

Outsourcing Lifeline Administration for Efficiency & Compliance - Four Key Benefits

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In this economic climate, the government places greater demands and expectations on public benefit programs, and Lifeline is no exception. The Lifeline program has come under much scrutiny in recent times, leading the FCC to enact several changes to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse.

For eligible telecommunications providers (ETCs), it can be challenging to serve business needs by seeking to increase Lifeline participation rates, while satisfying all state and federal requirements - particularly when those rules and requirements vary state by state, and continually change over time.

The need to proactively address these challenges is best managed with proven and reliable solutions. A highly effective way to ensure efficiency and compliance is outsourcing Lifeline administration; that is, engaging a third party administrator to perform Lifeline-related functions, including application intake, eligibility review, and customer service functions.

Solix has tremendous experience supporting Lifeline funding processes across the country, complying with state based rules and securely handling providers' sensitive customer data. Through our experience, we have learned that outsourcing Lifeline administration improves compliance while enhancing efficiency, as described below.

1: Efficient and Consistent Application of Rules

Lifeline eligibility determination is typically not a core function for service providers, whereas third-party administrators offer economies of scale. Savings and efficiencies can be realized through outsourcing because it eliminates the internal costs for service providers to qualify customers.

In addition, outsourcing ensures consistency. A single pool of trained reviewers provide a consistent and objective application of state and federal criteria. Proven methods to safeguard confidential information and adhere to legislative and regulatory requirements further ensure a compliant approach to eligibility reviews

2: Automated Certification Processes

After a customer has successfully completed the "certification" (initial eligibility) procedures to receive Lifeline benefits, ongoing reviews must be conducted through a formal "annual certification" (ongoing eligibility) process. Outsourcing these processes allows for use of secure systems to automate verification processes, thereby offering efficient verification processing while protecting against waste, fraud, and abuse.

In states or for programs where customers may self-certify with no documentation required, the process can be fully automated through a web-based reporting system using unique IDs and passwords to serve as electronic "signatures." These signatures allow for paperless transactions while still requiring customers to attest to their continued eligibility. As an additional compliance review, statistical samples of attestations can be audited to provide further assurance of program integrity.

3: Customer Data Management

Effective customer data management is a key benefit of an outsourced approach. While certain aspects of Lifeline eligibility review may be manual, most can be performed electronically. Automated processes, such as intake of applications using a mobile app, support improved Lifeline participation rates, while further minimizing compliance issues.

An experienced Lifeline administrator can produce accurate, customized files listing all eligible customers, regardless of whether the process was via a mobile app, a web portal, a paper application, an IVR, or a live customer care agent.

4: Ease-of-use for Consumers

Outsourced solutions provide consumers with a single point of contact regarding application requests, status inquiries, and eligibility determination. They also provide a number of convenient ways for consumers to apply for Lifeline benefits. For example, mobile apps make it possible for on-the-ground teams or retail locations to intake Lifeline applications and approve customer eligibility on the spot.

Similarly, outsourced solutions offer customers convenient options regarding how they may certify and verify eligibility, along with a single point of contact for any inquiries. These streamlined processes reduce administrative burden on all stakeholders.

Conclusion

Outsourcing Lifeline administration is a comprehensive way ETCs can ensure compliant and efficient program management. It allows for consistent application of rules, which vary state-by-state. In addition, automated data collection and address standardization ensure secure and accurate processing while minimizing the potential for waste, fraud, and abuse.

Outsourced solutions enhance the customer experience by providing convenient ways to apply and re-certify for Lifeline benefits annually, along with a single point of contact for application and eligibility-related inquiries. As political and economic realities continue to demand maximum efficiency and results from public benefit programs such as Lifeline, combining all aspects of a program into an outsourced solution can effectively ensure both operational efficiency and program integrity.

About Solix Inc.

Solix is a leading provider of eligibility determination, qualification program management and customer care services to government, telecommunications, broadband, utility and healthcare organizations. For over a decade, we've delivered smart, cost-effective, compliant outsourcing solutions that leverage our unique technologies and consultative expertise. Our customers benefit from faster, more accurate applicant qualification, increased program efficiency and improved customer communications. For more information, please visit www.solixinc.com.