# Where is the Link in the Lifeline? Understanding Lifeline Awareness, Support & Retention Among Low-Income Households in Florida[*]

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## Introduction

The FCC estimates that roughly one-third of low-income households in the U.S that qualify participate in Lifeline, a universal service program that provides monthly financial assistance toward local wireline telephone service.[1] Although Lifeline participation rates among qualified low-income households for California are more than 100 percent, 12 states are below 10 percent [2] and 22 states fall below 15 percent.[3] States with high Lifeline participation usually feature one or more of the following practices: automatic enrollment of households that participate in one of the eligible government assistance programs (e.g. Food Stamps), self-certification by households that wish to sign-up and significant outreach to increase awareness about Lifeline.[4] For instance low-income households in California may be immediately enrolled in Lifeline if they verbally certify that they qualify.[5] In Maine, a state with the second highest Lifeline enrollment rate at 66.5,[6] state agencies provide an explanation of Lifeline to households applying for public assistance. In addition telephone carriers in Maine mention Lifeline when one requests telephone service and allow self-certification of Lifeline eligibility over the phone.[7]

Take-up rates in individual states like Florida are low, where as few as 14 percent of qualified Floridians are taking part in Lifeline and thus unable to receive up to a $13.50 discount toward local phone service.[8] To help boost Lifeline participation rates in Florida, policymakers, together with local phone companies, have recently modified the eligibility criteria,[9] simplified enrollment procedures[10] and launched community outreach

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[1]Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WC Docket 03-109, In the Matter of Lifeline and Link-Up, Release No. FCC 04-87, (Re. April 29, 2004) (Lifeline R&O & FNPRM) at ¶ 1.

[2] Comments of the Universal Service Administrative Company (Dec. 31,2001), In the Matter of Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service., CC Docket. No. 96-45, available at www.universalservice.org/li/download/doc/LIcomments.doc

[3]See statistical tables for Lifeline R&O & FNPRM, available online at http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-260479A1.xls

[4]Comments of the National Consumer Law Center, (Aug. 18, 2003), In the Matter State Joint Board on Universal Service., CC Docket. No. 96-45. available at http://www.consumerlaw.org/initiatives/energy_and_utility/ch081803.shtml

[5] See Lifeline R&O & FNPRM at E-1. After verbal certification, a customer will be sent a self-certification form that states income may be verified. This form must be returned within 30 days to the company for the customer to remain in the Lifeline program.

[6] See statistical tables for Lifeline R&O & FNPRM, available online at http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-260479A1.xls

[7] Lifeline R&O & FNPRM at E-7.

[8] The FPSC estimated in 2004 that approximately 154,000 of the 1.1 million Floridians that were eligible for the Lifeline and Link-Up programs were participating. Florida Public Service Commission, Notice of Proposed Agency Action: Order Expanding Lifeline Eligibility, Docket No. 040604-TL, Order No. PSC-04-078 1-PAA-TL, August 10, 2004.

[9] Currently Floridians who receive public assistance in one of the following Lifeline-eligible programs may enroll in Lifeline: Medicaid, Food Stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8) (FPHA), or the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Participation in the National School Lunch free lunch program also qualifies you for participation if you are a BellSouth subscriber. Floridians may also qualify based solely upon income, specifically whether they reside at or below the 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

[10] Those who qualify for Lifeline may fill out one of two forms. First is a self-certification form through

efforts[11] though concerns remain as to what are the most effective mechanisms to increase participation. Beyond encouraging more participation, one of the ongoing concerns with the Lifeline program is the retention of current enrollees. Statistics unfortunately show that in Florida people who choose to no longer participate in the program unfortunately offset considerable amount of new Lifeline subscribers that are added each month.[12]

Previous universal studies in the 1990s suggest high long distance and toll call charges[13] and preferences to receive cable television[14] are reasons why low-income households don't subscribe to wireline. Although these studies are definitely useful to understand why some households do not have telephone service, they do not specifically ask low-income households their overall awareness concerning the Lifeline program and their perceptions on why other qualified households do not enroll to receive discounted telephone service. In addition, previous research does not address low-income households' beliefs concerning efforts to improve Lifeline awareness and whether the current Lifeline mission should be expanded to include other types of communication services. Furthermore, previous research does not address how former low-income telephone subscribers qualify for and learned about Lifeline.

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eligible telecommunication carriers that simply requests you to verify that you are participating in one of the Lifeline eligible programs (e.g. Food Stamps), available online at: http://www.floridapsc.com/industry/telecomm/Lifeline/index.cfm. The other, provided by the Florida Office of Public Counsel, asks you to verify your income, available online at: http://www.floridaopc.gov/Lifeline.cfm

[11] See Florida Public Service Commission (Dec. 2004), Number of Customers Subscribing to Lifeline Service and the Effectiveness of Any Procedures to Promote Participation.

[12] See the Florida Senate, Assessment of Lifeline Assistance Program, Interim Project Summary, 2005-116, November 2004. For instance, during the month of April '04, BellSouth added 2,252 new Lifeline subscribers but lost 2,421 customers from the program.

[13] See Mueller, M & Schement, J. R. (1995). Universal service from the bottom up: A profile of telecommunications access in Camden, New Jersey. The Information Society, 12:273-291, (1995).

[14] Horrigan, J. B. & Rhodes, L. (1995). The evolution of universal service in Texas. Austin, TX: Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, available at http://www.apt.org/policy/lbjbrief.html

**Methodology**

To help better understand Lifeline churn and improve retention and participation, a mail survey based upon a convenience sample of roughly 2200 former telephone subscribers was conducted in the fall of 2005 (herein referred to as "Disconnect Survey").[15] The subscribers surveyed voluntarily contacted BellSouth Florida to discontinue telephone service during the months of May and June. Participants were provided surveys in both English and Spanish, along with a $2.00 upfront incentive and a business reply envelope to return their survey. Prior to the survey, postcards were sent out to help preview the survey's arrival. Because of privacy concerns, the postcard and surveys were labeled and mailed by BellSouth while the surveys were returned directly in business reply envelopes to Dr. Justin Brown at the University of Florida.

