

required by the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or the Commission) invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on the following information collection.

Comments are requested concerning: whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Commission, including whether the information shall have practical utility; the accuracy of the Commission's burden estimate; ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on the respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and ways to further reduce the information collection burden on small business concerns with fewer than 25 employees.

**DATES:** Written PRA comments should be submitted on or before February 5, 2024. If you anticipate that you will be submitting comments, but find it difficult to do so within the period of time allowed by this notice, you should advise the contact listed below as soon as possible.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all PRA comments to Nicole Ongele, FCC, via email [PRA@fcc.gov](mailto:PRA@fcc.gov) and to [nicole.ongele@fcc.gov](mailto:nicole.ongele@fcc.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For additional information about the information collection, contact Nicole Ongele, (202) 418-2991.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The FCC may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid control number. No person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information subject to the PRA that does not display a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number.

*OMB Control Number:* 3060-1283.

*Title:* Improving Outage Reporting for Submarine Cables and Enhanced Submarine Outage Data.

*Form Number:* Not applicable.

*Type of Review:* Extension of a currently information collection.

*Respondents:* Business or other for-profit.

*Number of Respondents and Responses:* 85 respondents; 154 responses.

*Estimated Time per Response:* 2 hours.

*Frequency of Response:* On occasion reporting requirement.

*Obligation to Respond:* Mandatory. Statutory authority for this information

collection is contained in 47 U.S.C. 151, 154(i)-(j) & (o), 405, and the Cable Landing License Act of 1921, 47 U.S.C. 34-39, and 3 U.S.C. 301, and Executive Order 10530.

*Total Annual Burden:* 308 hours.

*Total Annual Cost:* No Cost.

*Needs and Uses:* Section 151 of the Communications Act of 1934 (Act), as amended, requires the Commission to promote the safety of life and property through the use of wire and radio communications. Additionally, the Cable Landing License Act, (47 U.S.C. 34-39), and Executive Order 10530, provide the Commission with authority to grant, withhold, condition and revoke submarine cable landing licenses. Further, the Cable Landing License Act and Executive Order 10530 provide that the Commission may place conditions on the grant of a submarine cable landing license in order to assure just and reasonable rates and service in the operation and use of cables so licensed. "Just and reasonable service" entails assurance that the cable infrastructure will be reasonably available. Availability of submarine cables is also critically important for national security and the economy because submarine cables carry approximately 95 percent of international communications traffic and are the primary means of connectivity for numerous U.S. states and territories.

This collection is part of the Commission's NORS outage reporting regime. As with the other information collection collected in NORS regarding other communications services (under OMB Control No. 3060-0484), this collection facilitates FCC monitoring, analysis, and investigation of the reliability and security of submarine cable networks, and to identify and act on potential threats to our Nation's telecommunications infrastructure. Drawing from a decade of experience in outage reporting, the Commission will seek an ongoing dialogue with submarine cable licensees, as well as with the industry at large, regarding lessons learned from the new information collection. These efforts will help the Commission develop a better understanding of the root causes of significant outages, and to explore preventive measures to mitigate the impact of such outages on the Nation and the American public.

Mandatory submarine cable outage data provides the Commission with greater visibility into the availability and health of these networks, allowing the Commission to better track and analyze submarine cable resiliency. This enhanced visibility into submarine cable network outages will allow the

Commission to take appropriate actions to mitigate disruptions, if necessary, and to avoid the development of larger, more significant problems which could impact national security and public safety interests. Submarine cable outages do not typically occur with the same frequency as terrestrial outages, but when they do occur have a greater impact on the Nation's telecommunications due to the volume and nature of communications carried over such cables. Damages to submarine cables are usually caused by weather or inadvertent slicing by underseas equipment. However, submarine cables are also susceptible to intentional damage for nefarious purposes that could lead to a severe degradation of crucial government, as well as non-government, communications.

Federal Communications Commission.

