



## California Network Modernization: FAQ

### **Will California customers lose service?**

- No California AT&T customer will be left without service.
- We are simply seeking an approved process to help consumers transition from outdated services to modern services.

### **Does this mean that customers won't have a home landline?**

- No. We are not cancelling landline service in California, and none of our California traditional copper-based customers will lose access to voice service.
- We are focused on enhancing our network with more advanced, higher speed technologies like fiber and wireless, which consumers are demanding.

### **Will California consumers have access to 911 services?**

- No customers are being disconnected.
- Our customers will continue to have access to 911, and newer digital voice services have access to 911 and use technology that makes it quicker and easier for customers to reach first responders.

### **Will Californians lose access to affordable services?**

- Today, Californians have access to mobile wireless and VoIP alternatives that are at least as affordable as copper-based landline service.
- AT&T also offers Access from AT&T, which provides low-cost internet service for eligible households with plans up to \$30/mo. and speeds up to 100Mbps where available.

### **How will California's rural residents be impacted?**

- No AT&T California customer is being left behind.
- We're working to transition our remaining consumers who use traditional copper-based phone service to upgrade to newer technologies from us or other providers.
- We are focused on enhancing our network with more advanced, higher speed technologies like fiber and wireless, which consumers are demanding.

### **What about location accuracy of 911 calls for wireless and VoIP phones?**

- Today, 911 operators can locate you nearly anywhere—from the side of a highway to inside your home—all thanks to decades of innovation in wireless location accuracy technologies.<sup>1</sup>
- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires that providers of interconnected VoIP telephone services using the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) to meet Enhanced 911 (E911) obligations. E911 systems automatically provide emergency service personnel with a 911 caller's call-back number and, in most cases, location information.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ctia.org/news/blog-the-wireless-industrys-commitment-to-9-1-1-location-accuracy>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/voip-and-911-service>



### **What are the benefits for California's seniors using wireless services?**

- According to the Pew Research Center, 94% of seniors (65 and older) in America own a cellphone of some kind, and 76% of seniors own a smartphone (Pew Research) including 94% of those 65 and older.<sup>3</sup>
- The benefits to senior of using modern technology include for telehealth services, staying connected with loved ones, keeping mentally fit, having access to emergency alerts and the ability to track and manage health conditions.
- It's imperative that California's seniors have access to and continue to adopt high-speed internet and newer technologies, to increase access to much needed services, connect with loved ones and to improve quality of life.

### **What will happen to residents in areas where cell service may not be as strong?**

- Our analysis based on data from the CPUC and FCC showed that 99.7 percent of consumers within our service territory have at least three viable alternative options for voice service.
- These include services other than wireless, such as VoIP services provided by cable companies.
- For customers who do not have alternatives available, we will continue to provide service until such time as an alternative is available.

### **What about backup power for VoIP phones. What is the cost? How long does the backup battery power last?**

- AT&T offers a 24-hour battery backup option for AT&T Digital Phone (VoIP). Customers can also buy a backup option that lasts for less time.<sup>4</sup>
- For VoIP phones, consumers can buy reliable external backup power systems online, at local electronics stores, or directly from the phone providers from anywhere from 8 to 48 hours. Costs vary for backup batteries for VoIP, but options can be found for around \$40.

### **Are prices for broadband and phone service increasing faster than inflation?**

- The current price of AT&T residential copper-based landline service in California is \$37.50 per month. There are both bundled and non-bundled VoIP and wireless alternatives costing a similar amount or less than the current \$37.50 per month price.
- Mobile wireless providers offer prepaid and postpaid wireless plans at price points below or comparable to those for AT&T's copper-based service. Managed VoIP services that broadband providers offer over their cable, fiber and fixed wireless networks are generally less expensive than copper-based landline voice services.
- According to a 2023 study, prices for broadband experienced a 18% drop year-over-year in the price of providers' most popular broadband speed tier and a 6.5% drop year-over-year in the price of providers' fastest speed tier.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/mobile/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.att.com/support/article/u-verse-voice/KM1041593/>

<sup>5</sup> [2023 Broadband Pricing Index \(BPI\) – USTelecom](#)



### **Is Access from AT&T available for new and existing customers?**

- Yes. AT&T has no plans to discontinue Access from AT&T program.
- We continue to offer the Access program, which provides low-cost internet service for eligible households with plans up to \$30/month and speeds up to 100Mbps where available. To learn more, visit <https://att.com/access>.

