

Prisoner Reentry Network's Guide To: Getting A Phone After Release from Prison



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A cell phone is an essential tool for life on the outside. The CA LifeLine program provides discounts for cell phones for low-income individuals. This guide explains the LifeLine program, and the basics of using a cell phone.

CALIFORNIA LIFELINE PROGRAM:

California LifeLine provides discounted basic telephone services to eligible Californians. LifeLine, sometimes referred to as “Obamaphones,” provides discounts for both landlines and cell phones. This packet will focus on acquiring a cell phone through LifeLine.

There are two main Universal LifeLine Telephone Service discounts in California. There are discounts from the California LifeLine Program (California LifeLine) and from the federal LifeLine program (federal LifeLine). All qualified California households may take advantage of these telephone discount programs to help lower the cost of their phone bills. The California LifeLine Administrator administers both the California LifeLine Program and the federal LifeLine program.

Only one discount per household for each residential address is allowed (except for teletypewriter users and for Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program participants). Each household must choose to get the discount either on a home phone or on a cell phone, but not on both. Households cannot get the discount from multiple phone companies. Households that do not follow the one discount per household rule will lose their discounts.

LifeLine eligibility is **program-based** and **income-based**.

Program-Based Eligibility:

You qualify for LifeLine if you or another person in your house is enrolled in any one of the following public-assistance programs:

- Medicaid/Medi-Cal
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8
- CalFresh, Food Stamps, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)
- National School Lunch Program (NSL)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF)
 - California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs)
 - Stanislaus County Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (StanWORKs)
 - Welfare-to-Work (WTW)
 - Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN)
- Tribal TANF
- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance
- Head Start Income Eligible (Income Only)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

Income-Based Eligibility:

You qualify for Lifeline if your household’s total annual gross income is at or less than these annual income limits (effective to May 31, 2015):

Household Size	Annual Income Limits
1-2 members	\$25,500
3 members	\$29,700
4 members	\$35,900
Each additional member	Add \$6,200

The following documentation shows your household income meets the annual income limits:

- Front page only of prior year's state (540, 540A, 540 2EZ, 540NR, or 540X), federal (1040, 1040A, 1040EZ, 1040NR, 1040NREZ, 1040SS, or 1040X), or tribal **tax return**,
- Income statements or paycheck stubs for 3 consecutive months within the past 12 months,
- Statement of benefits from Social Security, Veterans Administration, retirement/pension, Unemployment Compensation, and/or Workmen's Compensation,
- Alimony and/or child support documents, **and/or**
- Other official documents.

Application Prior to Release from Prison:

PRN has communicated with LifeLine about how to apply for its services prior to release from prison. Because the qualifications for LifeLine generally cannot be acquired while inside, the service is not available until after release. Further, there would be difficulties getting the phone to you once you leave prison. PRN will continue to work with LifeLine to remedy this issue.

CALIFORNIA LIFELINE APPLICATION PROCESS

The best way to get a LifeLine phone is to contact your parole agent or an individual that helps you sign up for public benefits. They are likely aware of the best service providers, and could have a process established in their office for getting you a LifeLine phone.

1. Contact phone company to begin application process.
2. Phone company reviews eligibility rules with you.
3. Receive an application form with a Personal Identification Number (PIN) in a pink envelop in the mail within three weeks.
4. Apply online at www.californialifeline.com using the PIN provided **OR** complete, sign, and submit your form by mail. Provide documentation. If you are submitting your application by mail, please be sure to send your completed and signed application form along with required documents to:

<p>California LifeLine Administrator P.O. Box 8417 Westminster, CA 92684-8417</p>

5. Receive an approval letter for enrollment or letter of disqualification.

Note: The Federal Communications Commission requires collection of Date of Birth and last 4 digits of Social Security Number or Tribal ID Number on application and renewal forms to be eligible for California LifeLine and federal Lifeline discounts.

Possible Reasons for Disqualification:

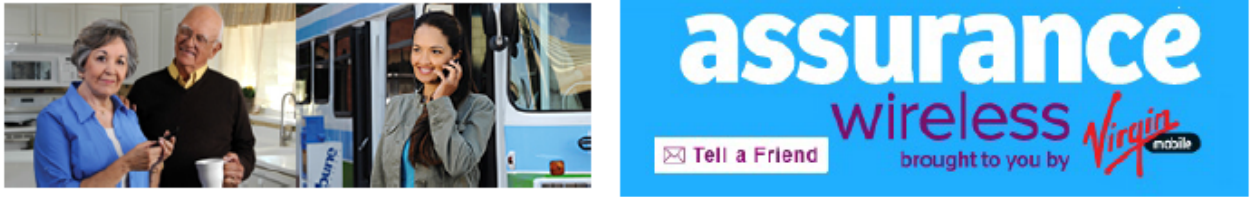
- The consumer does not return the form or register online by the due date.
- The form is incomplete.
- The consumer is found to be ineligible for LifeLine.
- The form is incorrect (and is not considered correctible).
- The consumer did not provide the appropriate documents to prove eligibility.
- The person signing up was claimed on someone else's income tax return as a dependent.
- The consumer was already receiving the LifeLine discount, and was not eligible for a second phone line with the LifeLine discount.

