

September 9, 2020



**FROM THE DESK OF
COMMISSIONER
BRENT BAILEY
CENTRAL DISTRICT OFFICE**



The Central District is pleased to bring you the latest information concerning utility rates, project developments, Public Service Commission actions and other news you can use. I hope you will find this information to be a useful resource to learn about the Public Service Commission, consumer issues and the continuous work we are doing for the citizens in the Central District and across the state of Mississippi. Thank you again for allowing me to serve you in this capacity.

Brent Bailey

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Need Help Paying for Your Telephone or Internet Bill? Affordable Telephone Service through "Lifeline" for Income-Eligible Mississippians

In today's increasingly interconnected world, telecommunications services provide a vital lifeline to emergency services, friends, and family. To help keep Mississippians connected – particularly during a pandemic – I wanted to remind constituents of a discount program that can help you remain connected and online even though you may have trouble affording such services.

The [Lifeline](#) program helps to make communications services more affordable for eligible low-income consumers. Lifeline provides subscribers a discount on monthly telephone service, broadband Internet access service, or voice-broadband bundled service purchased from participating providers. Participating consumers can choose to apply their discount to voice, broadband or a voice-broadband bundle.

In Mississippi, you may qualify for Lifeline if you or your household participates in any of the following programs: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8), Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit, or your total household income is at or below 135% of the [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#). Additional assistance is available for eligible residents living on tribal lands.

Rules of the Program

- Lifeline is available only to subscribers whose eligibility can be verified by checking a program eligibility database or by submitting documentation demonstrating their eligibility.
- Only one Lifeline benefit is permitted per household. Federal rules prohibit subscribers from receiving more than one Lifeline service. If a subscriber or his or her household currently has more than one Lifeline-discounted service, they must de-enroll from other Lifeline services immediately or be subject to penalties.
- Only low-income subscribers who have been found to be eligible are qualified to enroll.
- Subscribers must recertify their eligibility every year and should respond to any requests from the National Verifier's or state Lifeline administrator to recertify eligibility. Subscribers who fail to recertify their eligibility will be de-enrolled from the Lifeline program.

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), have designated next week—September 14-18, 2020— as [National Telephone Discount Lifeline Awareness Week](#) to both raise awareness of and increase participation in the [FCC's](#) program—[Lifeline](#).



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Additional links and resources can be found on the Mississippi Public Service Commission website at www.psc.ms.gov/telecom/lifeline, including the [list](#) of Mississippi's Lifeline assistance providers and contact information.

More extensive information on program eligibility, rules, and key messages is also available at <http://www.lifelinesupport.org>.

• September •

22

A special meeting of the Mississippi Public Service Commission will take place on **September 22 (Time TBA)**. Like the regular monthly docket meetings, this special meeting will take place telephonically with streaming broadcast over the MPSC YouTube channel at <https://www.psc.ms.gov/webcast>. Additional details to come.



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **12** complaints in the Central District.

Electric Companies	4
Telecommunications	5
Water/Sewage	3

Last week, the Central District received a total of **151** complaints from consumers against potential telemarketers through our No Call app, website and mail-ins. The top three general issues reported by consumers are related to financial loans/consolidate debt, health products/prescription drugs, and insurance.

We encourage consumers to file telemarketing complaints with the Federal Trade Commission at <http://www.donotcall.gov/> in addition to filing complaints with the Mississippi Public Service Commission.