

STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE

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August 31, 2009

Dear Consumer Leader/Service Provider:

In these economically challenging times, it is important that everyone know about the assistance available to help people stay connected and have access to vital telephone service. "Lifeline" and "Link-Up" are two assistance programs that provide discounts to low-income consumers on basic residential telephone service. While these programs have been active for years, half of the consumers eligible fail to take advantage of these discounts; we need your help to change that.

A recent resolution sponsored by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) has adopted the first full week after Labor Day as **National Lifeline Telephone Discount Awareness Week**. During the week of *September 14–20, 2009*, the New York State Public Service Commission, along with other state utility commissions and consumer advocates, will be calling attention to the availability of the Lifeline and Link Up Programs.

The basic concept of the discounts is simple: Lifeline involves discounts on the monthly charges for telephone service, and Link-Up involves a discount on the cost of initiating the service. The discount is available for a primary residential telephone, even a wireless phone. Additional discounts are provided for consumers on tribal lands.

We need your help to raise awareness about the Lifeline Discount Telephone Service Program so that more consumers who are eligible can take advantage of it.

Enclosed are copies of our Lifeline materials, including a poster announcing Lifeline Awareness Week, a brochure describing the program and a generic application that can be completed by eligible consumers and mailed to their telephone provider. To help increase awareness and enrollment in Lifeline and Link Up, please consider posting this valuable information in your offices, distributing information to consumers you serve, and forwarding materials to other organizations in your community that serve low-income consumers.

We also encourage you to take additional measures to spread the word about these important programs by writing an article for a local paper that reaches eligible consumers, participating in Lifeline sign-up events in your area, and posting a link on your organization's Web site to the Lifeline page on our www.AskPSC.com consumer Web site. An outreach "toolkit", available on the Web site, provides sample outreach materials that you can download and tailor to meet your needs.

With your help we believe we can increase consumer awareness and enrollment in the Lifeline Program. If you have any questions about the Lifeline Program or **Lifeline Awareness Week**, please feel free to contact Pamela Carter at pamela_carter@dps.state.ny.us or at 518-474-5858.

Thank you for your help with this important effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra S. Sloane".

Sandra S. Sloane
Director, Office of Consumer Services

Attachments