

## Free Cell Phones!

If you'd like a free cell phone and up to 250 minutes of free service monthly, the U.S. Government's "Lifeline" program will provide it in many states!

- **The free cell phones are for low-income families.** In Texas, for example, anyone who receives benefits from these programs is eligible:
  - Federal Public Housing Assistance, Section 8
  - Health Coverage under Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP)
  - Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
  - Medicaid
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps)
  - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
  - OR, Total Household Income at or under 150% of Federal Poverty Guidelines. A family of 4 with a \$33,000 income qualifies.
- **This program is available in 32 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico.** Go to this website to see if it is available in your state:  
*<<http://www.freegovernmentcellphones.net/states>>.*
- **Each state has specific cell phone providers.** You need to contact the cell phone providers themselves. In Texas, for example, there are three cell phone providers: Assurance Wireless, Safelink Wireless, and True Wireless.
- After the "Lifeline" cell phone user uses up his 250 minutes in a month, the phone is useless until the next month.
- Safelink Wireless is a Tracfone company, so additional minutes can be purchased at Wal-Mart, 7-11, etc. Tracfone "promo codes" can be used to get free minutes with purchases of additional minutes.
- **After one year the cell phone contract is up.** The cell phone user must re-certify to continue using the phone.
- **Best use for this phone?** Emergencies! Job hunting! Emergency contact phone number for family, friends, school!

Obviously there's potential for people to cheat and get a free cell phone paid for by the U.S. Government - hey, that means paid by me, the taxpayer! However, I can see these phones used by single mothers, little old ladies, disabled people on SSI, folks looking for work, and parents phoned by schools about a sick kid.