Annual Renewal:

If you are an existing lifeline customer may renew their participation on an annual basis. Each year, current participants will receive a LifeLine renewal form with a PIN number in a pink envelope.

Consumers can also go online to renew at www.californialifeline.com.

Description of Assurance Wireless LifeLine Program, one of many LifeLine providers.



Program Description

Best Offer Among Major Lifeline Programs.

How Our Lifeline Phone Program Works for New Customers

- 1 250 FREE Voice Minutes & UNLIMITED FREE texts added automatically each month, you do nothing.
- 2 PLUS an extra 250 FREE Voice Minutes each month for the first 4 months of service.
- 3 Add money if you decide to choose the \$5 or \$30 plan. Or, to pay for any services, like international calling and additional minutes.
- 4 Buy Virgin Mobile Top-Up cards from thousands of stores across the country. Or use credit, debit or PayPal.

For New Customers

UNLIMITED TEXTS AND MORE MINUTES



FREE Cell Phone & 500 FREE Minutes (for the first 4 months*) & UNLIMITED FREE Texts Each Month

***After 4 months, you get 250 FREE Voice Minutes each month. You will continue to receive UNLIMITED FREE Texts each month for as long as you are eligible.**

Need more?

MONTHLY PLAN CHOICES FOR NEW CUSTOMERS

\$30 UNLIMITED Talk, Text, and Web

Add \$30 each month to also get Unlimited Minutes and Unlimited Data

\$5 Talk & Unlimited Text

Add \$5 each month for 250 more minutes.

Access to Other Offerings

If you decide to add money to your account with a Virgin Mobile Top-Up card or a credit/debit card, you can also take advantage of the following Virgin Mobile offerings:

- Additional voice minutes at 10¢ each
- Data Packs as low as \$5 for 5 MB
- 411 service at \$1.75 per call + standard airtime charges
- International calling at great rates to over 200 countries
- And so much more

CALIFORNIA RESIDENTS:



Now in CA!
[Learn more.](#)

HOW TO APPLY

The Fastest way to Start the Process.

**APPLY ONLINE
BY CLICKING HERE**

OR

[Click here](#) to print out an application

OR

Call 1-888-898-4888 to request an application

CURRENT CUSTOMERS

**Log in
to your account**

PROGRAM BENEFITS

New Customers

- FREE Cell Phone
- 500 FREE Minutes Each Month (for the First 4 Months*)
- UNLIMITED FREE Texts Each Month
- No Annual Contract
- Nationwide Sprint® Network Coverage
- Voicemail Account, Call Waiting, and Caller ID Included
- 911 Access
- Calls to Customer Care are

Assurance Wireless Sample Application:

CALIFORNIA FOR YOU
LIFELINE REQUEST SHEET

Questions? Please Call 1-888-898-4888



1 PERSONAL INFORMATION

The person below **MUST BE** the same person applying for California LifeLine service.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Home Address: Check box if this is a temporary address

Street Address: _____ Apt/Unit: _____
(PO Box or General Delivery cannot be accepted)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Mailing Address: (if different from above)

Street Address: _____ Apt/Unit: _____
(PO Box allowed)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

ALREADY HAVE A CALIFORNIA AND/OR FEDERAL LIFELINE DISCOUNT? IT'S EASY TO SWITCH TO ASSURANCE WIRELESS.
If you are approved for the California FREEdomSM Plan, you will get a FREE phone, UNLIMITED FREE voice minutes and UNLIMITED FREE texts each month at home and on the go. If you switch to Assurance Wireless, your California LifeLine and federal Lifeline discounts (as applicable) will be applied to Assurance Wireless instead of your current provider - since only one wireless or wireline Lifeline discount is allowed per household.

2 FOR YOUR SECURITY

If approved for Assurance Wireless, you'll need an Account PIN to access your account and a Secret Answer in case you ever forget your PIN. Please write them down for safekeeping.

CHOOSE YOUR ACCOUNT PIN:

- It must be 6 numbers long
- No more than 3 consecutive numbers in a row (1234 or 5678 won't work)
- Do not repeat numbers next to each other (44 won't work)
- No symbols or letters (@#PRTE won't work)

YOUR ACCOUNT PIN:

AND YOUR SECRET ANSWER:

What is your favorite city? _____
Your Secret Answer: _____

? WHAT'S NEXT?

