



May 24, 2023

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To Whom It May Concern:

The AHA has been a long-time dedicated partner of the BPU, assisting clients access services under USF, LIHEAP, and PAGE. As such, the AHA feels that it is vitally important to provide commentary, as a non-profit organization, about its stance on the questions being posed by the BPU.

The AHA believes that the USF income ceiling should be in alignment with the LIHEAP ceiling beginning October 1st, 2023. Additionally, maintaining the USF affordability threshold at 2% of annual income for gas and non-heating electric costs and 4% of annual income for electric heating costs seems the most effective. This coupled with maintaining the USF monthly benefit cap at \$180 per month for gas and electric combined will be effective. The AHA also supports maintaining the minimum \$5.00 USF monthly benefit.

Furthermore, the AHA encourages the enrollment of any USF participant with \$60 or more in arrearages into the Fresh Start program regardless of the customer's past participation. Starting October 1, 2024, USF customers should be able to participate in Fresh Start once in a five-year period. Also, the BPU should permanently remove the \$100 cap on the monthly Fresh Start forgiveness.

Sincerely,

Randi Moore, CEO