In furthering understanding of Lifeline awareness and participation, a second mail survey was undertaken involving a random sample of 2500 low-income households throughout the state of Florida during the fall of 2005 (herein referred to as "Low-Income Survey). The low-income threshold for the low-income survey was the income level for a two-person household at 135% of the current Federal Poverty Guidelines (at or below $17,321). This level was chosen in part to make sure to reach a large number of households that would appear to benefit from Lifeline, as the average household size in Florida is roughly 2.5 persons. Residing at or below 135% of FPG is one of the ways in which a household may qualify for the Lifeline discount in Florida. The sample consisted of 2120 English-speaking households and 380 Spanish-speaking households, the latter of which received materials in both English and Spanish. Participants were provided with a $2.00 upfront incentive and a business reply envelope to return their survey. Prior to the survey, postcards were mailed out to inform households to be anticipating the survey's arrival.

Questions contained in the disconnect and low-income survey instruments were derived from discussions with telephone company representatives, policymakers and door-to-door interviews with low-income households[16] and pre-tested at Lifeline outreach events.[17] Specifically survey questions asked whether households have previous knowledge about Lifeline, how they learned about Lifeline, why households do not participate in the program, whether the Lifeline mission should be extended to other communication services and what might be done to improve awareness and outreach. In

[15]A total of 2,819 total wireline subscribers had voluntarily disconnected phone service with BellSouth during the months of May and June in 2005. From this list of subscribers, 2000 surveys were originally mailed out, of which 200 were returned back in the mail. These surveys were repackaged and mailed out to 200 additional subscribers on the list who had voluntarily disconnected phone service.

[16] Fifteen door-to-door interviews were conducted during June-July 2005 in Gainesville, Florida among qualified low-income households that were not participating in Lifeline.

[17]The Lifeline outreach events were conducted with seniors as part of the Connect Florida Campaign, a joint-effort by telephone companies, the Florida Public Service Commission and the Office of Public Counsel to increase Lifeline awareness and enrollment in Florida. For an analysis on the effectiveness of these outreach events, please see Justin Brown & Mark Jamison, Motivations Behind Low-Income Households Bypass of Support
for Universal Service, paper presented at the 33 Annual Telecommunications Policy Research Conference, available at: http://web.si.umich.edu/tprc/papers/2005/493/LifelineMotivationsTPRC05.pdf

addition, demographic questions were included to measure use of communication services, gender, age, race and ethnicity, employment and current involvement in Lifeline eligible government programs.

Upon data collection, results for both surveys were coded, entered and tabulated in the SPSS statistical database program. To test for any correlations, chi-square, ANOVA and Pearson's tests were employed depending on the nature of the variables. Specifically, all demographic, communication services and Lifeline variables were cross-tabulated and tested for statistical significance. Below, the results of the disconnect survey are presented first followed by the low-income survey. A summary of any statistically significant correlations present within the data is contained in Appendix A & B.

**Disconnect Survey Results**

From the sample of approximately 2200 former telephone subscribers, 354 valid surveys were returned for nearly a 16 percent overall participation rate. More than three-quarters of those surveyed qualify for Lifeline because there income levels are at or below 135 % of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG), with 57.8 percent falling at or below annual income of $12,920. More than seven out of every ten respondents (71.4 percent) also participate in at least one of the Lifeline-eligible government programs. Collectively, between the 135% of the FPG or participation in one of the above government programs, 301 out of 354 (83.3 percent) former subscribers that completed surveys qualified for Lifeline. Because of this trend, the results below describe findings among the 301 former telephone subscribers who qualify for Lifeline.

*Characteristics of Lifeline-Eligible Households*

With regard to the demographic characteristics of former telephone subscribers that qualify for Lifeline, nearly three-quarters the respondents are female (72%) and less than thirty percent (29.8) are married. In terms of race and ethnicity, 46.7 percent are Caucasian, 23.2 percent Hispanic or Latino, 21.8 are black or African American, 1.7 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, 5.4 percent bi-or multi-racial, .6 percent Asian, .3 percent Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and 1.7 percent refused to disclose their race or ethnicity. When asked what their primary language is spoken at home, 77.9 percent indicated English, 18.7 percent Spanish, one percent listed "other" and 2.5 percent declined to answer. More than 20 percent (20.9) indicated they speak another language besides English. Nearly 9 out every 10 surveys (89.5%) were returned in English compared to only 10.5 percent in Spanish. The median age of respondents is 53 and average household size is 2.5. More than three-fourths of respondents (78.8%) indicated they have children, with the average number of children at 1.86. In terms of young families, more than half (57%) of respondents indicate having children under the ages of 24, comprised of the following age ranges: under the age of 5 (11.9%), 5 to 13 years old (18.9%), 14-17 years old (10.7%) and 18 to 24 years old (15.5% percent).

In terms of Lifeline eligibility, 89.4 percent indicated they qualified because their income levels were at or below 135 percent of the FPG. As Table 1 demonstrates, more than 80 percent also participated in one of the Lifeline-eligible government programs. This participation was higher among households enrolled in Lifeline compared to households that qualify but are not participating in Lifeline (Non-Lifeline enrolled households). Furthermore, among those eligible for Lifeline (including those enrolled) nearly 3 out of every 4 respondents (73%) qualify for Lifeline under both the income and government program eligibility criteria.

**Table 1 Participation in Lifeline-Eligible Programs by Households that Disconnected from BellSouth Service in Florida, 2005**

| **Government Program** | **All Eligible Lifeline Households*** | **Lifeline-Enrolled Households**** | **Eligible but not part of Lifeline***** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) | 6 | 0 | 7.0 |
| Supplemental Security Income (SSI) | 40.5 | 46.7 | 39.5 |
| Food stamps | 55.5 | 64.4 | 53.9 |
| Medicaid | 65.8 | 68.9 | 65.2 |
| Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8) | 17.3 | 24.4 | 16 |
| Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Plan (LIHEAP) | 7.6 | 2.2 | 8.6 |
| Bureau of Indian Affairs Programs | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *Participation in at least one of the above* | *82.7* | *95.6* | *80.5* |

*=301 **N=45 ***N=256

*Use of Communication Services Among those Eligible for Lifeline*

Among those surveyed that qualify for Lifeline, 44.5 percent currently subscribe to wireline service, but only 15 percent indicated participation in Lifeline. For those who have wireline telephone service, 42.5 percent are still with BellSouth, 11.2 percent with Sprint, 6.7 percent with Verizon, 4.4 percent with Bright House Networks, 3 percent with SBC, 3.7 percent with Supra Telecom, 3.7 percent with Knology and 2.2 percent with Alltel. The remaining telephone subscribers either indicated another carrier (14.3%) or refused to answer (5.2%).

