

Empire Long Distance Corporation dba Empire Access
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Section 8 - SPECIAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

8.1 LIFELINE TELEPHONE SERVICE

8.1.1 Lifeline Telephone Service Options

.1 Flat Rate Lifeline Service

This service provides a full waiver of the monthly subscriber line charge plus a reduction of \$2.75 in the monthly Service Line rate (which is offset by a Federal intrastate revenue contribution) for flat rate Lifeline customers.

.2 Basic Lifeline Service

This service provides a full waiver of the monthly federal subscriber line charge plus a reduction of \$2.75 in the monthly Service Line rate (which is offset by a Federal intrastate revenue contribution) for message rate Lifeline customers. There is no monthly allowance for local calls. Primary area and Home Region calls are untimed. Extended area calls (where available) are timed.

8.1.2 Eligibility

This service is restricted to low income residential customers. To qualify for Lifeline service a customer must be income eligible for benefits from any one of the following Entitlement Programs administered by the New York State Department of Social Services:

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)
Food Stamps
Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
Home Relief
Medicaid
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

The applicant must provide proof to the Company that he or she is certified as income eligible to receive one or more of the above benefits. After initial contact the customer is sent an application form to be completed by the customer or authorized representative of the customer, as designated by the New York State Department of Social Services and identified as so authorized on the customer's card for any of the above benefits.

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8.1 LIFELINE TELEPHONE SERVICE (cont'd)

8.1.2 Eligibility (cont'd)

In addition, applicants are eligible for discounted Life Line rates when approved to receive either a Veterans Disability Pension or a Veterans Surviving Spouse Pension. Applicants must provide proof to the Company that they are receiving one of these pensions.

Life Line services are effective upon receipt of a completed and signed form or an application form certified from an entity authorized by the Company. If the form is not returned, no further action is taken by the Company to establish eligibility. The Life Line discount is credited as of the service connection date.

An individual's eligibility may be documented by information obtained by the Company as a result of enrollment programs, including but not limited to confidential computerized matching programs, conducted by the Company in conjunction with the New York State Department of Social Services (DSS) and/or the New York City Community Development Agency (CDA).

The Company, in coordination with appropriate agencies, will periodically verify each Lifeline customer's eligibility. If a customer is identified as being ineligible, the customer will be notified that unless the information is shown to be in error, the Lifeline discount will be discontinued. The customer will be billed for discounts received for any period in which he or she is proven to be ineligible for the service.

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8.1 LIFELINE TELEPHONE SERVICE (cont'd)

8.1.3 Charges

A qualified customer may choose one of the Lifeline services as described above.

Service connection charges do not apply to change existing service from:

- a. Message Rate Service to Basic Lifeline Service;
- b. Basic Lifeline Service to Message Rate Service.
- a. Flat Rate Service to Flat Rate Lifeline service;
- b. Flat Rate Lifeline Service to Flat Rate Service.

8.2 RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE

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8.3 SPECIAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE HEARING OR SPEECH IMPAIRED CUSTOMER

- 8.3.1 As required by Section 92-a of New York State Public Service Law, the Company will provide, upon request, specialized telecommunications equipment for a customer certified as hearing or speech impaired.
- 8.3.2 A customer can be certified as hearing or speech impaired by a licensed physician, otolaryngologist, speech-language pathologist, audiologist or an authorized representative of a social agency that conducts programs for persons with hearing or speech impairments in cooperation with an official agency of the State of New York.
- 8.3.3 The Company will make every reasonable effort to locate and obtain equipment for a certified customer.
- 8.3.4 The customer may purchase equipment at a price not to exceed the actual purchase price (including any applicable shipping costs) the Company pays.
- 8.3.5 The Company will also advise the customer who requests this equipment of the applicable terms for purchase.

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8.4 DISCOUNTED SERVICE FOR THE HEARING OR SPEECH IMPAIRED CUSTOMER

8.4.1 General

A handicapped person who has been certified to the Company as having a hearing or speech impairment which requires that he or she communicate over telephone facilities by means other than voice, and who either use non-voice equipment or make calls through an interpreter, will receive, upon application to the Company, a 50% discount on local message rate service.

8.4.2 Certification

Acceptable certifications are:

1. Those made by a licensed physician, otolaryngologist, speech-language pathologist or audiologist or an authorized representative of a social agency that conducts programs for persons with hearing or speech impairment in cooperation with an official agency of the State of New York, or
2. A pre-existing certification establishing the impairment of hearing or speech such as those which qualify the handicapped person for social security benefits on the basis of total hearing impairment or for the use of facilities of an agency for a person with hearing or speech impairment.