Send the California LifeLine Request Sheet to Assurance Wireless.

Mail to: Assurance Wireless, PO Box 686, Parsippany, NJ 07054-9726 **OR** **Fax to:** 1-877-732-3018

- You will receive an official California LifeLine Application Form from the California LifeLine Administrator. (It will arrive in a pink envelope with easy-to-follow instructions.)
- Follow the instructions carefully. Be sure to completely fill out and sign the official California LifeLine Application Form and send it back with your proof of program participation or proof of income.
- Once approved, you will be notified by the California LifeLine Administrator and Assurance Wireless.

About Assurance Wireless

Assurance Wireless is a California LifeLine provider. Lifeline is a government benefit program. Brought to you by Virgin Mobile, Assurance Wireless provides Lifeline service supported by the federal Universal Service Fund and the California LifeLine Program.

Discounts provided by the California LifeLine and federal Lifeline programs are limited to one per household.

As a California resident, you may qualify for Assurance Wireless if you participate in certain public assistance programs such as Medicaid, Medi-Cal, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). You may also qualify based on household income. You must provide proof of program participation or proof of income when you submit your official California LifeLine Application Form to the California LifeLine Administrator.

Offer available for eligible CA customers (select areas) only and is non-transferable. Int'l & Data services may be extra per plan. Phone models based on availability and may vary depending on inventory. Consumers who willfully make false statements in order to obtain the benefit can be punished by fine or imprisonment or can be barred from the program. Unlike a traditional wireline phone, a wireless handset may be removed from the home. By removing a wireless cell phone from a residence that does not have other phone services, residents may not have a way to make 911 calls during an emergency. Also, wireless service may experience interruptions due to weather conditions, terrain or gaps in service coverage. Customers de-enrolled from the Lifeline program may use service with funds remaining in the account for max. 150 days, after which account expires and balance is forfeited unless customer adds funds to the account. State and local sales taxes and fees may apply. Minimum Top-Up of \$10 may be required. Coverage not available everywhere. Offers not available in all states/areas. Nationwide coverage area reaches more than 281 million people. Virgin Mobile® USA network services are provided on the Nationwide Sprint® Network. Visit virginmobileusa.com to check coverage in your area. Network management rules apply. Visit Assurance Wireless' Important Service/Product and General Terms of Conditions on assurancewireless.com.



CELL PHONES BASICS:

From Tibet to Tanzania to Toronto, no matter where you go you'll see someone talking on his or her cell phone. You might hear terms like 4G, LTE, GSM and CDMA thrown around and wonder what they refer to. At its most basic, a cell phone is a phone without wires. Newer cell phones can connect to the internet, but not all are so fancy. There are a few things to know:

Your Number: You will be given a cell phone number. People can reach you at this number, so memorize it. If necessary, write your number on the back of your phone using a marker, so you do not forget it.

Charging: Be sure to keep your cell phone charged. Cell phones use rechargeable batteries that provide power to the phone for a few days, or a few hours, depending on how you are using your phone. If you run out of power, you will not be able to make or receive phone calls. Charge your phone at any standard outlet.

Voicemail: Set up your voicemail. This allows individuals to leave spoken messages that you can check later. Read your phone's manual to learn how to set up voicemail.

Texting: Most cell phones have the ability to send text messages. Many people prefer texts to phone calls because they are less intrusive and more casual than speaking on the phone. While most official business is still done over the phone, text messages are a huge part of modern communication. Text messages go to the recipient's cell phone and look like this:



Unfortunately, all this technology does not make people smarter.

Other Functions: Cell phones provide an incredible array of functions. Newer cell phones are mobile computers, and allow immediate access to the world's knowledge. Read your phone's manual to see what it can do. New phones have the capacity to do some or all of the following:

Store contact information	Make task or to-do lists
Keep track of appointments and set reminders	Use the built-in calculator for simple math
Send or receive e-mail	Get information (news, entertainment, stock quotes) from the Internet
Play games	Watch TV
Send text messages	Take photos and videos
Integrate other devices such as PDAs, MP3 players and GPS receivers	

Useful Numbers to Call:

911	Call in case of emergency, and you will speak to a dispatcher who can send paramedics, the fire department, or the police.
211	Call for information on obtaining shelter, emergency housing, food, clothing, and other resources. Each CA county runs their own 211 call center, so quality will vary.
411	Information directory that will provide phone numbers, addresses, and other information. Payment will come from your next phone bill.
1-800-FREE411 1-800-373-3411	Similar service as 411, except supported by advertising.
1-866-272-0349	LifeLine Call Center (English)
1-866-272-0350	LifeLine Call Center (Spanish)
1-877-858-7463	LifeLine Administrator