

People usually discover that landlines are vanishing the hard way. A relative moves into a new apartment in Los Angeles and asks for a plain telephone line, no internet. The sales rep pauses, then tries to sell a bundle, or says the old copper line is “no longer available” in that neighborhood.

Underneath that awkward sales script sits a brutal reality: traditional phone service is being dismantled piece by piece. Yet in California, real landlines have not completely disappeared. They are just fragmented across different providers, technologies, and regulatory categories.

This guide walks through, in practical terms, which companies still offer landline service in California, how “real” those lines are, what they cost, and how to choose the right option, especially for seniors or businesses that still rely on a hardwired phone.

What “Landline” Really Means Now

Before looking at specific companies, it helps to straighten out terminology. When people say “landline”, they typically mean one of three different things.



First, there is true POTS, Plain Old Telephone Service, over copper pairs that carry analog voice and power from the central office. These are the original landlines. They usually keep working in a power outage because the line itself is powered from the phone company.

Second, there are digital or fiber based “landlines”, sometimes called VoIP or digital voice. The line looks like a landline to you, with an RJ11 jack on a modem or ONT, but the voice is really running as data over cable or fiber. If power or internet go down, so does the phone.

Third, there are business phone systems that might use SIP trunks, hosted PBX, or mobile integrations. Technically not landlines, but many offices still think of them as “the phone line”.

When you ask which companies still offer a landline in California, you have to decide whether you insist on original POTS over copper, or whether a fixed home phone line over fiber or cable is acceptable.

The Main Categories of Landline Providers in California

To simplify a messy landscape, think of California landline options in four broad buckets:

1. Traditional local exchange carriers (ILECs) with legacy copper and some fiber
2. Cable companies selling digital home phone
3. Over-the-top VoIP providers that ride on your existing internet
4. Mobile and wireless substitutes dressed up as “home phone”

Each category comes with trade-offs for reliability, emergency calling, and long-term support.

1. Traditional Phone Companies That Still Offer Landlines

These are the descendants of the old regulated phone companies. In California, they are still responsible for providing basic voice in their territories, although regulators have gradually loosened that obligation.

AT&T California

In the 1980s, the name on the bill in much of California was Pacific Bell, a regional “Baby Bell” spun out of the old Bell System. After a string of mergers, that company effectively became AT&T California, the largest incumbent local exchange carrier in the state.

AT&T still sells landline service in California, but several details matter.

AT&T provides:

- Traditional copper POTS lines in some areas, especially older neighborhoods and rural stretches that have not been upgraded.
- Fiber based voice, often sold as “AT&T Phone” over fiber, in newer builds and upgraded areas.
- Business lines and PRI/SIP solutions for offices and call centers.

For someone asking “Can I just have a landline without internet?” the answer with AT&T is location dependent. In some central office territories, you can still order a standalone “measured rate” local line, often in the range of 30 to 60 dollars per month before taxes and fees. In other areas, reps will try hard to steer you to a bundled internet and voice offer, arguing that the copper network is being retired.

AT&T has petitioned regulators to phase out traditional landlines in parts of California, but the California Public Utilities Commission has not yet granted a blanket shutdown. So, you will keep seeing rumors like “Will I lose my landline in 2027?” without a simple yes or no answer. The reality is more gradual. Specific copper routes will be decommissioned as fiber or wireless alternatives appear, sometimes street by street.

For seniors, AT&T participates in the federal Lifeline program, which can significantly reduce the monthly bill. It is worth asking explicitly about Lifeline or any senior plan, because front-line reps often default to the most profitable package.

Frontier Communications and Other Regional Carriers

In large parts of Southern California and some northern and inland pockets, Frontier Communications serves as the local phone company. Frontier acquired systems that were once part of GTE and Verizon, both major names in the list of past telephone companies.

Frontier still offers:

- Traditional landline service in copper-served areas
- Digital voice over fiber in upgraded territories
- Business lines and multi-line services

Frontier's standalone landline pricing is usually in the same ballpark as AT&T's basic service, but promotions and fees vary heavily by ZIP code. Frontier's copper outside plant has had a rough maintenance history in some regions, so reliability can depend on your exact location. On the other hand, where Frontier has deployed fiber, voice service tends to be stable and clear.