**Marlene Dortch,**

*Secretary, Office of the Secretary.*

[FR Doc. 2023-26696 Filed 12-4-23; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 6712-01-P**

## FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

[FR ID: 187884]

### Privacy Act of 1974; Matching Program

**AGENCY:** Federal Communications Commission.

**ACTION:** Notice of a new matching program.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended ("Privacy Act"), this document announces a new computer matching program the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC" or "Commission" or "Agency") and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) will conduct with the New Mexico Human Services Department. The purpose of this matching program is to verify the eligibility of applicants to and subscribers of Lifeline, and the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), 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 January 4, 2024. This computer matching program will commence on January 4, 2024, and will conclude 18 months after the effective date.

**ADDRESSES:** Send comments to Elliot S. Tarloff, FCC, 45 L Street NE, Washington, DC 20554, or to [Privacy@fcc.gov](mailto:Privacy@fcc.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Elliot S. Tarloff at 202–418–0886 or [Privacy@fcc.gov](mailto: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, 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. In the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Public Law 116–260, 134 Stat. 1182, 2129–36 (2020), Congress created the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, and directed use of the National Verifier to determine eligibility based on various criteria, including the qualifications for Lifeline (Medicaid, SNAP, etc.). EBBP provided \$3.2 billion in monthly consumer discounts for broadband service and one-time provider reimbursement for a connected device (laptop, desktop computer or tablet). In the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Public Law 117–58, 135 Stat. 429, 1238–44 (2021) (codified at 47 U.S.C. 1751–52), Congress modified and extended EBBP, provided an additional \$14.2 billion, and renamed it the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). A household may qualify for the ACP benefit under various criteria, including an individual qualifying for the FCC's Lifeline program.

In a Report and Order adopted on March 31, 2016, (81 FR 33026, May 24, 2016) (*2016 Lifeline Modernization Order*), the Commission ordered USAC to create a National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier (“National Verifier”), including the National Lifeline Eligibility Database (LED), that would match data about Lifeline applicants and subscribers with other data sources to verify the eligibility of an applicant or subscriber. The Commission found that the National Verifier would reduce compliance costs for Lifeline service providers, improve service for Lifeline subscribers, and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the program.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 directs the FCC to leverage the National Verifier to verify applicants' eligibility for ACP. The purpose of this matching program is to verify the eligibility of Lifeline and ACP applicants and subscribers by

determining whether they receive SNAP and Medicaid benefits administered by the New Mexico Human Services Department.

**Participating Agencies**

New Mexico Human Services Department (source agency); Federal Communications Commission (recipient agency) and Universal Service Administrative Company.

**Authority for Conducting the Matching Program**

The authority to conduct the matching program for the FCC's ACP is 47 U.S.C. 1752(a)–(b). The authority to conduct the matching program for the FCC's Lifeline program is 47 U.S.C. 254(a)–(c), (j).

**Purpose(s)**

The purpose of this new matching agreement is to verify the eligibility of applicants and subscribers to Lifeline, as well as to ACP and other Federal programs that use qualification for Lifeline as an eligibility criterion. This new agreement will permit eligibility verification for the Lifeline program and ACP by checking an applicant's/ subscriber's participation in SNAP and Medicaid in New Mexico. Under FCC rules, consumers receiving these benefits qualify for Lifeline discounts and also for ACP benefits.

**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 ACP benefits; are currently receiving Lifeline and/or ACP benefits; are individuals who enable another individual in their household to qualify for Lifeline and/or ACP benefits; are minors whose status qualifies a parent or guardian for Lifeline and/or ACP benefits; or are individuals who have received Lifeline and/or ACP 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 first or 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: SNAP and Medicaid administered by the New Mexico Human Services Department.

**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 ACP system of records, FCC/WCB–3, Affordable Connectivity Program, which was published in the **Federal Register** at 86 FR 71494 (Dec. 16, 2021).

Federal Communications Commission.

**Marlene Dortch,**

*Secretary.*

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**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

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