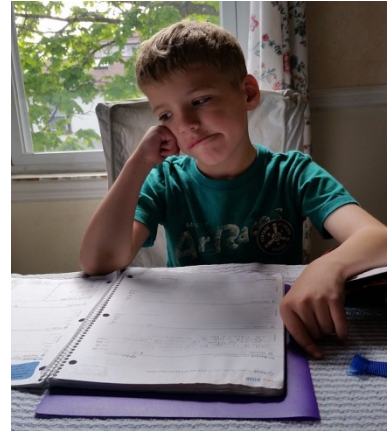


Lifeline: Putting Students on the Right Side of the Digital Divide

Lifeline is a federal program created in 1985 to help low-income consumers afford telephone service. The program now includes wireless service and broadband internet, and helps low-income students and children in every state and territory access voice and broadband service. But the FCC may devastate the program by drastically reducing the number of eligible service providers and limiting the reach of Lifeline. The FCC's proposals would increase costs and boot nearly 70% of Lifeline households from their current carrier.

The Lifeline program can help close the homework gap.

The "homework gap" refers to the barriers students face when working on homework assignments without a reliable internet source at home. More than [5 million households with school-age children](#) do not have access to high-speed internet service at home while [70% of teachers](#) assign homework requiring it. The Lifeline program was designed to break down the affordability barrier and help low-income kids keep up with their peers.



Lifeline helps make higher education a reality. Low-income students can [obtain grants](#) and scholarships that open up opportunities for continuing their education—but they [need broadband access to apply](#).



Lifeline allows students to find part-time employment. Affordable broadband internet opens the door to employment opportunities for the more than [1 in 4 high school students](#) who work at least part-time. [74% of Lifeline subscribers](#) enjoy broadband access on their smartphone or computer – allowing students to access online job boards and other online resources to help them find and keep a job to make ends meet. The unfortunate reality of today's workplace often demands that employees have wireless phone access to receive "[just-in-time](#)" scheduling updates.

Lifeline allows parents to stay connected with teachers and school support staff.

Affordable wireless phone and broadband services allow parents to schedule parent-teacher conferences, stay on top of their child's attendance, or take a call from the school nurse or resource officer. When parents have the tools they need to get involved in their child's education, [students do better](#).

Affordable broadband is a critical component to a young person's success. The Lifeline program connects low-income students and parents to their educators and to a world of opportunities that may otherwise lie out of reach.

Rationing Lifeline benefits and limiting service providers will increase costs and disrupt access for students. The FCC must keep the Lifeline program's focus on people, and maintain affordable voice and broadband service for all.