



News Release

Lifeline, Inc.

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Housing and Utility Assistance Available for Lake & Geauga Residents Financially Impacted by COVID-19 May 13, 2021

PAINESVILLE, Ohio— Lifeline, Inc., which serves Lake & Geauga Counties, has received additional funding to assist eligible households impacted by COVID-19 with rent or mortgage payments and to prevent utility disconnections. Residents in need can contact Lake County 2-1-1 at 2-1-1 or at 440-639-4420 for more information and to connect with services.

“We are thrilled to have these resources available to help our community maintain safe and healthy homes for their families as we recover from the economic fallout from COVID-19,” said Carrie Dotson, Executive Director at Lifeline. “Our experience administering these programs for the last six months will allow us to help hundreds of households once again find stable ground.”

Governor Mike DeWine announced the availability of additional funds last Tuesday during a formal signing of Ohio House Bill 167.

“Although the eviction moratorium by the Centers for Disease Control has prevented some residential evictions for non-payment of rent, they are still accumulating,” said Dotson. “This funding will make a high impact, will keep families in their homes now, and will prevent future evictions. It will also provide a safety net when the moratoriums expire.”

Since receiving its initial Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars through the Ohio Development Services Agency in November 2020, Lifeline has spent \$1,318,697 and provided 494 Lake & Geauga households with emergency rent assistance, 47 with mortgage assistance and 51 with emergency utility assistance as of May 12, 2021. Every one of those households has been impacted financially due to COVID-19, in most instances by lay-offs, reduced work hours or lost wages due to quarantines.

The assistance Lifeline has provided wouldn't have been possible without the partnership of Fair Housing Resource Center (FHRC), our local housing counseling agency.

“Our partnership with FHRC has been invaluable. Before we launched the initial program back in November, their staff volunteered to partner with us to help expedite the triage and screening process and have continued to do so throughout,” said Dotson. “Many of our clients are in crisis and getting personal attention from a real, live person and getting the assistance quickly is imperative. FHRC's partnership has allowed us to keep the program very customer-centered and efficient. This has been a perfect example of how collaboration can and should work to meet the needs of our community.”

Lifeline for the Empowerment and Development of Consumers was founded in 1973 with the mission of helping Lake County residents by providing them assistance and life skills programming that is designed to increase self-sufficiency. In 1980 Lifeline became a participating agency of the United Way of Lake County, UWLC, and in 1987 was designated a community action agency by the Ohio Development Services Agency, ODSA. In 2008, Lifeline was designated as a mental health agency by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Lifeline received interim designation as Geauga County's Community Action Agency in 2020.

Today Lifeline continues with the same mission of helping Lake and Geauga Counties' low-income residents break the cycle of poverty and make the transition from agency-dependency to self-sufficiency. Lifeline's current programming includes healthcare services, housing & energy assistance, information & referral services, guardianship and consumer education & job training areas. Our motto is 'helping people, changing lives.' Lifeline is currently funded by grants through the ODSA, the Lake County Board of Commissioners, the Lake County ADAMHS Board, Lake County Department of Job & Family Services, the City of Mentor, UWLC, the Western Reserve Junior Service League, the Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Lake Health and through private donors.