

TELECOM

100 free minutes for phone call support

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Mobile users will be able to apply for 100 minutes of free voice calls from today as part of public assistance during the coronavirus outbreak.

Users can apply from 8am today until midnight May 15.

Under the assistance, users have 100 minutes of free phone calls to all mobile networks for 45 days, according to the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC).

More than 50 million subscribers are expected to benefit from the scheme, particularly prepaid users, a group that most commonly makes phone calls.

The NBTC's 20-day window for mobile users to apply for 10 gigabytes of free internet ended yesterday. Some 14.6 million subscribers qualified for the assistance, meant to support people working from home during the pandemic.

For free voice calls, users can dial *170* followed by their 13-digit ID number, then # at the end, said NBTC secretary-general Takorn Tantasith.

If a mobile user subscribes to three mobile numbers under three different mobile operators, the user will receive a combined 300 minutes of free calls

— 100 minutes for each number, Mr Takorn said. The assistance will be given to both prepaid and post-paid users.

Foreigners and those who subscribe to mobile phone numbers under juristic persons are not eligible for the scheme, he said.

There are 130 million mobile subscriptions nationwide, 90% of them in the prepaid system. About 70% of prepaid users commonly make phone calls, Mr Takorn said. Making calls is still prevalent in provinces.

Referring to the 10GB assistance, Mr Takorn said 15.9 million mobile users applied for the scheme from

April 10 until yesterday, with 14.6 million qualifying.

Of the 14.6 million users, 8.56 million use Advanced Info Service, 3.51 million use True Move H Universal Communication, 2.41 million use Total Access Communication, 160,000 use CAT Telecom, 4,850 use TOT and the rest use mobile virtual network operators.

Some 1.5 billion baht from the NBTC's Broadcasting and Telecommunication Research Fund will be drawn out to fund the 10GB assistance. Mobile operators will get about 100 baht per qualified subscriber under the scheme.