Those who disconnected phone service but currently qualify for Lifeline were also asked to mark whether they use specific communication services in different settings, namely at home, work and outside of the home and work environment. As Table 2 depicts, local wireline telephone service is indicated most frequently for the type of communication service used at home (58.1%) and work (11%). Less than half use a cell phone either at home (33.6% cell phone, 11% prepaid) and outside home or work (36.2% cell phone, 12.3% prepaid). In comparison, 17.9 percent of respondents indicate they use the

Internet at home and 11.6 percent indicated they use the Internet outside the home or work. Nearly one-third of respondents subscribe to either cable television (22%) or direct broadcast satellite (DBS) service (10.2%). Table 3 specifically shows use of communication services among those currently enrolled in Lifeline. In contrast, Table 4 shows how those eligible but not participating in Lifeline use various communication services.

**Table 2 Use of Communication Services Among Households Eligible for Lifeline***

| Type of Service | Percent at Home | Percent Outside Home or Work | Percent at Work** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Local wire line | 58.1 | 30.9 | 11 |
| Long distance (via wire) | 23.3 | 5.3 | 3.7 |
| Cell phone | 33.6 | 36.2 | 5.3 |
| Prepaid cellular | 11 | 12.3 | 1 |
| Internet | 17.9 | 11.6 | 5.3 |
| Cable TV | 20.6 | 3.7 | 0 |
| DBS | 8.3 | 1.7 | .3 |

**N=301. **Only 17.3 percent of all respondents indicated they were employed*

**Table 3 Use of Communication Services Among Households Enrolled in Lifeline***

| Type of Service | Percent at Home | Percent Outside Home or Work | Percent at Work** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Local wire line | 100 | 42.2 | 44.4 |
| Long distance (via wire) | 37.8 | 6.7 | 4.4 |
| Cell phone | 31.1 | 40 | 33.3 |
| Prepaid cellular | 4.4 | 6.7 | 0 |
| Internet | 35.6 | 13.3 | 33.3 |
| Cable TV | 33.3 | 4.4 | 0 |
| DBS | 4.4 | 0 | 0 |

**N=45 **Note: only 17.8 percent employed*

**Table 4 Use of Communication Services Among Households Eligible but not enrolled in Lifeline***

| Type of Service | Percent at Home | Percent Outside Home or Work | Percent at Work** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Local wire line | 51.2 | 29 | 46 |
| Long distance (via wire) | 20.7 | 5.1 | 14.3 |
| Cell phone | 34 | 35.7 | 20.6 |
| Prepaid cellular | 12.1 | 13.3 | 4.8 |
| Internet | 14.8 | 11.4 | 20.6 |
| Cable TV | 18.4 | 3.5 | 0 |
| DBS | 9 | 2 | 1.6 |

**N=256 **Note: only 17.3 percent of respondents employed*

*How Do those that Qualify for Lifeline Learn About the Program?*

Respondents that qualify for Lifeline were asked how they first learned about the program. In most cases, respondents chose only one answer, but in some cases multiple responses were chosen. As indicated below in Table 5, social worker (32.6 %) and social service agency (14.3%) were among the top five responses, along with the telephone company (24.6%), friend (21.9%) and family member (13.6%). Few people indicated that they learned about the program through a senior residence facility (4%) or their apartment landlord (2%). Within those who chose the social service agency category, nearly forty percent of respondents specified receiving information from either their food stamps or Florida Department of Children & Families offices. Among the "other" category, responses included learning about Lifeline from word of mouth, advertising, phonebooks, senior centers and work source programs.

**Table 5 First Learn About Lifeline**

| **Lifeline Source** | **Percent of Lifeline-Eligible Households*** | **Percent of Lifeline-Enrolled Households**** | **Percent of Eligible Households, but not part of Lifeline***** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social worker | 32.6 | 42.2 | 30.9 |
| Telephone company | 24.6 | 28.9 | 23.8 |
| Friend | 21.9 | 13.3 | 23.4 |
| Social service agency | 14.3 | 20 | 14.5 |
| Family member | 13.6 | 11.1 | 14.1 |
| Senior residence facility | 4 | 4.4 | 3.9 |
| Apartment landlord | 2 | 4.4 | 1.6 |
| Other | 10 | 0 | 11.7 |

*N=301 **N=45 ***N=256

*Reasons for Not Participating in Lifeline*

Respondents eligible for Lifeline but not enrolled in the program were asked why they do not participate. In most cases, respondents choose only one answer, but in some cases multiple responses were selected. As indicated below in Table 6, more than forty percent (44.5) of all respondents indicated that moving was a reason they do not participate in Lifeline. More than thirty percent indicated not being able to afford local phone service was a factor in why they do not participate in Lifeline. Other reasons included using money for other needs (12.1%), preference to use cell phones (11.3%), finding something less expensive (6.6%), hard to understand phone bill (6.6%), death of wireline subscriber (3.9%), needing to use telephone service that's supplied by their landlord (4.7%) and no longer meeting eligibility criteria (3.5%). A few respondents (3%) indicated that they recently reapplied in Lifeline while five percent listed additional reasons why they do not participate in Lifeline.

Those who disconnected phone service but qualify for Lifeline were also asked to choose the most important reason why they do not participate in Lifeline. As Table 7 indicates, close to thirty percent indicated that they stopped participating in Lifeline because they recently moved. Nearly one-quarter (23.4%) indicated they disconnected because they couldn't afford local phone service. The rest of the reasons are fairly fragmented in terms of importance. 15.6 percent checked off "Other" as being the most important and more than ten percent (12.9) percent refused to list a most important reason for no longer participating in Lifeline.