### **What are the eligibility criteria for Access from AT&T?**

- The following programs will continue to be used to determine eligibility for Access from AT&T: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for California residents, National School Lunch, or with a household income below 200% of federal poverty guidelines.
- New Access from AT&T customers can go through an application process where they submit documentation for review.

### **Why is AT&T exiting programs such as Lifeline that provide service to low-income customers?**

- Californians can continue to choose from among a number of providers if they want to participate the federally supported Lifeline program.
- A CPUC report found that about 85% of Lifeline customers in California already obtain the Lifeline benefit for wireless services.<sup>6</sup>
- We also offer the Access program, which provides low-cost internet service for eligible households with plans up to \$30/month and speeds up to 100Mbps where available

### **What is a COLR?**

- One of the applications that AT&T submitted, if approved, would remove AT&T's obligation under California law to provide traditional landline phone service in a large portion of our service territory in California – known as Carrier of Last Resort (COLR).
- AT&T's COLR obligation means that we must provide traditional landline phone service to any potential customer in our service territory.
- However, the COLR obligation no longer makes sense given that almost everyone in our service territory can choose among several comparable or lower-priced wireline and wireless alternatives to traditional telephone landlines for voice service.

### **Why did AT&T file for COLR relief in California?**

- We've seen a precipitous decline in demand for telephone services provided over our copper networks.
- This application seeks targeted COLR relief for areas in our California service territory where facilities-based alternative options for voice service already exist.
- Our commitment is that consumers currently in our California service territory will retain access to a service connection, whether from us or another service provider.

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Efile/G000/M478/K367/478367564.PDF>



### **Doesn't California need a COLR provider?**

- We believe that the COLR obligation is outdated and no longer necessary given that nearly everyone in our California service territory already has or can choose among several comparable or lower-priced wireline and wireless alternatives to copper-based landlines for voice service.

### **Why doesn't AT&T just maintain the copper-based network?**

- Our copper network is incapable of meeting these modern, data demands, and as such, it is now vastly underutilized.
- We cannot continue to support two networks, and the time has come for us to switch to a modern network.

### **What happens to households who do not have access to alternative services?**

- Our commitment is that customers currently in our California service territory will retain access to a service connection, whether from us or another service provider.
- For customers who do not have alternatives available, we will continue to provide service until such a time as an alternative phone service or provider is available.
- We are participating in eight in-person and virtual public forums for stakeholders and customers to provide input into our proposal.

### **Is AT&T just profiting off discontinuing landline?**

- We are not cancelling landline service in California, and none of our California customers will lose access to voice service if the CPUC approves our application.
- We spend more than a billion dollars a year in California maintaining our legacy network and set of services that are used by a small and rapidly declining number of customers. Those dollars would be better spent on more advanced, higher speed technologies like fiber and wireless, which consumers are increasingly demanding over outdated copper-based services.
- In California, we invested nearly \$8.6 billion in our wireless and wireline network infrastructure from 2020-2022.

### **Would we sell portions of business to another service provider?**

- None of our traditional copper-based landline customers in California will be left without service.
- We are simply seeking an approved process to help consumers transition from an antiquated copper network to modern services. Our goal is for customers currently in our California service territory to retain access to a service connection, whether from us or another provider.
- We are focused on investing in services that will meet our rural customers' needs today and in the future. Resources we spend on maintaining an antiquated copper network are resources we can't invest in our networks to help close the digital divide.