SUMMARY:

The categories of records involved in the matching program include, but are not limited to, the last four digits of the applicant’s Social Security Number, date of birth, and first and last name. The National Verifier will transfer these data elements to the Kentucky Cabinet which will respond either “yes” or “no” that the individual is enrolled in a qualifying assistance program: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Division of Family Support, SNAP or Medicaid.

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Categories of Individuals

The categories of individuals whose information is involved in the matching program include, but are not limited to, those individuals who have applied for Lifeline and/or EBBP benefits: are currently receiving Lifeline and/or EBBP benefits; are individuals who enable another individual in their household to qualify for Lifeline and/or EBBP benefits; are minors whose status qualifies a parent or guardian for Lifeline and/or EBBP benefits; or are individuals who have received Lifeline and/or EBBP benefits.

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The purpose of this matching program is to verify the eligibility of applicants and subscribers of Lifeline (existing purpose) and the new Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, both of which are administered by USAC under the direction of the FCC. More information about these programs is provided in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section below.

DATES: Written comments are due on or before July 23, 2021. This computer matching program will commence on July 23, 2021, and will conclude 18 months after the effective date.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Margaret Drake at 202–418–1707 or Privacy@fcc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Lifeline program provides support for discounted broadband and voice services to low-income consumers. Lifeline is administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) under FCC direction. Consumers qualify for Lifeline through proof of income or participation in a qualifying program, such as Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit, or various Tribal-specific federal assistance programs.


Purpose(s)

In the 2016 Lifeline Modernization Order, the FCC required USAC to develop and operate the National Verifier to improve efficiency and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the Lifeline program. The stated purpose of the National Verifier is “to increase the integrity and improve the performance of the Lifeline program for the benefit of a variety of Lifeline participants, including Lifeline providers, subscribers, states, community-based organizations, USAC, and the Commission.” 31 FCC Rcd 3962, 4006, para. 126. To help determine whether Lifeline applicants and subscribers are eligible for Lifeline benefits, the Order contemplates that the USAC-operated LED will communicate with information systems and databases operated by other Federal and State agencies. Id. at 4011–2, paras. 135–7. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 directs the FCC to leverage the National Verifier to verify applicants’ eligibility for EBBP.

The purpose of this modified matching agreement is to verify the eligibility of applicants and subscribers to Lifeline (existing purpose), as well as to the new EBBP and to other Federal programs that use qualification for Lifeline as an eligibility criterion. This new agreement would replace the existing agreement with New Mexico, which permits matching only for the Lifeline program by checking an applicant's/subscriber's participation in SNAP or Medicaid. Under FCC rules, consumers receiving these benefits qualify for Lifeline discounts and also for EBBP benefits.

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The categories of individuals whose information is involved in the matching program include, but are not limited to, those individuals who have applied for Lifeline and/or EBBP benefits; are currently receiving Lifeline and/or EBBP benefits; are individuals who enable another individual in their household to qualify for Lifeline and/or EBBP benefits; are minors whose status qualifies a parent or guardian for Lifeline and/or EBBP benefits; or are individuals who have received Lifeline and/or EBBP benefits.

Categories of Records

The categories of records involved in the matching program include, but are not limited to, the last four digits of the applicant’s Social Security Number, date of birth, and last name. The National Verifier will transfer these data elements to the New Mexico Human Services Department which will respond either “yes” or “no” that the individual is enrolled in a qualifying assistance program: New Mexico Human Services Department, SNAP or Medicaid.

System(s) of Records

The records shared as part of this matching program reside in the Lifeline system of records, FCC/WCB–1, Lifeline, which was published in the Federal Register at 86 FR 11526 (Feb. 25, 2021).

The records shared as part of this matching program reside in the EBBP system of records, FCC/WCB–3, Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, which was published in the Federal Register at 86 FR 11523 (Feb. 25, 2021).