**Table 6 Reasons Not Participating in Lifeline***

| Reason | Percent |
|---|---|
| Recently moved | 44.5 |
| Couldn't afford local phone service | 30.5 |
| Use money for other needs | 12.1 |
| Prefer cell phones | 11.3 |
| Found something less expensive | 6.6 |
| Hard to understand phone bill | 6.6 |
| Death of wireline subscriber | 3.9 |
| Need to use service provided by landlord | 4.7 |
| No longer meet eligibility criteria | 3.5 |
| Recently reapplied for Lifeline | 3.0 |
| Other | 26.2 |

*N=256

**Table 7 Most Important Reason for Not Participating in Lifeline***

| Reason | Percent |
|---|---|
| Recently moved | 28.1 |
| Couldn't afford local phone service | 23.4 |
| Prefer to use cell phones | 5.1 |
| Death of wireline subscriber | 4.0 |
| Use money for other needs | 3.5 |
| Need to use service provided by landlord | 3.1 |
| Found something less expensive | 3.1 |
| No longer meet Lifeline eligibility criteria | 2.7 |
| Recently reapplied for Lifeline | 2 |
| Hard to understand phone bill | 1.6 |
| Other | 15.6 |
| Refused | 12.9 |

*N=256

Beyond their own personal experience, former wireline subscribers who qualify for Lifeline were also asked why they believe other qualified households do not participate in the Lifeline program. This question included a number of different answer choices, allowing respondents to check multiple responses. Based upon the list of choices indicated in Table 8, overwhelmingly respondents indicated lack of awareness (78.1%) followed by concerns over understanding qualification criteria (43.2%), paying for local telephone (23.9%) as well as long distance, toll services (20.3%) and preferring to use cell phones (13%). As indicated below, each of the remaining reasons fall under ten percent.

**Table 8 Reasons other people don't participate in Lifeline***

| Reason | Percent |
|---|---|
| Lack of Awareness | 78.1 |
| Do not understand if they qualify | 43.2 |
| Unable to pay for local phone service | 23.9 |
| Unable to pay for long distance/toll service | 20.3 |
| Prefer to use cell phones | 13 |
| Use money for other needs | 9.3 |
| Find something less expensive | 9 |
| Distrust of the phone company | 8.3 |
| Hard to understand phone bill | 7.6 |
| Hard to fill-out Lifeline paperwork | 7 |
| Distrust of the government | 5.6 |
| Must use service landlord provides | 3.7 |
| Other | 7 |

*N=301

Based upon the choices listed above, survey participants were also asked to mark the most important reason why they believe other qualified households do not participate in Lifeline. As Table 9 indicates, a majority of those surveyed believe lack of awareness (52.7 %) is a significant factor on why other households do not enroll in Lifeline, followed by concerns regarding whether they qualify (9 %). Each of the remaining reasons, as shown below, fall under five percent.

**Table 9 Most Important Reason Why Others Do Not Participate in Lifeline***

| Reason | Percent |
|---|---|
| Lack of Awareness | 52.7 |
| Do not understand if they qualify | 9 |
| Unable to pay for local phone service | 4.3 |
| Distrust of the phone company | 3.3 |
| Prefer to use cell phones | 2.3 |
| Find something less expensive | 2.7 |
| Unable to pay for long distance | 1.3 |
| Use money for other needs | 1.3 |
| Hard to understand phone bill | .7 |
| Must use service landlord provides | .7 |
| Hard to fill-out Lifeline paperwork | .3 |
| Distrust of the government | .3 |
| Other | 2.3 |
| Refused | 18.3 |

*N= 301

*Extending Lifeline to Other Communication Services*

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to rate their preference for extending the Lifeline program separately to cell phones, Internet access and cable television on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 being "not at all" to 5 being "Yes, Very Much." One-Sample T-Tests were run on the three-scaled items and the means were found to be statistically significant ($p<.01$). As Table 10 demonstrates, among those respondents who disconnected phone service but qualify for Lifeline, cell phones received the most support for being included in Lifeline (3.65), followed by cable television (3.54) and Internet access (3.1). In fact, more than half of those surveyed (53.5) indicated the strongest measure for cell phones ("Yes, very much") while less than half believed cable television (48.8 percent) and Internet access (38.7 percent) was worthy of such designation.

**Table 10 Extending Lifeline to Other Communication Services***

| Service | Mean Ranking (1 to 5 scale) |
|---|---|
| Cell phones | 3.65 |
| Cable Television | 3.54 |
| Internet Access | 3.1 |

*N= 301

**Low-Income Survey Results**

From the sample of 2500 of low-income households, 392 valid surveys were returned for nearly a 16 percent overall participation rate.[18] Overall, 96.7 percent of the surveys were returned in English and only 3.3 percent of the surveys in Spanish.

With regard to demographic characteristics, 59 percent of the respondents are female and 41 percent are male. Only 39.8 percent of the respondents are married, with 60.2 percent indicating they are unmarried. In terms of race and ethnicity, around two-thirds of respondents (66%) are Caucasian, 11 percent Hispanic or Latino, 12.3 percent are African American, 3.3 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, 2.3 percent bi-or multi-racial, 1.3 Asian percent, .5 percent Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and 6.6 percent refused to disclose their race or ethnicity. When asked what their primary language is spoken at home, 83.7 percent listed English, 7.9 percent Spanish, 3.6 percent listed "other" and 4.8 percent declined to answer. More than 20 percent (21.7) indicated they speak another language besides English. The average age of respondents is 63 with size of household size just under two persons (1.94). More than three-fourths of respondents (77.3%) indicated they have children, but only 31.5 percent indicated that they have children living at home, with the average number of children at 1.6, comprised of the following age ranges: under the age of 5 (5.1%), 5 to 12 years old (10.5%), 14-17 years old (3.3%) and 18 to 24 years old (3.6%). With regard to economic well-being, only slightly more than thirty percent (32.5) of those surveyed are currently employed. Less than forty percent (36.9) of those surveyed qualify for Lifeline because there income levels are at or below 135 % of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Less than twenty percent (18.4) participate in at least one of the Lifeline-eligible government programs, as shown in Table 11.

**Table 11 Participation in Lifeline-Eligible Programs**

| Government Program | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) | .5 |
| Supplemental Security Income (SSI) | 7.9 |
| Food stamps | 8.9 |
| Medicaid | 13.3 |
| Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8) | 4.3 |
| Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Plan (LIHEAP) | 1.5 |
| Bureau of Indian Affairs Programs | 0 |
| National School Lunch Program | 2.8 |
| *Participation in at least one of the above* | *17.6* |

N=392

[18] Of the 2500 surveys that were mailed, 296 surveys were "returned to sender" by the post office and thus never received by intended recipients to be filled out.

