

UTILI-FACTS

TUSF

What is the Texas Universal Service Fund (TUSF)?

The TUSF is a fund instituted by Texas law known as the Public Utility Regulatory Act (PURA). The fund is designed to implement a set of programs to assist Texas residents, as needed, in obtaining basic telecommunications services. The programs within the TUSF include services such as the Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP), Relay Texas, Audio Newspaper, and Lifeline. The programs within the TUSF also include high-cost assistance programs to assist telecommunications providers in providing basic local telephone service at reasonable rates in high-cost rural areas.



What services are assessed the fee?

The TUSF fee is assessed on the in-Texas portion of telecommunications providers' receipts for local, long distance, pager, wireless, and other telecommunications services. The fee is on users' telephone bills because telecommunications providers are allowed to pass the TUSF assessment on their receipts through to their residential and business customers, with certain exemptions shown below.

How is the TUSF funded?

The TUSF is funded by a fee or surcharge assessed on telecommunications providers' receipts for certain services.

What is the rate for the fee or surcharge?

Effective January 1, 2012, the TUSF surcharge is 4.3% of intrastate telecommunications services receipts.

How is the charge on the phone bill calculated?

The charge is calculated by multiplying the intrastate (or "in-state") portion of the total bill by the percentage rate (4.3%), minus the 9-1-1 service fee.

Who and what is exempt?

There are some exemptions to the fee assessment, including:

- Texas state agencies
- Non-profit schools (tax-exempt entities)
- Long-distance telecom services that are not both originated from and billed to a telephone number or billing or service address within Texas
- Lifeline, Link-Up America, and Tel-Assistance services.

QUESTIONS:

Call: 1-888-782-8477, in Austin 512-936-7120
(TTY 512-936-7136) (FAX 512-936-7003)

Write: PUC - Customer Protection Division
P.O. Box 13326, Austin, TX 78711-3326

Online: <http://www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/complaint/Complaint.aspx>

