

Free Government Phone

How to apply — and how to avoid the scams

gov-grants.org

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Verified August 30, 2026

The federal Lifeline program gives qualifying households a phone with \$0 monthly service — unlimited talk and text plus monthly data. There is no credit check, no deposit, and no fee, ever. Roughly 54 million Americans qualify and most never claim it.

1 DO YOU QUALIFY?

You only need **ONE** of these two doors:

A. Someone in the household receives SNAP/EBT, Medicaid, SSI, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Veterans Pension or Survivors Benefit, or a qualifying Tribal program. (This path is faster — it verifies automatically.)

B. Household income at or below 135% of the federal poverty guideline:

Household size	Yearly income limit
1 person	\$21,546
2 people	\$29,214
3 people	\$36,882
4 people	\$44,550
5 people	\$52,218
6 people	\$59,886

Add \$7,668 for each additional person. Alaska and Hawaii limits are higher.

2 WHAT YOU GET

- A smartphone, or a free SIM for the phone you own
- Unlimited talk and text; monthly data (varies by carrier)
- \$0 every month — no bill, no contract, no credit check
- Keep your current phone number if you want

3 WHAT TO BRING

- Photo ID (state ID, licence or passport)
- PLUS ONE of: a benefit award letter dated within the last 12 months, or your last 30 days of pay stubs

Most applications need no documents at all — records are matched automatically. Clear, full-page photos avoid the most common delay.

4 HOW TO APPLY (about 10 minutes)

- 1 Check eligibility at gov-grants.org — 30 seconds, nothing is stored.
- 2 Open your state's page to see which carriers are authorised where you live.
- 3 Apply on that carrier's own website. Never through a third party, never for a fee.
- 4 Choose your device — or pick 'bring your own phone' for the fastest start.
- 5 Approval is often instant. Phones ship in about 5–10 business days.

WALK AWAY IF ANYONE:

- x Charges a fee to apply, ship or 'process' anything
- x Asks for payment by gift card or cash app
- x Wants your EBT card number or PIN
- x Says the offer is 'today only'
- x Wants your full Social Security number before you have chosen a carrier
- x Promises everyone a brand-new iPhone

5 THE THREE RULES TO KEEP IT

- One benefit per household — not per person.
- Use the service at least once every 30 days.
- Recertify once a year, or service stops. Keep your mailing address up to date.

6 NEED HELP APPLYING?

Your public library has free computers and staff who help with benefits forms. Dial 211 for your local community action agency. Your SNAP or Medicaid caseworker can also help, and can print the award letter you need.

START HERE:

gov-grants.org

Check eligibility, then open your state page for the carriers serving you.

YOUR EBT OR MEDICAID CARD ALSO UNLOCKS

Low-cost home internet plans
A discounted tablet (small co-pay applies)
Free school meals for children

gov-grants.org

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