*Use of Communication Services*

Among those surveyed, 75.5 percent currently subscribe to wireline service. For those who have wireline telephone service, 49.3 percent are with Bell South, 20.5 percent with Sprint, 19.1 percent with Verizon and 9.7 percent with other carriers. Survey participants were also asked to check off which communication services that they currently use in different settings, namely at home, work and outside of the home and work environments. As Table 12 indicates, local wireline telephone service was indicated most frequently for the type of service used at home (89.5%) and work (25.8%). More than half of respondents use a cell phone either at home (42.3% cell phone, 11.2% prepaid) and outside home or work (46.4%, 10.2% prepaid). In addition, 44.9 percent of respondents indicated they had Internet access at home, 18.1 percent at work and 9.9 percent indicated they use the Internet outside the home or work setting. Nearly sixty percent of respondents indicated they either subscribe to cable (46.4%) or direct broadcast satellite (DBS) service (13.3%).

**Table 12 Use of Communication Services**

| Type of Service | Percent at Home | Percent Outside Home or Work | Percent at Work* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Local wire line | 89.5 | 24.5 | 25.8 |
| Long distance (via wire) | 54.3 | 13 | 16.6 |
| Cell phone | 42.3 | 46.4 | 11.2 |
| Prepaid cellular | 11.2 | 10.2 | 1 |
| Internet | 44.9 | 9.9 | 18.1 |
| Cable TV | 46.4 | 6.6 | 3.8 |
| DBS | 13.3 | .8 | 1.8 |
| Public Payphone | n/a | 23.7 | n/a |

N=392 **Note: Only 32.5 percent of all respondents indicated they were employed*

*Lifeline Awareness & Participation*

Overall, an overwhelming amount of respondents do not have knowledge of Lifeline, nor do they currently participate in the program. Less than 10 percent of respondents are current (6.3%) or former (3%) Lifeline subscribers. Only 1 out of every 5 respondents (20%) had previously heard about Lifeline, while less than five percent (4.7) had ever heard about the Link-up program.[19] Respondents who previously knew about Lifeline were also asked how they first learned about the Lifeline program. In most cases, respondents chose only one answer, but in some cases multiple responses were chosen. As indicated below in Table 13, social worker (13%) and social service agency (14.3%) were among the top five responses, along with telephone company (27.3%), friend (27.3%) and family member (13%). Some of those familiar with Lifeline also indicated that they learned about the program through a senior residence facility (7.8%). Within the

[19] Link-up is a program that provides financial assistance to qualified low-income households toward establishing wireline service.

social service agency category, a majority of respondents indicated they received information from either their food stamps or Department of Children & Families offices. Among the other category (19.5%), written responses included learning about Lifeline from word of mouth, community outreach and senior centers.

**Table 13 First Learn About Lifeline (among those previously aware)**

| Lifeline Source | Percent |
|---|---|
| Social worker | 13 |
| Telephone company | 27.3 |
| Friend | 27.3 |
| Social service agency | 14.3 |
| Family member | 13 |
| Senior residence facility | 7.8 |
| Other | 19.5 |

N=77

All survey respondents were also asked why they believe other qualified households do not participate in the Lifeline program. This question provided a number of different responses and allowed participants to check multiple responses. Based upon the list of choices indicated in Table 14, overwhelmingly respondents indicated lack of awareness (87.7%) followed by concerns over understanding qualification criteria (48.1%) and paying for local telephone (24.7%) and long distance, toll services (23.1%).

**Table 14 Reasons other people don't participate in Lifeline**

| Reason | Percent |
|---|---|
| Lack of Awareness | 87.7 |
| Do not understand if they qualify | 48.1 |
| Unable to pay for local phone service | 24.7 |
| Unable to pay for long distance/toll service | 23.1 |
| Use money for other needs | 17.2 |
| Hard to understand phone bill | 13.4 |
| Prefer to use cell phones | 11.3 |
| Hard to fill-out Lifeline paperwork | 10.8 |
| Distrust of the government | 8 |
| Distrust of the phone company | 9.8 |
| Find something less expensive | 4.9 |
| Must use service landlord provides | 4.9 |
| Other | 2.6 |

N=392

Based upon the choices listed above, survey participants were also asked to mark the most important reason why they believe other qualified households do not participate in Lifeline. As Table 15 indicates, an overwhelming majority of those surveyed believe lack of awareness (83.2%) is a significant factor on why other households do not enroll in Lifeline, followed by concerns regarding whether they qualify (8.1%).

**Table 15 Primary Reason Why Others Do Not Participate in Lifeline**

| Reason | Percent |
|---|---|
| Lack of Awareness | 83.2 |
| Do not understand if they qualify | 8.1 |
| Unable to pay for local phone service | 1 |
| Distrust of the phone company | 0 |
| Prefer to use cell phones | 1.7 |
| Find something less expensive | 1.4 |
| Unable to pay for long distance | 0.3 |
| Use money for other needs | 1.3 |
| Hard to understand phone bill | .3 |
| Must use service landlord provides | .7 |
| Hard to fill-out Lifeline paperwork | .3 |
| Distrust of the government | .7 |
| Other | 2.4 |

N=392

*Extending Lifeline to Other Communication Services*

During the second half of the survey, respondents were asked to rate their preference for extending the Lifeline program separately to cell phones, Internet access and cable television on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 being "not at all" to 5 being "Yes, Very Much." One-Sample T-Tests were run on the three-scaled items and the means were found to be statistically significant ($p<.01$). As Table 16 demonstrates, cell phones received the most support for being included in Lifeline (3.17), followed by cable television (3.08) and Internet access (3.07). In fact, more than one-quarter of those surveyed (29.5%) indicated the strongest measure for cell phones ("Yes, very much") while only 24.5 percent and 24.1 percent thought cable television and Internet access was worthy of such designation.

