



Idaho Public Utilities Commission

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Case No. GNR-T-25-04
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NEWS RELEASE: Commission accepts annual report, budget for telecommunications program that assists Idaho residents.

BOISE (May 6, 2025) – The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has accepted the 2024 annual report and the 2025 budget for the Idaho Telecommunications Service Assistance Program, which helps decrease the cost of basic local exchange telephone service for eligible Idaho residents.

The program is funded through a uniform, commission-ordered surcharge on all end-user business, residential and wireless access service lines. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare administers the program along with federal programs to grant limited federal “lifeline” contributions to low-income customers. The lifeline program is designed to ensure all Americans have the opportunities that phone service provides, including being able to connect to jobs, family and emergency services.

Idaho telephone companies provide a monthly \$2.50 discount to eligible applicants. If the public utilities commission designates a company as an eligible telecommunications carrier, the company may be reimbursed from the program’s fund for the assistance it provided to customers.

The commission issued its order on May 1 accepting the annual report and 2025 budget for the program. Commission staff were in agreement with the report and 2025 budget.

During 2024, the number of recipients receiving the discount was reported at 89,508. The number of recipients for 2023 was 93,325. This represents a decrease of about 4 percent from 2023.

The program’s administrator, Kathleen Toohill, submitted a report on the program’s activities for 2024 and a recommended budget for 2025. The administrator projected that funding requirements for 2025 will be met. During 2024, the program’s fund balance increased by

\$298,714.01 due to the previously suspended surcharge being reinstated on May 1, 2024, at a rate of \$0.05 per line.

The administrator recommended that the surcharge be decreased from \$0.05 per line to \$0.03, which is intended to create a more stabilizing rate. The administrator estimated that the lower rate would bring annual income closer to expected annual expenses, which have ranged between \$235,000 to \$320,000 over the last four years.

Additional information on the report is available at: puc.idaho.gov/case/Details/7502.