8.4.3 Qualification

A customer qualifying for the discount is one whose impairment is such that competent authority would certify him or her as being unable to use a telephone for voice communication. See Section 11, "Handicapped Person," for a listing of the necessary qualifications.

8.4.4 Billing

The reduction in charges is applied only at one location, designated by the impaired person.

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8.5 UNIVERSAL EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER SERVICE

Universal Emergency Telephone Number Service (911 Service) is an arrangement of Company central office and trunking facilities whereby any telephone user who dials the number 911 will reach the emergency report center for the telephone from which the number is dialed or will be routed to an operator if all lines to an emergency report center are busy. If no emergency report center customer exists for a central office entity, a telephone user who dials the number 911 will be routed to an operator. The telephone user who dials the 911 number will not be charged for the call.

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8.6 NEW YORK RELAY SERVICE

8.6.1 General

The Company will provide access to a telephone relay center for New York Relay Service. The service permits telephone communications between hearing and/or speech impaired individuals who must use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) or a Teletypewriter (TTY) and individuals with normal hearing and speech. The Relay Service can be reached by dialing an 800 number. Specific 800 numbers have been designated for both impaired and non-impaired customers to use.

8.6.2 Regulations

- a. Only intrastate calls can be completed using the New York Relay Service under the terms and conditions of this tariff.
- b. Charges for calls placed through the Relay Service will be billed as if direct distance dialed (DDD) from the point of origination to the point of termination. The actual routing of the call does not affect billing.
- c. Calls through the Relay Service may be billed to a third number only if that number is within New York State. Calls may also be billed to calling cards issued by the Company or other carriers who may choose to participate in this service.

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8.6 NEW YORK RELAY SERVICE (cont'd)

8.6.2 Regulations (cont'd)

- d. The following calls may not be placed through the Relay Service:
1. calls to informational recordings and group bridging service;
 2. calls to time or weather recorded messages;
 3. station sent paid calls from coin telephones; and
 4. operator-handled conference service and other teleconference calls.

8.6.3 Liability

The Company contracts with an outside provider for the provision of this service. The outside provider has complete control over the provision of the service except for the facilities provided directly by the Company. In addition to other provisions of this Tariff dealing with liability, in the absence of gross negligence or willful misconduct on the part of the Company, the Company shall not be liable for and the customer, by using the service, agrees to release, defend and hold harmless for all damages, whether direct, incidental or consequential, whether suffered, made, instituted or asserted by the customer or by any other person, for any loss or destruction of any property, whatsoever whether covered by the customer or others, or for any personal injury to or death of, any person. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, in no event shall the Company be liable for any special, incidental, consequential, exemplary or punitive damages of any nature whatsoever.

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8.7 RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE

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8.8 SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES DISCOUNT PROGRAM

8.8.1. General

The Schools and Libraries Discount Program permits eligible schools (public and private, grades Kindergarten through 12) and libraries to purchase the Company services offered in this tariff and the (additional company tariff references, if appropriate) at a discounted rate, in accordance with the Rules adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in its Universal Service Order 97-157, issued May 8, 1997 and the New York State Public Service Commission in its Opinion and Order 97-11 Adopting Discounts for Services for Schools and Libraries, issued June 25, 1997. The Rules are codified at 47 Code of Federal Regulation (C.F.R.) 54.500 et. seq.

As indicated in the Rules, the discounts will be between 20 and 90 percent of the pre-discount price, which is the price of services to schools and libraries prior to application of a discount. The level of discount will be based on an eligible school or library's level of economic disadvantage and by its location in either an urban or rural area. A schools level of economic disadvantage will be determined by the percentage of its students eligible for participation in the national school lunch program, and a library's level of economic disadvantage will be calculated on the basis of school lunch eligibility in the public school district in which the library is located. A non-public school may use either eligibility for the national school lunch program or other federally approved alternative measures to determine its level of economic disadvantage. To be eligible for the discount, schools and libraries will be required to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the Rules. Discounts are available only to the extent that they are funded by the federal universal service fund. Schools and libraries may aggregate demand with other eligible entities to create a consortium.

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8.8 SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES DISCOUNT PROGRAM (Cont'd)

8.8.2. Regulations

1. Obligation of eligible schools and libraries

a. Requests for service

1. Schools and libraries and consortia shall participate in a competitive bidding process for all services eligible for discounts, in accordance with any state and local procurement rules.

2. Schools and libraries and consortia shall submit requests for services to the Schools and Libraries Corporation, as designated by the FCC, and follow established procedures.

