

IURC News Release

Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission

101 W. Washington St.

Suite 1500 E.

Indianapolis, IN 46204

For Immediate Release

September 16, 2009

Contact Information:

Danielle Dravet

Office: (317) 232-2297

Fax: (317) 232-6758

E-mail: ddravet@urc.IN.gov

Connecting Hoosiers with Basic Phone Service

Promoting "Lifeline Awareness Week," September 14 - 20

INDIANAPOLIS – Staying connected to local resources and emergency services can improve and possibly save lives, which is why state and federal partners are promoting "Lifeline Awareness Week" from September 14 – 20.

Based on data from the Census Bureau's July 2008 "Continuing Population Survey (CPS)," the Federal Communications Commission estimated that 92.6 percent of Indiana's households had a telephone from which people in the household could both make and receive calls. Unfortunately, this number was among the lowest in the nation. The comparable U.S. percentage for July 2008 was 95.4 percent.

Access to local emergency services and community resources is vital to our low-income and elderly residents. The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) wants residents to "stay connected" and is reaching out to those who need phone service but can't afford it. During "Lifeline Awareness Week," the IURC will promote the Lifeline and Link Up Assistance Programs, which offer discounts to help residents have access to basic local telephone service.

Under the federal Lifeline program, telephone customers who participate in or are eligible for certain public assistance programs are entitled to receive a basic telephone service discount of at least \$10 per month. Link-Up provides a 50 percent reduction in the telephone service installation charge, up to a maximum of \$30, for qualifying households that do not currently have telephone service.

Hoosiers may be qualified if their household income is no more than 135 percent of the federal poverty income guidelines or if they participate in any of the following programs:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8)
- Food Stamps

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- National School Lunch Free Lunch Program (NSL)
- Bureau of Indian Affairs Program (Tribal TANF, Head Start Subsidy, NSL)

For additional information about these programs, please visit the federal Lifeline and Link Up Web site at www.lifeline.gov/lifeline_Consumers.html. To apply for benefits, please visit <http://www.in.gov/oucc/2383.htm> or contact your local telephone company.

###

The Commission is a fact-finding body that hears evidence in cases filed before it and makes decisions based on the evidence presented in those cases. An advocate of neither the public nor the utilities, the IURC is required by state statute to make decisions that balance the interests of all parties to ensure the utilities provide adequate and reliable service at reasonable prices.