



N A R U C
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners

August 16, 2017

RE: Your Commission's Participation in Lifeline Awareness Week—September 11-17!

Dear Colleagues,

We are about a month away from *Lifeline Awareness Week*—September 11-17! We hope your State is getting ready to participate. Since 2009, NARUC and its colleagues at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA) have recognized the first week after Labor Day as *Lifeline Awareness Week*. Our collective efforts are helping eligible consumers participate in this vital program.

Lifeline affects millions of lives. It is an important program that helps qualifying low-income consumers access voice and/or broadband services. Having voice and/or broadband service is a vital link to crucial emergency health care, government services, and employment. Your Commission's participation in Lifeline Awareness Week can also increase the efficiency of the program by reminding both participants and service providers about program proscriptions and service quality requirements. By joining our FCC and NASUCA colleagues, NARUC member Commissions across the country can promote more efficient program operation while continuing to alert qualified consumers of program benefits.

NARUC continues to be very active in the Lifeline space. The FCC's 2016 Lifeline order, for the first time, allows low-income consumers to apply the \$9.25 per month discount to stand-alone broadband service as well as bundled voice and data service packages. Since that decision was released, NARUC members have been working closely with the FCC and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) on many fronts. From implementing new eligibility rules, educating participants on changes to the program, facilitating required recipients' annual recertification, to coordinating with USAC on the creation of a national verifier system, our efforts help ensure efficient program operation.

Thanks to the Committee on Consumer Affairs, participation is easy. The Staff Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs updated the *Lifeline Awareness Outreach Toolkit*, available on the NARUC Lifeline web page at <https://www.naruc.org/our-programs/national-telephone-discount-lifeline-awareness-week/>. The *Toolkit* has messaging tips, sample press releases, social media advice, and much more to help you plan your outreach events. It has already been distributed to the Staff Subcommittees on Consumer Affairs and on Telecommunications and to members of the communications listserv. The web page also has important links to outreach materials; FCC information, including flyers and PSAs; and statistics and information from USAC that may be useful to you.

Many thanks to the Staff Subcommittee for continuing its hard work and leadership on the *FCC/NARUC/NASUCA Lifeline Across America Task Force*.

We are hoping to have even more States participate in *Lifeline Awareness Week* this year. Please let NARUC know how your State is planning to participate. Send information on your activities to Brian O'Hara, at bohara@naruc.org, and Regina L. Davis, at rdavis@naruc.org.

Thank you in advance for your service. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

John W. Betkoski
NARUC President and Vice-Chairman, Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority