



# Leader Voice Mail - Frequently Asked Questions for Users

The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) has joined Leader Technologies Inc. and the Ohio Benefit Bank to bring a critically-needed free voice mail service to 24 counties in northwest Ohio. Listed below is a set of frequently asked questions and answers written to assist new users of Leader Voice Mail in understanding how this service may best suit their individual needs.



## **Q. Where do I go to get the voice mail service?**

A. You can sign up for the service by visiting a participating agency, which includes local community action agencies, social service agencies, homeless shelters and domestic violence shelters.

## **Q. How do I sign up for the service?**

A. Participating agencies can sign you up for the service.

## **Q. How long does it take to sign up?**

A. The sign-up process is very simple and should take approximately 5 minutes.

## **Q. Is there any cost for the service?**

A. No. The service is being offered free of charge through the cooperative efforts of Leader Technologies, the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel and the Ohio Benefit Bank..

## **Q. Can anyone get this service?**

A. Eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the participating agency based on the applicant's need for service. Individuals without telecommunications service and who are in crisis or in transition (i.e. homeless, unemployed, domestic abuse survivors) as well as low-income households will be the primary target audience for the service.

## **Q. How long do I get to use the voice mail service?**

A. The voice mail box is available to you as long as you need it. However, if it remains inactive for 90 days, it will be automatically de-activated. If you then decide that you need the service again, you will need to go back to the agency to re-apply.

## **Q. What should I do if I no longer need the service?**

A. If you no longer need the service, please contact the agency where you initially signed up, so that the voice mail phone number can be reassigned to a new user.

## **Q. Will I get my own personal phone number when I sign up for Leader Voice Mail?**

A. Yes, you will receive a phone number in the 419 area code as your personal phone number. This is the number you can give to others so that they can leave you messages.

## **Q. How do I retrieve my messages?**

A. You can retrieve your messages from any touch tone phone by calling a toll-free number or through the Internet. However, when checking your messages online the computer has to have sound activated. Please refer to the printout of instructions provided to you during the sign-up process.

## **Q. Will callers hear my voice when they call me?**

A. Yes, if you choose. You can record a personal greeting at any time by following a simple set of prompts. You can change your greeting whenever you like.

## **Q. How do I know my message will be secure?**

A. An access code is required to retrieve your messages by telephone and/or by using the internet. You will set up your four digit access code during the sign up process. We suggest that you make it a number that would be difficult for others to learn.

## **Q. How do I get my messages if I don't have my own phone or my own computer?**

A. You can retrieve your messages from any touch-tone phone or computer that has access to the internet. You can use a public pay phone, request to use the phone at a shelter or social service agency, or request to use a friend/family member's home phone or cell phone. Most public libraries offer computers for public use. You may also wish to check with local community or senior citizen centers as well. If using an unfamiliar computer to check messages, verify that there is sound capability to hear your messages.

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**Q. What type of computer software is necessary to check my messages online?**

- A. To retrieve messages the computer will need to have at least one of the following: Windows Sound Recorder, Windows Media Play, or Apple Quicktime. Windows Sound Recorder and Windows Media Player are standard with the Windows operating system.

**Q. Do I need to have a library card to use the computers there?**

- A. Check with your local library regarding its policies on computer use.

**Q. Will I need headphones to listen to my messages if I use a computer to access my voice mail?**

- A. Check with your local library regarding its policies on headphone use.

**Q. What do I do if I forget my access code?**

- A. If you are trying to access your voice mail box from a telephone, there will be a prompt on the message with Leader's telephone number in case this happens. Also, if you are trying to access your voice mail box with a computer, the login page will give instructions for forgotten access codes. This method of retrieving your access code will require you to have your own e-mail address.

**Q. Can I still sign up even if I don't have a permanent address?**

- A. Yes. The sign up screen will ask for an address, but this is not a required field.

**Q. Do I have to have an e-mail address to have the service?**

- A. An e-mail address is not required to use the service. However, free e-mail accounts are available through Web sites such as [www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com), [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com) or [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).

**Q. When I am ready to get my own telephone service, is there assistance available?**

- A. Yes. The Lifeline program offers financial assistance for home telephone (land line) service for income eligible individuals. For more information on Lifeline, contact the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel toll-free (see below).

**Q. Where can I get more information?**

- A. Contact the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel at the phone number or on the Web site listed below.

**Q. Are there similar voice mail programs elsewhere in Ohio?**

- A. The concept of voice mail for people in need is part of a nationwide effort initially made available in 2000 to Ohioans in Cuyahoga and Lorain counties through Community Voice Mail, a national nonprofit organization. Recently, Community Voice Mail expanded its Ohio efforts to include Summit County.

\* - Counties offering Leader Voice Mail Service are: Allen, Ashland, Auglaize, Crawford, Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Huron, Lucas, Mercer, Morrow, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Van Wert, Williams, Wood, Wyandot

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The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, represents the interests of 4.5 million households in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts. The state agency also educates consumers about electric, natural gas, telephone and water issues and resolves complaints from individuals. To receive utility information, brochures, schedule a presentation or file a utility complaint, residential consumers may call 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) toll free in Ohio or visit the OCC Web site at [www.pickocc.org](http://www.pickocc.org).

*The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.*

**For additional information from the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel:**

**Call: 1-877-PICKOCC (1-877-742-5622) toll free or (614) 466-8574**  
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