Besides AT&T and Frontier, California still has a number of small independent telephone companies, especially in rural or mountain regions. Names like Volcano Telephone Company, Sierra Telephone, and Cal-Ore Telephone are not household brands statewide, but they are the oldest phone company in America type of story in their particular valleys and towns. For residents there, the local independent telco may still offer reliable POTS, and they often know every pole and splice by heart.

2. Cable Companies Offering "Home Phone" in California

Cable providers do not support original copper POTS, but they do offer home phone service that behaves similarly for most households.

The key ones in California are:

- Xfinity (Comcast)
- Spectrum
- Cox Communications (in limited markets like parts of Orange County and San Diego County)

These companies provide digital phone over their coax or fiber networks. You plug your phone into a port on their modem or gateway. The service includes 911 and standard calling features, and you can often keep your old phone number when you move from a true landline.

For many families, this has become the cheapest landline phone service without internet, at least on paper, because cable companies frequently run aggressive "double play" and "triple play" promotions where the voice portion is quoted at a very low incremental cost. The trick, of course, is that they assume you are also taking internet and possibly TV.

If you walk into an Xfinity or Spectrum store and firmly insist that you want voice only, no internet, the monthly price will usually jump. In practice, the standalone cable phone line can still be cheaper than AT&T copper POTS in some markets, but not always. Taxes and surcharges also differ.

One important detail for emergency preparedness: cable phone service relies on local power and the modem. Cable companies often provide a battery option, but it usually covers only a few hours of outage, not days. Traditional POTS still wins on extended blackout resilience.

3. VoIP Providers That Turn Your Internet into a "Landline"

Over-the-top VoIP services have matured dramatically since the early days of Vonage adapter boxes in the 2000s.

Today, if you already pay for reliable broadband, you can get a home phone service that uses your internet connection for as little as 10 to 30 dollars per month. Providers like Ooma, Vonage, VoIP.ms, Callcentric, and others serve California numbers.

These are not original landlines, but for many households they are “good enough” and much cheaper. They typically offer:

- Number porting from AT&T, Frontier, or cable numbers
- Caller ID, call waiting, voicemail to email, and sometimes spam blocking
- Options to ring both a home phone and a mobile app at the same time
- International calling plans

Ooma, for example, has been widely used by retirees who want a low monthly bill and do not mind buying the adapter upfront. For seniors, the best landline service is often the one that is simplest to use and does not surprise them with extra fees. A thoughtfully configured VoIP setup connected to a straightforward corded phone can check those boxes, as long as someone in the family is willing to handle the initial setup and occasional troubleshooting.

One catch: if your home internet or router goes down, so does your phone. For those who still think of a landline as the phone that always works even when cell towers and power are out, VoIP is a different beast.

4. Wireless and “Home Phone” Cellular Adapters

Several mobile carriers quietly market a device that lets you plug a standard phone into a cellular base station. AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile have all offered versions of this over the years.

From a regulatory perspective, this is mobile service. From a user perspective, it feels like a home phone that does not need traditional wiring. For rural Californians who have weak or unreliable copper but usable cell coverage, this can be a sensible compromise.

These adapters still rely on local power, and during a prolonged power outage, you would need a battery backup solution if you want them to function for 911.

For many customers looking for an alternative to Verizon or AT&T landlines, a cellular home phone device or even a dedicated mobile phone kept in a charging stand becomes the de facto landline replacement.

Companies That Still Support Original Copper Landlines

If your priority is “What companies now support original landlines” in the pure POTS sense, the realistic list in California today is short:

- AT&T California, in those parts of its footprint where copper has not yet been retired
- Frontier Communications, in copper-served zones
- Independent rural telcos like Volcano, Sierra, Cal-Ore, Ducor, and a handful of others, territory specific

No cable company provides true POTS. No VoIP or wireless provider does either, even if they market their service as a “landline replacement”.

If you live in an older California subdivision and your house has a gray demarcation box with a copper cable entering from the pole, you may still be able to get original POTS. Call AT&T or Frontier, give them your address,

and ask specifically for a “traditional landline” or “POTS line”, not digital voice. Occasionally, the sales system will initially say it is unavailable, but a knowledgeable rep or local technician may know of remaining copper capacity.

Given that carriers are heavily incentivized to retire copper plant, expect availability to shrink each year, not expand.

Prices: Who Is the Cheapest Landline Provider Right Now?

Exact prices change constantly, but the structure tends to fall into some recognizable ranges.

Traditional landlines from AT&T or Frontier usually fall in the 30 to 60 dollar range per month for a single residential line, before taxes and fees. Measured service that charges per local call, where still offered, may sit on the lower end. Unlimited local and long-distance packages cost more. Senior or Lifeline discounts can drop the effective bill substantially if you qualify.

Cable phone standalone pricing often ends up in the 30 to 50 dollar range once introductory promo periods expire. When bundled with broadband, the headline price may look like 10 or 15 dollars for voice, but the overall bill climbs.

Over-the-top VoIP providers are usually the cheapest option for someone who already has reliable internet. Monthly charges can range from about 5 to 30 dollars depending on included calling and features. For example, some providers charge a few dollars plus per-minute usage, while others offer flat unlimited plans. Hardware costs and porting fees are front-loaded.

If your core question is “What is the cheapest landline phone service without internet?”, and you are open to considering digital voice as a landline, the answer is almost always a lower end VoIP provider combined with a stable internet connection. If you truly mean without any internet at all, then one of the basic POTS lines from AT&T, Frontier, or a rural telco, potentially combined with Lifeline, is your option. That will nearly always cost more per month than VoIP, but it does not require internet service.

Landlines and Seniors: Reliability, Simplicity, and Safety

Most of the real-world demand for landlines in California now clusters around seniors. Adult children call asking: Which is the best landline phone provider for seniors? What is the simplest landline phone for seniors?

Three factors matter more than marketing:

- Can the service place a reliable 911 call, with correct location?
- Does it work during a power outage, and for how long?
- Is the physical handset easy to understand and use?

True POTS still wins on those first two in many areas. [Phone Systems Company California](#) [mtinc.net](#) A corded phone plugged directly into a copper wall jack, powered by the central office, will often survive a neighborhood blackout that knocks out Wi-Fi and cell towers. That robustness is why some families keep a single copper line even when everyone uses mobiles daily.

For seniors, the easiest phone is often a large-button corded or cordless handset with loud audio and minimal menus. Brands like VTech, Panasonic, and AT&T branded handsets regularly produce simple models aimed at older users. The top 20 phone brands list for smartphones may grab headlines, but for landlines, the brand list is smaller and more practical. Look for generous volume controls and a physical “call block” button rather than fancy screens.

If budget is tight, combining a Lifeline-discounted POTS line with an inexpensive amplified corded handset can be the best landline service for senior citizens who value stability over features.

Business Phone Systems that Still Depend on Landlines

When people ask “What is a business phone system?” today, the answer often involves cloud PBX platforms like RingCentral, 8x8, or Zoom Phone, tied into office phones or softphone apps. Underneath, these use SIP trunks and broadband, not POTS.

Small California businesses, though, still sometimes use one or more analog landlines from AT&T or Frontier as a backbone. They feed those into a small key system or PBX that handles multiple handsets. For industries that care deeply about uptime, such as medical clinics or alarm monitoring services, a couple of copper lines remain valuable as a fail-safe.

The best business phone system for a particular office usually blends technologies. Many firms keep one analog landline for failover and fax, then run their main voice traffic over a cloud PBX solution that offers richer features, call routing, and analytics. Pure copper voice is rarely the centerpiece anymore, but it still plays a supporting role in some sectors.

Call Feature Codes: *82, *77, *69 and Friends

Old telephone companies in the 1980s taught customers a vocabulary of star codes: short sequences you dial to enable or disable features. Many of these still work on modern landline and digital voice systems.

Here are three that people ask about often:

*82 is commonly used to unblock your caller ID on a per-call basis. If you normally have your number hidden (via “per line blocking”), dialing *82 before the number tells the network to show your ID for that call.

*77 is typically tied to anonymous call rejection. When activated, it blocks calls from people who have deliberately suppressed their caller ID. Not all carriers support *77, and some may use it for other features, so you should check with your specific provider.

*69 is usually last call return. Dialing it calls back the last number that rang your phone. On some networks it may also announce the number and time of the last call, with an option to return the call for a per-use fee.