**Table 16 Extending Lifeline to Different Services**

| Service | Mean Ranking (1 to 5 scale) |
|---|---|
| Cell phones | 3.17 |
| Internet Access | 3.07 |
| Cable Television | 3.08 |

N=364

*Improving Lifeline Awareness & Participation*

The last items on the survey reflected upon how strongly specific methods may be in improving Lifeline awareness. Respondents were asked to rate their preferences separately on nine different improvement mechanisms on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 being "not at all" to 5 being "Yes, Very Much." One-Sample T-Tests were run on each of the items and the means were found to be statistically significant ($p<.01$). As shown in Table 17, respondents believe strongly that more people will participate if Lifeline was a better-known social program like Food Stamps (4.38). Additionally, respondents also strongly believe awareness and participation may be improved through the following methods: telephone company mailings (4.30), community outreach (4.25), television advertising (4.22) and learning about the program from a family member/friend (4.12) or social worker (4.06)

**Table 17 Beliefs Concerning Methods to Improve Lifeline**

| More people would participate in Lifeline if … | Mean Ranking (1 to 5 scale) |
|---|---|
| Known program like Food Stamps | 4.38 |
| Telephone company mailed information | 4.30 |
| More community outreach | 4.25 |
| Advertised on TV | 4.22 |
| Learn from family member or friend | 4.12 |
| Learn from social worker | 4.06 |
| Advertised in newspaper | 3.82 |
| Made information available at Wal-Mart | 3.68 |
| Advertised on radio | 3.71 |

N=392

**Analysis & Conclusion**

The findings of the disconnect survey provide a better understanding of the reasons why people do not participate in the Lifeline program in Florida and why low-income households in Florida discontinue their wireline service. Moving was listed by half of all respondents as a contributing factor and cited by one-third of respondents as the most important reason low-income households voluntarily disconnect their wireline service. Collectively, not being able to pay for local service, using money for other needs and finding something less expensive were significant economic concerns raised by low-income households. Nevertheless, there are a whole host of varied reasons like death and cell phone preferences that also play a role in why low-income households chose not to continue wireline phone service.

When asked why other qualified households do not participate, overwhelmingly Lifeline-eligible subscribers listed lack of awareness as the dominant reason followed by "don't understand qualification criteria" as a distant second. Both of these reasons suggest many low-income Floridians lack sufficient knowledge of the Lifeline mission, discount and what it takes to become eligible for the program.

Luckily low-income households that qualify for Lifeline provide a great vehicle to learn about successful outreach techniques that may effectively help remedy concerns over awareness. None of the sources of how people first learned about the program were necessarily dominant. This not only suggests that a variety of techniques are currently being employed but there may be potential opportunities to further increase outreach that is already working. Collectively just over half of respondents listed social worker and social service agency as sources of how they first learned about Lifeline.

Greater outreach among these sources would more than likely increase awareness of Lifeline.[20] After all, more than seventy percent of Lifeline-eligible respondents reported they are participating in a Lifeline-eligible government program that often requires the facilitation of a social service agency and/or social worker. Friends and family members are also considerable sources of knowledge for Lifeline. Providing some type of incentive like an additional discount on a given month's phone bill for each referral may help increase awareness and participation among new enrollees and help establish greater retention for existing customers. Additionally further outreach efforts should be made to various racial and ethnic minorities to help increase their participation in Lifeline. Even though these diverse populations are more likely to be eligible to participate in Lifeline than Caucasians, Caucasians in the disconnect survey were more likely to subscribe to wireline (see Appendix A).

The low-income survey findings provide greater insight into the degree of awareness that low-income households possess concerning Lifeline in a state that has a low participation

[20] FCC (July 26, 2005), FCC and NARUC Launch "Lifeline Across America" To Raise Awareness of Lifeline and Link-Up Programs, available at http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-260129A1.pdf . The FCC established a new working group to boost Lifeline awareness and participation, see also http://www.Lifeline.gov .

rate among qualified households. While these results apply specifically to the state of Florida, it is not hard to imagine that awareness is also the major obstacle to getting more households to participate in Lifeline nationally. In this particular study, less than 20 percent of low-income households were aware of Lifeline and less than ten percent were former or current Lifeline subscribers. In comparison, a monthly telephone survey of randomly sampled Floridians found roughly the same amount of awareness of Lifeline.[21]

Respondents also gave strong preference for improving Lifeline participation, especially making Lifeline akin to a known program like food stamps and through other marketing efforts, including word of mouth through family member or friends, through social workers, community outreach advertising and telephone company mailings. A majority of the above trends regarding improving Lifeline participation are particularly true among cell phone users, those who speak another language besides English, non-Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics and Latinos and younger individuals (see Appendix B)

Another important finding of the low-income survey is how low-income households are using various communication services. Nearly three-quarter of respondents in this study have existing wireline telephone service and more than half use cell phones both at home and outside home or work. Although a number of socio-economic factors like employment, marital status and race and ethnicity play a role in wireline and wireless usage (see Appendix B), the overall percentages are nevertheless high considering the annual target income level of the sample was $17,321 (the cut-off figure for a two-person household at 135% of the FPG). These findings appear to call into question whether some low-income households need the Lifeline discount since they are already finding a way to afford either wireline and/or wireless telephone services. On the other hand, these findings also suggest that a number of existing wireline phone subscribers would benefit economically if they had simply been aware of the Lifeline program prior to signing up for local telephone service.

The findings of the low-income survey research also suggest low-income households possess some measurable interest in extending the Lifeline discount to wireless and Internet access, but less support for cable television service.[22] This is an important finding considering many states like Florida are allowing wireless carriers to qualify as an eligible telecommunications carrier and provide a Lifeline discount to qualified customers. In the not so distant future, policymakers may take steps to evolve universal policy and extend Lifeline to include discounted dial-up or broadband Internet service. After all, in 2005 approximately only one out of 10 households (11.4%) with incomes

[21] In a telephone survey of roughly 1500 Floridians over a three-month span, specifically, 18.3 percent of survey respondents were "aware of the telephone subsidy program called Lifeline" 8.6% were familiar with any of the Lifeline eligibility criteria. See Justin Brown, Perspectives on Communications Services & Lifeline: Results of a Telephone Survey of Florida Households, available at: http://www.purc.org/Lifeline2.htm

[22] Among general Floridians, 69.1% are in favor of maintaining the current Lifeline discount and more than half were in favor of extending the discount to Internet Access (56.6%) and Cell phones (50.6%), See Justin Brown, Perspectives on Communications Services & Lifeline: Results of a Telephone Survey of Florida Households, available at: http://www.purc.org/Lifeline2.htm

below $30,000 reported having broadband access[23] compared to 28 percent of homes subscribing to broadband nationally.[24] The notion of extending universal service initiatives like Lifeline is particularly compelling when broadband providers offer local phone service through voice-over-Internet protocol (VoIP) as a bundle with high-speed Internet access. Under broadband Lifeline, low-income households would be able to choose from an array of different offerings that best suit their own personal preferences and social circumstances.

Despite how universal service policy evolves in the future,[25] the findings of the disconnect and low-income surveys suggest that Lifeline faces a serious identify crisis. If the goal is to promote greater connectivity for households, then better outreach to build awareness must take place for the program to reach its intended goals. It is clear from the results of this research that former wireline subscribers that qualify for lifeline believe awareness is the primary reason why households don't participate in lifeline. Furthermore, less than twenty percent of low-income households in Florida were even aware of a program that improves their ability to afford and retain wireline service. As a result, the FCC should continue its efforts to expand Lifeline awareness and outreach and seriously consider requiring uniform best practices that ensure those who are need are indeed hearing the message the Lifeline is there to help.

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[23]S. Derek Turner, Broadband Reality Check II: The Truth Behind America's Digital Divide (Sept. 2006) at 26, available at http://www.freepress.net/docs/bbrc2-final.pdf; Based on data from Oct. 2003, less than eight percent (7.5) of households with incomes less than $15,000 to subscribed to broadband. Less than 10 percent of households with incomes $15,000-24,999 used broadband. This compares to roughly 20 percent (19.9) of households subscribing to broadband across all income levels. See U.S. Department of Commerce, A Nation Online: Entering the Broadband Age (Sept 2004) at A-1, available at http://www.ntia.doc.gov/reports/anol/NationOnlineBroadband04.pdf

[24] U.S. Government Accountability Office, Broadband Deployment is Extensive throughout the United States, but it is Difficult to Assess the Extent of Deployment Gaps in Rural Areas, GAO-o6-426 (May 2006) at 3. available at www.**gao**.gov/new.items/d06426.pdf. Overall 58 percent subscribe to the Internet (28 percent broadband, 30 percent dial-up), but 41 percent of American households do not have a household Internet connection. Of these households, more than 75 percent do not have a computer in the home Id at 10.

[25] Under Section 254 the Telecommunications Act of 1996 congress made the concept of universal service "evolving," requiring the services targeting for support be periodically reviewed by the FCC. See 47 U.S.C. § 254.

# Appendix A

*Disconnect Survey Correlations*

There are a number of statistically significant correlations concerning the use of communications services and preferences for extending Lifeline that are related to the demographic characteristics of age, household size, marriage status and race and ethnicity.

The role of age was statistically significant in relation to support for Internet access and cell phones. Pearson's correlation revealed a correlation between respondent's age and their support for extending the Lifeline discount to Internet access ($p<.01$). In general, cross-tabulations revealed that the younger the respondent, the more likely their support for Internet access. One-way ANOVA tests also found that those with children were more likely to support extending Lifeline to cell phones than those households without children in this age group ($p<.01$).

Based upon chi-square tests, age was also statistically significant with the use of local wireline telephone service, disconnecting phone service because of concerns over costs and initial learning about Lifeline. Specifically households with children were more likely to subscribe to local wireline telephone service than those households without children ($p<.01$). Households with children 5 to 13 years of age ($p<.01$) are more likely to indicate unable to pay for local phone service as the most important reason they do participate in Lifeline than those households without children in these age groups. Additionally, respondents under the median age of 53 were more likely to first learn about Lifeline from a social worker than those 53 years of age and over ($p<.01$).

Chi-square tests also revealed that race and ethnicity play a contributing factor in use of wireline telephone service at home and first-knowledge, participation, eligibility and support regarding Lifeline. Caucasians were more likely to be using local wireline telephone service at home than non-Caucasians ($p<.01$). In addition, African Americans were less likely to be using local wireline telephone service at home ($p<.04$). Non-Caucasians were more likely to cite unable to pay for local phone service as the most important reason they do not participate in Lifeline ($p<.01$). In addition, Caucasians are less likely to participate in government programs like supplemental security income ($p<.03$), food stamps ($p<.01$), Medicaid ($p<.02$) and federal public housing assistance (Section 8) ($p<.02$) than non-Caucasians. As a result, non-Caucasians were more likely to qualify for Lifeline based upon participation in Lifeline-eligible programs than Caucasians ($p<.01$). Upon running ANOVA tests, non-Caucasians expressed greater support for extending the Lifeline discount to cover cell phones ($p<.01$) and cable television ($p<.03$) than Caucasians.

Household size and marital status was also found to be statistically significant in relation to Lifeline eligibility. Those households with only one person were more likely to participate in Lifeline-eligible government programs like supplemental security income ($p<.01$), food stamps ($p<.01$), Medicaid ($p<.01$) federal public housing assistance (Section 8) ($p<.03$) than households with two or more persons. As a result, these households were more likely to qualify for Lifeline based upon their participation in

government assistance programs ($p<.01$). In addition, those respondents who are married were less likely to participate in supplemental security income ($p<.03$), food stamps ($p<.01$) and Medicaid ($p<.01$) and therefore less likely to qualify for Lifeline based upon program participation than those who are not married ($p<.01$). Those who are married were also less likely to qualify for Lifeline based upon meeting the 135% of FPG than those who are not married ($p<.02$). In contrast, household size and race and ethnicity were not to be found statistically significant with regard to whether an individual would qualify for Lifeline by residing either at or below 135% of FPG.

Beyond the above findings only two other statistically significant correlations were found. Females were more likely to be enrolled in Lifeline than males ($p<.01$). One-way ANOVA test also found those who use cell phones outside the home and work were more likely to support extending Lifeline for Internet access than those that do not use a cell phone outside the home or work ($p<.03$).

# Appendix B

*Low-income Survey Correlations*

There are a number of statistically significant correlations between demographic characteristics, use of communication services and beliefs regarding Lifeline awareness and extending the program to different communication services. In particular, the correlations involving the independent variables of employment, race, gender age and household characteristics are summarized below.

While the survey sample was comprised of low-income households, employment is statistically significant with how individuals use communication services and believe Lifeline participation may be enhanced. Based upon chi-square tests, those who are employed are more likely to use the cell phone ($p<.01$), Internet ($p<.01$), and subscribe to DBS ($p<.01$) than those unemployed. In contrast, those unemployed are more likely to be eligible for Lifeline based upon participation in government programs ($p<.05$) and by residing at or under 135% of the FPG ($p<.01$). As a result, unemployed respondents are more likely to be Lifeline subscribers ($p<.01$). In addition, one-way ANOVA tests revealed unemployed respondents are more likely to favor extending the Lifeline discount beyond wireline to cell phones ($p<.05$) and Internet access ($p<.01$). This group is also more likely to believe that radio advertising will help boost Lifeline participation ($p<.01$). Based upon one-way ANOVA tests, those eligible for Lifeline based on government program participation are more likely to support extending the Lifeline discount to cell phones ($p<.01$) and cable television ($p<.01$).
Those eligible for Lifeline based upon their income either at or below 135% FPG are more likely to support applying the Lifeline discount to cell phones ($p<.01$) and cable television ($p<.01$) and believe telephone company mailings ($p<.03$) and television advertising ($p<.03$) would help increase participation.

