

## CELL PHONE PLANS IN THE U.S.

### Mobile Phone Systems

System	Comments
GSM	If you have an unlocked GSM phone at home and you just want a US SIM card, stick to your GSM carrier
CDMA	CDMA phones don't always use SIM cards, so you may have to get a new phone or carrier in the US that operates with the GSM system

### Types of Wireless Service Providers

Providers		Comments
Carrier	There are three main carriers that run their own network — Verizon, AT&T and T-Mobile.	More stable in highly crowded areas. But more expensive than MVNOS.
MVNO	MVNOS are carriers that don't have their own wireless network; instead, they piggyback off another carrier's platform for coverage through their cell phone plans.	Cheaper and usually more options of plans. Most of them are fairly stable around campus.

### Types of plans

Type of plan	How it works	Advantages	Disadvantages
Pre-paid plan	You "refill" your phone plan monthly, quarterly or annually without which you don't get service.	You don't have to commit to a contract, which means you can stop refilling your plan whenever you are out of the country. You can also change the plan at any time.	Doesn't come with a device.
Individual contract	Usually 1 or 2 year contract with early termination fee, monthly bill, and option to buy phones at discount prices. This is not very common anymore.	Usually cheaper in the long run, you can usually get a device for free or heavily discounted.	You have to commit for at least 12 months, requiring cash flow to pay every month. Devices need to be paid off if you want to change a carrier.
Payment Plan	You pay a monthly bill for access to a certain amount of talk, text and data.	Most of these plans include unlimited talk and text.	You may or may not get the full advantage of the plan depending on how heavy of a phone user you are. Unused data does not carry over to the next month.
Family	A group of friends or	Generally, the more people	You rely on friends/acquaintances'

contract	acquaintances can form a "family" for phone plan services and initiate a group plan together, where you share data.	you have in the "family" contract, the cheaper it is for individuals.	ability to get together and organize, as well as pay bills (except Visible) on time. You also share your data/minutes which can be unbalanced.
Unlimited Plan	You pay a monthly bill for unlimited talk, text and data.	Don't need to worry about limits.	Expensive. Need to be a heavy phone user to get the most out of this plan.

### Plans by Main Carriers /MVNOs (July 2022)

\*We list the basic plans for you but all carriers have multiple plans that you can choose depending on your needs. Please consult their websites. Plans are prices subject to change by individual carrier\*

Carriers			
Carrier	Verizon	AT&T	T Mobile
Website	<a href="http://www.verizon.com">www.verizon.com</a>	<a href="http://www.att.com">www.att.com</a>	<a href="http://www.t-mobile.com">www.t-mobile.com</a>
Unlimited talk & text (in network)	✓	✓	✓
International Calls	Requires extra fee	Requires extra fee	Requires extra fee
5GB	\$40	\$50 (4GB)	/
20GB	/	/	\$45
25GB	\$60	/	/
unlimited/unlimited plus- 1line	\$65/\$70/\$80	\$50/\$65/\$75	\$60
unlimited basic-3/4/5 lines	\$40/\$30/\$25 per line	\$45/\$35/\$30 per line	\$30/\$26/\$24 per line
unlimited plus-3/4/5 lines	\$45/\$35/\$30 per line	\$50/\$40/\$35 per line	\$40/\$35/\$32 per line

MVNOS							
MVNO	Consumer Cellular	Mint Mobile	Google Fi	Tello	Boost Mobile	Ting	Visible
Website	<a href="https://www.consumercellular.com/">https://www.consumercellular.com/</a>	<a href="https://www.mintmobile.com/">https://www.mintmobile.com/</a>	<a href="https://fi.google.com/">https://fi.google.com/</a>	<a href="https://www.tello.com/">https://www.tello.com/</a>	<a href="https://deals.boostmobile.com/">https://deals.boostmobile.com/</a>	<a href="https://ting.com/">https://ting.com/</a>	<a href="https://www.visible.com/">https://www.visible.com/</a>
Unlimited talk & text (in network)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
International Calls	Requires extra fee	Requires extra fee	Requires extra fee	Requires extra fee	Requires extra fee	Requires extra fee	Requires extra fee
flexible/under 5GB	\$20(1GB) \$25(3GB)	/	\$17+\$10/GB	\$10(1GB) \$14(2GB)	\$8.3(1GB) \$15(2GB)	\$10+\$5/GB	/
5GB	\$35(7GB)	\$15(4GB)	/	\$19	\$25	\$25	/
10GB	\$40	\$20	/	\$24	\$35	\$35(12GB)	/
15GB	\$45	\$25	/	/	/	/	/
20GB	/	/	/	/	/	\$45(22GB)	/
25GB	/	/	/	/	/	\$55(35GB)	/
unlimited/unlimited plus- 1line	\$55	\$30	\$50/\$65	\$29	\$50	\$45	\$40
unlimited basic-3/4/5 lines	\$30 per line (3 lines)	/	\$25/\$20/\$20 per line	/	\$30 per line (3 lines)	/	\$30/\$25/\$25 per line
unlimited plus-3/4/5 lines	/	/	\$45/\$40/\$40 per line	/	/	/	/

Recommended resource: <https://9to5mac.com/2022/07/19/best-phone-carriers/>

**Carriers' stores near Macalester (double-check on Google Map)**

Carrier	Location	Time
ATT	1315 University Ave W / 2132 Ford Pkwy	MON-FRI: 10AM - 8PM, SAT: 10AM - 7PM, SUN:11AM-6PM / MON-FRI: 10AM - 8PM, SAT: 10AM - 6PM, SUN:11AM-6PM
T-Mobile	1460 University Ave / 2110 Ford Pkwy	MON-FRI: 10AM - 9PM, SAT: 10AM -8PM, SUN: 11AM- 6PM / MON-FRI: 10AM - 9PM, SAT: 10AM -8PM, SUN: 11AM- 6PM
Verizon	474 Hamline Ave / 2034 Ford Pkwy	MON-SAT: 10AM - 7PM, SUN: 12PM - 6PM / MON-FRI: 9AM - 8PM, SAT: 9AM - 6PM SUN: 11AM - 5PM

\*You can also visit Target, Walmart, or Best Buy stores to buy phones, SIM cards, or phone plans.

\*You can also purchase a SIM card online, or get an e-SIM card (check the eligibility of your phone first!)

**Installing a Landline Phone**

Before you get a mobile phone plan, you may get a landline for your room from Macalester ITS. (**Mac requires a phone number in your student record, otherwise there is a registration hold.**) so that your mentors can reach you (<http://its-notices-alerts.blogspot.com/2013/05/11-things-students-should-know-about.html>). You can call anywhere in the Twin Cities with this phone, free of charge.

**Notes:**

1. Don't ask your host family to join their family plan (that's rude). If they make the offer, that's great.
2. Most phones sold in the U.S. are locked to the carrier that sells them, so you couldn't take a GSM iPhone from AT&T and use it on T-Mobile's network unless the phone is unlocked. However, many Verizon smartphones come unlocked.
3. On that note, there is also an option to unlock your phone after a certain period of time (for example, 9 months with AT&T). Consult your phone company for the detailed policies.
4. Each carrier has options for voice, text, or data that gives you a certain amount of usage and fees for when you go over your limits. If you are not on unlimited voice or text plan, US carriers may charge you for outgoing and incoming call minutes or texts.
5. To check a coverage map, enter in Mac's zip code – 55105.
6. Plans change often so check the carrier's website for updated costs and information.
7. Most plans offer the ability to set up autopay to automatically pay for the bill. This typically comes with a discount and means you don't have to worry about remembering to pay every month.