These codes are remnants from a time when “What is the *#69 code used for?” was answered via the front of the phone book, not a web search. On VoIP systems, some of these features are moving into smartphone style apps, but the star codes still exist for many traditional and digital landlines.

The Long Fade of Old Phone Companies and Dial-Up Providers

A question that surfaces when people think about landlines is: What were the telephone companies in the 1980s? What phone companies no longer exist?

In California during that decade, the dominant local players were Pacific Bell and GTE. Long-distance giants included AT&T, MCI, and Sprint. On the data side, dial-up internet providers like CompuServe, Prodigy, later AOL, and then EarthLink, NetZero, and countless local ISPs sat on top of those phone networks.

Before AOL became a household name, early packet networks like ARPANET connected research labs. In 1973, what we call the internet today was still mostly known as ARPANET, an experimental network funded by the U.S. Department of Defense. Commercial use barely existed.

Many of those old dial-up internet companies and long-distance brands have vanished or been absorbed. MCI disappeared into Verizon. GTE merged into Bell Atlantic and then Verizon. Pacific Bell's name faded into SBC, then the "new" AT&T. Some phone companies are out of business, some simply changed badges.

If you look at the major telecommunications companies now, the list in the United States tends to center around AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile, and Comcast, with Charter (Spectrum) and Cox close behind. They occupy a similar structural place to the "big 5 phone companies" or "top 5 phone companies" of earlier decades, even if exact rankings by subscriber count change. Globally, lists of the top 3 phone service providers and top 3 best phone brands now refer more to mobile carriers and smartphone makers than to fixed landline operators.

Meanwhile, the quiet copper pairs that powered dial-up tones in the 1990s are slowly being pulled from service as carriers abandon or replace them.

Will Landlines Really Be Gone by a Specific Year?

Every few months, someone publishes a headline predicting that landlines will be phased out by a particular year: 2025, 2027, 2030. The reality is more uneven and jurisdictional.

In the United States, carriers have been pushing regulators to relieve them of their obligations to maintain copper POTS networks. Some states have already granted broad permission. California has moved more cautiously, partly because of wildfire vulnerabilities, rural [Phone Systems Company California](#) coverage, and equity issues for seniors and low-income residents.

Practically speaking, the number of active POTS lines in California declines each year. New builds nearly always use fiber or coax, not copper. When old copper is damaged, carriers may seize the chance to migrate customers to fiber or wireless instead of rebuilding. So when someone asks "What year will landlines be phased out?" the honest answer is that there will not be a single shutoff date. Instead, availability will keep shrinking until, for most households, original landlines feel as obscure as dial-up internet.

If you care deeply about keeping a landline, the actionable step is to check with your current provider each year, stay aware of any notices about network retirement, and consider backup options such as VoIP, cellular home phone devices, or business-grade voice services.

How to Choose: A Simple Checklist

When trying to decide which company is best for landline phones in your part of California, it helps to reduce the noise to a few key questions.

1. Do you absolutely need original copper POTS, or is digital voice acceptable?
2. How important is working service during a power or internet outage?
3. Is there already a solid internet connection at the location?
4. Are there seniors or vulnerable users in the home who need very simple handsets and clear 911 access?
5. What is your real budget ceiling, including taxes and fees, not just promotional rates?

Your answers will usually steer you toward one of four routes: a legacy POTS line with a simple corded phone, cable or fiber digital voice bundled with internet, an over-the-top VoIP provider to save money, or a cellular-based home phone adapter in areas where wired infrastructure is poor.

A Final Perspective

When I walk into an equipment room in an older California building and see a neat row of punch-down blocks feeding analog lines into a forty-year-old key system, I am looking at a slice of history. That same copper likely once carried fax traffic, modem screech from old dial-up internet providers, and office calls routed through operators on cord boards.

Those systems are aging out, but they have not disappeared yet. The carriers behind them have merged, rebranded, and sometimes gone bankrupt, yet the essential promise of a landline remains powerful: pick up the phone, get dial tone, talk to anyone.

In California today, that promise is fulfilled by a patchwork of AT&T, Frontier, smaller rural telcos, cable companies, VoIP providers, and mobile networks pretending to be home phones. If you know which you really want, and you are willing to ask specific questions, you can still get a landline that fits your needs, even as the state's last copper pairs quietly go dark.