may begin using the National Verifier for eligibility determinations but may also continue to use existing eligibility determination processes. The soft launch period will allow ETCs to become familiar with the National Verifier online portal before the mandatory hard launch date, and to adjust and test their systems and business processes. If an ETC uses existing eligibility processes to determine a subscriber's eligibility during the soft launch period, the ETC must comply with the Commission's existing rules for eligibility determinations.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, during the soft launch period, the National Verifier will begin the process of verifying the eligibility of consumers in the six initial launch states that already participate in the Lifeline program.<sup>5</sup> Any consumer whose eligibility cannot be verified in this process will be de-enrolled from the program.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization et al.*, Third Report and Order, Further Report and Order, and Order on Reconsideration, 31 FCC Rcd 3962, 4021, para. 165 (2016) (*2016 Lifeline Order*) (directing the Bureau to “issue a notification to all interested participants providing information about effective dates and any other relevant obligations” as USAC deploys the National Verifier in each state).

<sup>2</sup> See *id.* at 4006, para. 126.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 4020, para. 164.

<sup>4</sup> See 47 CFR §§ 54.410(a), 54.410(b)(1), 54.410(c)(1), 54.410(d), 54.410(g).

<sup>5</sup> See USAC, Lifeline National Verifier Plan, Docket Nos. 11-42, 09-197 and 10-90 (filed July 31, 2017).

Finally, on the date of the hard launch, March 13, 2018, all eligibility determinations and recertifications in these initial six states must be conducted by the National Verifier, pursuant to the Commission's rules.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> 47 CFR §§ 54.400(o), 54.407(a), 54.410(b)(2), 54.410(c)<sup>2</sup>(2), 54.410(f)(2)(iv), 54.410(f)(3)-(5), 54.410(h).