3. Services requested will be used for educational purposes.

4. Services will not be sold, resold or transferred in consideration for money or any other thing of value.

2. Obligations of the Company

a. The Company will offer discounts to eligible schools and libraries on commercially available telecommunications services contained in this tariff. Those services contained in this tariff which are excluded from the discount program, in accordance with the Rules, are included as an attachment to this tariff.

b. The Company will offer services to eligible schools, libraries and consortia at prices no higher than the lowest price it charges to similarly situated non-residential customers for similar services (lowest corresponding price).

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8.8 SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES DISCOUNT PROGRAM (Cont'd)

8.8.2. Obligations of the Company (Cont'd)

c. In competitive bidding situations, the Company may offer flexible pricing or rates other than in this tariff, where specific flexible pricing arrangements are allowed, subject to New York State Public Service Commission approval.

8.8.3. Discounted Rates for Schools and Libraries

1. Discounts for eligible schools and libraries and consortia shall be set as a percentage from the pre-discount price, which is the price of services to schools and libraries prior to application of a discount.

2. The discount rate will be applied to eligible intrastate services purchased by eligible schools, libraries or consortia.

3. The discount rate is based on each school or library's level of economic disadvantage as determined in accordance with the FCC Order or other federally approved alternative measures (as permitted by the Rules) and by its location in either an urban or rural area.

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8.9 HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS SUPPORT PROGRAM

8.9.1. General

The purpose of the Health Care Providers Support Program is to enable public and non-profit rural health care providers to have access to telecommunications services necessary for the provision of health care services at rates comparable to those paid for similar services in urban areas. The Health Care Providers Support Program offers eligible public and non-profit health care providers located in rural areas reduced rates for Company intrastate services, available in this Tariff. Such services must be purchased in accordance with the Rules adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in its Universal Service Order 97-157, issued May 8, 1997 and the New York State Public Service Commission in its Order in Cases 94-C-0095 and 28425, issued November 4, 1997. The FCC Rules are codified at 47 Code of Federal Regulation (C.F.R.) 54.601 et. seq., and any amendments made thereto.

8.9.2. Regulations

a. To be eligible for the reduced rates, rural health care providers are required to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the FCC Rules.

b. Reduced rates are available only to the extent that they are funded by the federal universal service fund.

c. Eligible rural health care providers may aggregate demand with other entities to create a consortium. Universal service support shall apply only to the portion of eligible services used by an eligible health care provider.

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8.9 HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS SUPPORT PROGRAM

8.9.2. Regulations (Cont'd)

d. Responsibility of eligible health care providers (Cont'd)

1. Rural health care providers and consortia shall participate in a competitive bidding process for all services eligible for reduced rates in accordance with any state and local procurement rules.

2. Rural health care providers and consortia shall submit requests for services to the program Administrator, as designated by the FCC, and follow established procedures.

3. Services requested must be used for purposes related to the provision of health care services or instruction that the health care provider is legally authorized to provide under the law.

4. A health care provider that cannot obtain toll free access to an Internet Service Provider and who is eligible for support for limited toll-free access under the Rules must certify that it lacks toll-free Internet access and that it is an eligible health care provider.

5. Services cannot be sold, resold or transferred in consideration for money or any other thing of value.

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8.9 HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS SUPPORT PROGRAM (Cont'd)

8.9.2. Regulations (Cont'd)

e. Responsibility of the Company

1. The Company shall offer the rates and charges as specified in Section 3, to eligible health care providers to the extent that facilities and services are available and offered in the tariffs specified in 1. preceding.

2. The Company shall offer services to eligible rural health care providers and consortia at prices no higher than the highest urban rate as defined in the FCC Order and Rules.

3. In competitive bidding situations, where specific flexible pricing arrangements are allowed, the Company may offer flexible pricing (to determine the reduced rate) subject to New York State Public Service Commission approval.

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8.9 HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS SUPPORT PROGRAM (Cont'd)

3. Rates and Charges

The following price adjustments will be available to eligible rural health care providers, except subparagraph c., which shall be available to all eligible health care providers, regardless of location;

a. A reduced rate for telecommunications services, using a bandwidth capacity of up to 1.544 Mbps, not to exceed the highest tariffed or publicly available rate charged to a commercial customer for a similar service provided over the same distance in the nearest city in New York State with a population of at least 50,000.

b. An exemption from some mileage charges for any telecommunications services, using a bandwidth capacity of up to 1.544 Mbps, that is necessary for the provision of health care services. The exempted mileage includes the distance between the rural health care provider and the most distant perimeter of the nearest city in New York State with a population of 50,000 or more, less the standard urban distance, which is the maximum average diameter of all cities with population of 50,000 or more in the state.

c. Each eligible health care provider that cannot obtain toll-free access to an Internet service provider is entitled to receive toll charge credits for toll charges imposed for connecting to an Internet service provider as per the FCC Rules. Such toll charge credits are available pursuant to applicable toll tariffs.