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Owing to the advancement in technology, we are now more dependent on gadgets than ever before. From the smallest of things like moving up and down an escalator to the huge things like rocket launches, technology is everywhere around us. Even the way we connect with each other has been changed. Cell phones have become an indispensible part of our lives. We cannot think of moving from one day to the next without a cell phone. A cell phone helps us connect with the people that we need to- friends, family, colleagues, bosses, clients etc. It is essential to both our personal lives and professional lives. Nevertheless, unfortunately with the rising costs of the daily amenities today, it is not possible for everyone to afford a cell phone. However, at the same time, we cannot underestimate the importance of a cell phone in todayâ€™s life.

To help people with this issue, the government is now offering a free government cell phone service. Under this service, everyone who qualifies is entitled to get mobile service with the basic facilities like making long distance and local calls, sending text messages, accessing 911, voicemail and directory assistance. Each state could have different qualifying criteria. The number of minutes is fixed and is replenished every month, although you can easily buy more at a low rate as needed. (The number of minutes may vary from state to state). The program is mostly free of cost and the applicant never receives a bill. A few states have certain initial or recurring costs like in Oklahoma, there is $1 charge per month for the 1000-minute plan and in Texas, and the applicants have to pay a $30 activation fee.

Different states could have different qualifying criteria. Normally, the applicant must be participating in any of the government assistance programs like Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Medicaid, National School Lunch Program's Free Lunch Program, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). One can also apply if the household income is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. By complying to these guidelines, the residents of Louisiana, Arkansas, Illinois, Oklahoma, Maryland, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Washington, Rhode Island, Nevada, Iowa, Texas and West VirginiaÂ can apply for this free cell phone plan. One can easily look for a service provider online and apply for this program.

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