



Cellular Phone and Blackberry Type Devices

Original Adoption: February 10, 2008
Effective Date: February 10, 2008
Last Revision: August 29, 2014

Northwest Louisiana Technical College (NWLTC) provides Cellular telephone and Blackberry type devices for Official College business under specific circumstances for College employees. There are criteria for user eligibility and an established approval process that must be followed before cellular or PCS services are purchased or rented.

Policy Reference: LTC Policy #FS1930.312 Cellular Phone and Blackberry Type Devices

Approved:

Dianne Clark
Interim Director



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SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

Cellular telephone service may be available for college use under certain circumstances. It is important to understand the subscriber's requirements and know that cellular and Personal Communications Service (PCS) are not all the same.

There are criteria for user eligibility and an established approval process that must be followed before cellular or PCS services are purchased or rented. Each campus is responsible for assuring that eligibility, approvals, usage, and billing are appropriate and correct.

OTM has established state contracts with a number of vendors from which cellular and PCS wireless telephone service can be acquired. Campuses may work directly with vendors to determine needs and select appropriate equipment and service.

While there is no longer a state-initiated cellular service plan for state employees' personal use, most cellular vendors offer special service and equipment pricing for state employees.

WIRELESS TELEPHONE SERVICE

Although generally lumped in a single category referred to as "cell phones," cellular telephone service is actually one particular type of wireless telephone service. Companies now offer analog and digital cellular service and digital PCS. PCS is another wireless technology that is very similar to cellular service. In this policy, the word "cellular" includes PCS.

Cellular service is not all the same. Different technology is used for the various offerings. The quality of service may vary. Coverage areas (where a subscriber can make and receive cellular calls) will vary for each type of service/technology and from vendor to vendor. The availability of features, options and how they work will differ with various vendor offerings.

Cellular service is offered using either analog or digital technology. Analog service is widely available. Digital service generally has more available features and options. Features available with digital cellular service may include text messaging, mobile-to-mobile services, and incoming caller identification (caller ID).

The cost of cellular service is based on a monthly subscription charge, minutes of usage, and charges for other features and services. There may also be additional charges for using the service when traveling outside of a "home area" (daily roaming and per minute charges), for making long distance calls, and for being provided a monthly call detail report which lists information about each individual call made and received. Cellular charges may be rolled into a single monthly charge and may include some number of minutes, roaming, long distance calling, caller ID, voice mail, and other features. Different packages may be available at different prices depending on quantities of minutes used and features included. Cellular handsets may be rented or purchased and, along with other accessories, are usually priced separately. Cellular telephone numbers are unlisted.

When selecting a vendor and the particular wireless service required, careful consideration should be given to a number of factors. Based on low rental costs, how quickly technology is evolving, and how long the service will be needed, equipment rental (available through some of OTM's state cellular contracts) may be a better option than equipment purchase. It will be important to know the geographic area normally traveled by the subscriber and any particular feature requirements that the subscriber may need. With this information in hand, comparisons can be made for each vendor for service coverage area, the availability of service when traveling out of the vendor's service area, the availability of features and services, and the availability and cost of equipment. The overall cost of service can then be calculated and evaluated. Finally, the campus may select the vendor and service which best meets the subscriber's particular needs. To assist in this process, personnel in OTM's Wireless Service section are available for campuses to discuss their cellular options.

DELEGATED APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Before acquiring cellular service or equipment for those not pre-approved, the Region or campus needs written approval. The Director has been granted delegated approval authority for respective NWLTC Regions and campuses. The Director has final approval authority for cellular telephone service requests. The Director is responsible for approval of all cellular requests for NWLTC employees. Requests for cellular service must be submitted in writing for consideration and possible approval to the Director.

All approvals shall be based upon the following screening criteria concerning the protection of life and property or a demonstrated requirement to improve efficiency and effectiveness, and a lack of a suitable communications alternative.

ELIGIBILITY

NWLTC provided cellular telephone service is not intended for personal use. It is for official state business and is to be acquired and used only after receiving specific, written approval from the Director. Guidelines have been established which help determine if a request for cellular service will be approved. Favorable consideration will be given to a request for cellular service when the use of the service relates to life or death situations, personal safety, or when a bona fide business case can be made which requires cellular service. The request for cellular service must indicate that the use of alternative means of communicating have been considered and are less economical, impractical, or unavailable.

Protection of life and property - the job duties of the individual require the performance of duties that could affect the protection of life and property. These duties may be impeded without immediate access (inbound and/or outbound) to the public telephone network regardless of time of day or location of the employee.

Law enforcement-the daily job duties of the individual require the performance of law enforcement activities, and these activities may expose the individual or, the public, to harm or danger.

Personal safety-the daily job duties of the individual require the performance of activities that may expose the individual or clients to harm or danger.

Public welfare-the daily job duties of the individual require the performance of duties that may directly affect the safety, health, and welfare of the public.

Improved efficiency and effectiveness-the job duties of the individual require immediate access (inbound and/or outbound) to the public telephone network for recall, consultation, and/or decision-making. Lack of instantaneous communications could have significant effect on the operational efficiency of the agency or significant impact on the economic or political welfare of the state.

On call - duties require that the individual be immediately accessible after normal work hours regardless of location.

Mobile or in transit - duties require that the individual be mobile or in transit a large percentage of the business day yet immediately accessible.

Lack of suitable communications alternatives - no other suitable communications alternatives (one-way or interactive pagers, two-way radio, and standard telephone service) are available due to the location or environmental conditions of the workplace.

