

Know Your Rights!

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES & DISCONNECTION

If someone within your household has a medical condition that requires local phone access in case of emergencies or other services, you may be eligible for a five-day grace period before disconnection. You are required to notify your company, either through the phone or by mail. Within your five-day grace period you must do the following:

- Pay \$10 or 25% (whichever is higher) of the overdue charges for local service,
- Agree to pay the remaining balance for local service within 90 days,
- Agree to pay future local service bills on time, and
- Submit written verification signed by a health care professional to verify your household's medical emergency.

Enhanced Lifeline/Linkup Tribal Program

Customers living on tribal lands may be eligible for additional support if they have an income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, participate in any of the qualifying assistance programs for WTAP, or participate in any of these programs:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Tribally-Administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TTANF)
- Head Start (if income eligibility criteria are met)
- Tribal National School Lunch Program
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- LIHEAP (energy assistance)

Community Voice Mail (CVM)

If you are phoneless and do not want local phone service, a free personal voice mail number is available.

A voice mail number does not allow you to make outgoing calls. Instead, people can call and leave a message that you can then check from any telephone line, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For a list of agencies in your area that participate in the CVM program, visit solid-ground.org/programs/housing/cvm, call 206-694-6771 or E-mail cvm@solid-ground.org.

Additional Information

Telecommunications Consumer Education and Training Project

<http://nwcommunityresources.org/communication>

FCC Consumer Facts on Lifeline/Linkup Programs

<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/lllu.html>

Washington Utilities and Transportation

Commission:

360-664-1160

<http://www.wutc.wa.gov>

DSHS WTAP Office

1-888-700-8880



Washington Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP)

What is WTAP?

The Washington Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP) helps eligible low-income Washingtonians afford a home phone by covering up to 100% of connection fees and reducing the cost of basic phone service (landline). The cost is \$8 (plus tax) per month for basic service.

Do I qualify for WTAP?

WTAP is available to adults receiving benefits from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), including:

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- State Family Assistance
- General Assistance (GAX/GAU)
- Refugee Assistance
- Food Stamps
- State Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicaid
- Medical Assistance, including Medicare cost sharing programs
- Community Options Program (COPEs)
- Chore Services

AND

- Previous users of Community Voice Mail are also eligible. Contact your CVM provider for assistance enrolling in WTAP.

For more information about WTAP eligibility, call DSHS-WTAP toll free at 1-888-700-8880.

How do I enroll in WTAP?

Call your local telephone company and ask to be enrolled in the Washington Telephone Assistance Program. Customers enroll by providing their DSHS identification number.

If the company doesn't recognize the name WTAP, ask for the "Lifeline" or "Linkup" programs. Be sure to ask for tribal benefits if you think that you qualify. (See the Tribal Program section of this brochure)

PARTICIPATING PHONE SERVICE PROVIDERS IN KING COUNTY

Qwest	1-800-244-1111
Verizon*	1-800-483-4000
CenturyTel*	1-800-201-4099

**Limited service area in King County*

Not all representatives are familiar with WTAP. Let them know that you are a Washington State resident and that you are a DSHS client. Ask to speak to a supervisor if necessary.

If your phone company participates in WTAP, but won't allow you to enroll, call DSHS at 1-888-700-8880. Representatives are available to make a 3-way phone call with you and the telephone company to assist in your WTAP enrollment.

If you have a complaint about a telephone company, call the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission at 1-800-562-6150.

WTAP support is only available for one telephone line per household, and can't be combined with other Link Up/Lifeline programs.

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RECONNECTION/PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Once every five years, each customer is entitled to an option to repay a prior bill over a six-month (or more) period.* The company must restore service upon payment of the first installment. (The phone company may require that a deposit be paid. Ask your company about available alternatives to deposits).

**This does not apply if you were receiving WTAP assistance at the time of disconnection for nonpayment.*

Enrolling in WTAP enables you to make a \$12 a month repayment on unpaid bills. ** For Qwest payment plans, call 1-800-416-4190 and tell them you want the special WTAP payment arrangement.

***Payment plans must be kept current or phone will be disconnected. The phone company will not send you a monthly bill for a payment plan. You must remember to make the additional payment each month.*

ALTERNATIVES TO DEPOSITS

If you cannot pay a deposit because you are unable to afford it, some telephone companies may provide alternatives for you. Examples of alternatives include:

- Toll restriction -- a block placed on your telephone line that restricts long distance calls (Long distance calls using a calling card or dial-around service are still permitted).
- Using a "Guarantor"-- someone with good credit agrees to be legally responsible for your account if you are unable to pay your bill.

Ask your telephone company if they offer the same or similar options.