

Advertising USF-Supported Services and Lifeline Service

The Public Utility Commission of Texas (“Commission”) requires Eligible Telecommunications Providers and Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (“ETPs/ETCs” and/or “Lifeline Providers”) to advertise the availability of services supported by federal and state Universal Service Funds (“USF”) and the associated charges for supported services, including Lifeline service, through “media of general distribution,” in accordance with 47 C.F.R. § 54.201(d)(2) and TAC § 26.417(c)(1)(F).

To satisfy the state and federal USF advertising requirements, ETPs/ETCs must advertise USF supported services via newspaper, television or radio advertisements. Bill inserts and telephone directory listings are not considered media of general distribution.

Lifeline Providers in Texas must also provide notice of Lifeline service via published directories, through an annual bill message, and orally and in writing when service is initiated or the customer changes its service provider or location, and shall publicize the availability of Lifeline service in a manner reasonably designed to reach those likely to qualify for the service. Additionally, a copy of the annual bill message must be filed in Project No. 41687 to satisfy the requirements of 16 TAC § 26.412(g)(2)(D).

In addition to the aforementioned Texas obligations, Lifeline Providers must also comply with the FCC’s Lifeline outreach guidance designed to increase public awareness, as follows. ETCs should:

(1) utilize outreach materials and methods designed to reach households that do not currently have telephone service; (2) develop outreach advertising that can be read or accessed by any sizable non-English speaking populations within a carrier’s service area; and (3) coordinate their outreach efforts with governmental agencies/Tribal governments that administer any of the relevant government assistance programs

All published or distributed notices should be retained for a recommended period of three full preceding calendar years to comply with federal record retention regulations.