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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**Board of Public Utilities**  
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Joseph L. Fiordaliso  
President

Aida Camacho-Welch  
Secretary of the Board

## NOTICE<sup>1</sup>

Docket No. EO19030308

### **Universal Service Fund Program - Periodic Review**

The Staff of the Board of Public Utilities (“BPU” or “Board”) invites all interested parties and members of the public to a Stakeholder Meeting to discuss if changes should be made to the eligibility criteria for the Universal Service Fund (“USF”) energy assistance program as detailed below.

#### **USF Overview**

The Electric Discount and Energy Competition Act, N.J.S.A. 48:3-49 et seq. (“EDECA” or “the Act”), was signed into law on February 9, 1999. Among other things, the Act provides:

There is established in the Board of Public Utilities a non-lapsing fund to be known as the “Universal Service Fund.” The Board shall determine: the level of funding and the appropriate administration of the fund; the purposes and programs to be funded with monies from the fund; which social programs shall be provided by an electric public utility as part of the provision of its regulated services which provide a public benefit; whether the funds appropriated to fund the “Lifeline Credit Program” established pursuant to P.L. 1979, c. 197 (C.48:2-29-15 et seq.), the “Tenants’ Lifeline Assistant Program” established pursuant to P.L. 1981, c. 210(C. 48:2-29.31 et seq.), the funds received pursuant to the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program established pursuant to 42 U.S.C.s. 8621 et seq., and funds collected by electric and natural gas utilities, as authorized by the Board, to off-set uncollectible electricity and natural gas bills should be deposited in the fund; and whether new charges should be imposed to fund new or expanded programs.

On April 30, 2003, the eligibility requirements for the USF Program were outlined by Board order in Docket No. EX10020091 (“April 2003 order”), as well as in subsequent board orders. The April 2003 order stated that USF would be “an on-going, evolving program, subject to review, and amended as necessary.”

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<sup>1</sup> Not a Paid Legal Advertisement

As over 15 years have passed since the USF program's inception, the Board would like to give the public the opportunity to review the USF eligibility requirements and determine if they should at this time be adjusted to better serve the needs of New Jersey's low-income population.

Please note that this proceeding is specifically limited to the USF Program. Please take further notice that the discussion points contained below pertaining to the USF program have been prepared by Board staff for discussion purposes only.

Written comments are also welcome and must be submitted to Aida Camacho-Welch, Board Secretary, New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, 44 South Clinton Avenue, Post Office Box 350, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0350, by Friday, May 24, 2019. Written comments may also be submitted electronically to [board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov](mailto:board.secretary@bpu.nj.gov) in PDF or Word Format. All comments must be received on or before 5:00 p.m. on Friday, May 24, 2019.

**USF Program Stakeholder Meeting:**

**Date:** Friday, May 10, 2019

**Location:** New Jersey Board of Public Utilities  
44 South Clinton Avenue  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0350  
Multipurpose Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

**Time:** 10:00 a.m.

The following topics, as well as any other topics related to the USF program the public would like to discuss, are included for comment at the above-referenced Stakeholder Meeting and by written submissions:

1. Should the USF Income Ceiling be increased from 175% FPL to 185%?
2. Should the USF Energy Affordability Threshold and/or screening process be reexamined?
3. Should the USF benefit cap be adjusted from \$150/month (\$1,800 per year) or be changed for certain heating types?
4. Should a one-time USF "incentive credit" be provided as a USF bill credit to households who participate in either the Board's Comfort Partners program or the Department of Community Affairs' Weatherization Assistance Program? If so, what would a reasonable credit amount be?



Aida Camacho-Welch  
Board Secretary

Dated: April 10, 2019