Chi-squares also demonstrated statistically significant correlations between gender and the use of communication services and Lifeline awareness and participation. Compared to females, males are more likely to subscribe to wireline ($p<.01$), use wireline ($p<.01$) and have Internet access at home ($p<.03$). In contrast to males, females are more likely to be aware of Lifeline ($p<.03$). Females are also more likely to be eligible for Lifeline based upon their participation in government assistance programs ($p<.01$) or residing at or below 135% FPG ($p<.01$). One-way ANOVA tests found females are more likely to believe that community outreach ($p<.05$), social work ($p<.05$) and family member or friends ($p<.04$) would help improve participation in Lifeline.

Race and ethnicity, in terms of being Caucasian versus non-Caucasian are also correlated variables that are statistically significant. Compared to non-Caucasians, Caucasians are more likely to subscribe to wireline ($p<.01$), use wireline ($p<.01$) and long distance at home ($p<.01$) and wireline outside home or work ($p<.02$). In addition, Non-Caucasians are more likely to be eligible for Lifeline based upon government assistance programs ($p<.01$) and residing at or below 135% FPG ($p<.05$). One-way ANOVA tests demonstrated that Non Caucasian are more likely to support extending Lifeline to cell phones ($p<.01$), Internet access ($p<.01$) and cable television ($p<.01$). Furthermore, Non-

Caucasians are more likely to believe Lifeline participation may be increased through the following methods: community outreach ($p<.01$), social worker ($p<.01$), television advertising ($p<.05$), newspaper advertising ($p<.02$), radio advertising ($p<.03$), telephone company mailings ($p<.02$), and distributing materials at Wal-Mart ($p<.01$).

There are other important correlations within the area of race and ethnicity. African Americans are less likely to subscribe to wireline ($p<.01$), use wireline ($p<.01$), long distance ($p<.01$) and Internet access at home ($p<.01$). African Americans are more likely to be previously aware of Lifeline ($p<.01$), eligible for Lifeline based upon participation in government assistance programs ($p<.01$) and currently enrolled in Lifeline ($p<.01$). Based upon one-way ANOVA tests, Hispanics or Latinos are more likely to use cell phones ($p<.02$) and the Internet at home ($p<.08$) as well as cell phones ($p<.02$) and the Internet outside the home ($p<.01$). One-way ANOVA tests show Hispanic or Latinos are more likely to believe the Lifeline discount should be applied to cell phones ($p<.01$), Internet access ($p<.01$) and cable television ($p<.02$). Hispanics or Latinos also believe Lifeline participation may be enhanced through different approaches, including community outreach ($p<.05$), social worker ($p<.01$), television advertising ($p<.04$), radio advertising ($p<.01$), and distributing materials at Wal-Mart ($p<.03$).

Marriage, size of household and language were also found to be involved in statistically significant correlations. Chi-square cross-tabulations revealed that married respondents are more likely to subscribe to wireline ($p<.02$), use Internet access ($p<.02$) and a cell phone at home ($p<.01$) as well as a cell phone outside home or work ($p<.01$). Those who are not married are more likely to be enrolled in Lifeline ($p<.05$) and reside at or below 135% FPG ($p<.02$). Single-person households are more likely subscribe to Lifeline ($p<.02$), but less likely to have cell phone ($p<.01$) or Internet access at home ($p<.01$) and cell phone outside home or work ($p<.01$). Chi-square and one-way ANOVA tests show one to two person households are less likely to be supportive of applying the Lifeline discount to Internet access ($p<.01$).

Through chi-square analysis, those absent children at home are more likely to subscribe to wireline ($p<.02$) while those households with children at home are more likely to use the cell phone at home ($p<.02$) and outside home or work ($p<.05$). In addition, those households with children at home are more likely to be eligible for Lifeline based upon their participation in government assistance programs ($p<.01$) or by residing at or below 135% FPG ($p<.03$). Based upon one-way ANOVA tests, households with children at home are more likely to favor extending Lifeline to cell phones ($p<.02$) and Internet access ($p<.01$) and also believe more people would participate in Lifeline through radio advertising ($p<.01$) and distributing materials at Wal-Mart ($p<.05$).

Chi-square tests demonstrate that those who speak another language other than English more likely to use a cell phone at home ($p<.01$) and outside home or work ($p<.05$). One-way ANOVA tests also uncovered that those who speak another language besides English are more likely to extend the Lifeline discount to cell phones ($p<.01$), Internet access ($p<.01$) and cable television ($p<.01$). This group is also more likely to believe that

more people would participate in Lifeline through community outreach ($p<.02$), social workers ($p<.01$) and telephone company mailings ($p<.01$).

Another set statistically significant correlations present is between cell phone usage and Lifeline support and participation. One-way ANOVA tests found those who use the cell phone at home are more likely to support applying the Lifeline discount to cell phones ($p<.01$) and Internet access ($p<.01$). Those who also use the cell phone at home are more likely to believe that Lifeline participation would be improved if the program was a known social program like food stamps ($p<.01$). Likewise, those who use the cell phone outside home or work are more likely to support extending the Lifeline discount to cell phones ($p<.02$) and Internet access ($p<.01$). This same group is also more likely to believe that more people would participate in Lifeline if it was a known social program like food stamps ($p<.01$).

Last but not least, Pearson correlation tests found age to be an important variable. Specifically compared to their older counterparts, younger persons are more likely to favor applying the Lifeline discount to cell phones ($p<.01$) and Internet access ($p<.01$). This group also believes participation would rise if Lifeline was a known social program like food stamps ($p<.01$) and through increased efforts in the following areas: coordination with social workers ($p<.01$), radio advertising ($p<.01$), telephone company mailings ($p<.05$) and distributing materials at Wal-Mart ($p<.01$).