REGIONAL AND CAMPUS RESPONSIBILITIES

Each Region and campus must assure each request meets the eligibility requirements, the approval process is followed, and funds are available. Cellular equipment or service may not be ordered or acquired before final notification of the Director. Each campus must be sure that the cellular service is terminated if the requesting subscriber no longer meets eligibility requirements or no longer requires the service.

Regions are responsible for controlling usage of cellular telephone service. Cellular service must include subscription to the call-detail billing feature. Subscriber employees and the campus must certify each month that charges are according to contract prices and that the authorized payment for charges was for official state business. The monthly certifications must be signed and dated by the employee. The completed certifications must be available for auditor's review. Use of cellular service must comply with all applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations.

Each campus is responsible for maintaining all documentation and must comply with laws, rules, and regulations governing records retention. Additionally, the campus is required to maintain an inventory of approved cellular telephones in operation and the assignment of the telephones. The campus must submit inventory changes to the NWLTC Regional Cellular Service Coordinator or other Regional designee.

SELECTION PROCESS

After the Director has approved the cellular request, each Campus and subscriber must first determine cellular usage requirements for that subscriber. This includes the approximate number of minutes to be used each month, the area of travel where service will be required, and the features and functionality of the service to be acquired.

State cellular contracts are available and have been structured to permit state agencies to work directly with contract vendors. Vendor personnel will be available to assist agencies in determining cellular requirements, coverage area, and other alternatives that the vendor has available to best meet subscriber needs. Before making a selection, it may be prudent to contact several vendors to help determine which vendor's service best meets the needs for a particular subscriber.

Listed are state contract numbers, vendors, and areas of availability, services provided, and the vendor contacts:

State Contract 404546: CenturyTel Communications

Areas: Alexandria; Monroe; Shreveport; northern Louisiana

Services: Analog and Digital Cellular Telephones and Service

Contractor Representative: Ty Martin, 318-683-3418/Lindsey West, 318-683-3336

State Contract 404545: Centennial Wireless

Areas: Alexandria; Lafayette; Lake Charles; Natchitoches; and other areas south of interstate Highway I-20 in Louisiana.

Services: Analog and Digital Cellular Telephones and Service

Contractor Representative: Joyce Brunson 318-481-6410/Rob Toso, 318-277-8400

State Contract 404544: AT&T (formerly Cingular) Wireless

Areas: Baton Rouge; Houma-Thibodaux; Lafayette; New Orleans; other areas in southern Louisiana

Services: Analog and Digital Cellular Telephones and Service

Contractor Representative: Freddy Smith, 225-235-1700/Lynn Snell, 225-296-4256.

State Contract 404543: AT&T (formerly Cingular) Wireless PCS

Areas: Shreveport; Monroe; Alexandria; other areas in northern Louisiana.

Services: PCS Digital Telephones and Service

Contractor Representative: Freddy Smith, 225-235-1700/Lynn Snell, 225-296-4256.

State Contract 404547: MobileTel Cellular

Areas: Houma; Thibodaux; other areas in Lafourche and Jefferson parishes.

Services: PCS Digital Telephones and Service

Contractor Representative:

John Rogers, 504-804-4285/Corkie Gayton, 504-798-2325.

Cellular Service—continued

State Contract 404327: Nextel Communications

Areas: Alexandria; Baton Rouge; Houma; Lafayette; Lake Charles; Monroe; New Orleans; Shreveport; Thibodaux; other areas statewide.

Services: Digital Radio-Telephones with Internet Access and Service

Contractor Representative: Lesa Kelley, 225-413-1330/Trey Bowman, 225-296-3727

State Contract 404548: SunCom Wireless

Areas: Baton Rouge; Lafayette; Lake Charles; New Orleans; other areas in southern Louisiana

Services: PCS Digital Telephones and Service

Contractor Representative: Bill Katchur, 225-229-2121/Mike Kee, 225-229-2900

State Contract 404549: Verizon Wireless

Areas: Baton Rouge; New Orleans

Services: PCS Digital Telephones and Service

Contractor Representative:
Mark Charles, 504-846-6266/Trudi Ruppenicker, 504-846-6370.

State Contract 404776: Alltel Communications

Areas: The metro areas of Baton Rouge and New Orleans and most of Southeast Louisiana.

Services: Analog and Digital Telephones and Service.

Contractor Representative: Mr. Terry Ginn, 225-296-8202

HOW TO ORDER

Complete Above Selection Process

Complete and Submit "Request for Cellular Telephone Service" for proper approvals.

Send approved "Request for Cellular Telephone Service" to the NWLTC Telecommunications Coordinator.

For Cell Phone orders, the NWLTC TC will complete documentation then submit approved form to the requestor to place order at the campus level.

For Blackberry orders, the NWLTC Region Coordinator will place order with the State Office of Telecommunication Management. After the order is received, the Coordinator will contact the cellular service provider to complete the process. The Coordinator will then ship blackberry to the requestor.

NON-STATE BUSINESS CELLULAR SERVICE FOR STATE EMPLOYEES

The state cellular contracts are for official state business only and are not to be used to acquire cellular equipment or service for personal business. However, while there is not a state-initiated cellular service plan for state employees' personal use, some cellular vendors offer special service and equipment pricing for state employees. As the availability and offers of such plans may vary from vendor to vendor, employees should contact vendors directly in order to determine the availability, service, and cost of employee plans. The vendor may require proof of state employment such as state identification badge or paycheck stub.

*Policy Reference: LTC Policy #FS1930.312 Cellular Phone and Blackberry Type Devices
LTC Form #FS300.6 Request for Cellular Telephone Service*

Approved:

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