

SECRETARY'S RECORD, NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Nebraska) Application No. NUSF-92
Public Service Commission, on its) Progression Order No. 10
Own Motion, to Administer the)
Nebraska Universal Service Fund)
Broadband Program.) ORDER OPENING GRANT WINDOW
)
)
) Entered: March 24, 2020

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N A N D F I N D I N G S

There are many challenges Nebraskans will face during these next few months in response to the novel coronavirus. As students are asked to continue learning from home, affordable broadband connectivity has become even more vital. The Commission applauds those carriers that have already stepped up to provide free connectivity during this crisis and encourages other carriers to do so as well.

Historically, the Commission has made support available through its Broadband Adoption program for pilot projects finding that universal service support should be used to assist low-income subscribers in obtaining affordable access to broadband services in their homes. We find it necessary and appropriate to do so again by making support available on a temporary basis to ensure that consumers have access to critical services and students can continue to learn in at-home environments.

Accordingly, the Commission allocates \$1 million for reimbursement of broadband adoption projects designed to provide free or reduced broadband services to low-income consumers where needed to facilitate online learning. This broadband adoption support will apply only to new lines of service for low-income families added after March 15. Support will be made available for services provided beginning March 15 and through the end of May, 2020. Any telecommunications carrier which holds a certificate as a local exchange carrier or is registered with the Commission as a communications provider may file an application seeking NUSF adoption support as of May 1. Applications must include the names and addresses for the households for which reimbursement is being requested, the total number of households supported, retail pricing information, a service area description, the proposed discounted rate, broadband speed packages available, and the requested grant amount. Applicants must certify that the subscribers qualify as low income based on a household income at 135% or less than the federal poverty guidelines based on your household size and state; or through participation in one of the following programs: 1) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps; 2) Medicaid; 3) Supplemental Security Income (SSI); 4) Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA); or 5) Veterans Pension and

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Survivors Benefit. Reimbursement is intended to cover customer costs that are not already covered through existing programs, such as Lifeline. The minimum speed offered must be 25/3 Mbps. In order to be eligible for support carriers must not require customer contracts, may not charge connection/disconnection fees, and may not charge late fees for late/nonpayment of service. All other terms and conditions of service must also be disclosed to the Commission. The window for applications will close on August 31, 2020. The Commission, in its discretion may extend the timeframe for this support or extend the application window. In the event that requested support exceeds the total amount allocated through this Order, the Commission may reduce grant support awarded on a prorated basis for each applicant.

Applicants must file one (1) original paper copy and one (1) electronic copy of their application. In addition to the paper applications, applicants must file electronic copies of their budget in an electronic excel format. Also, if the application contains confidential information, each applicant must also file one (1) paper and one (1) electronic redacted copy of the application. All electronic submissions should be directed to psc.nusf-filings@nebraska.gov.

The Commission intends to consider and award grant applications on an expedited basis.

O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that the filing window for grant applications be opened as of May 1, 2020 and shall close on August 31, 2020 as provided herein.

ENTERED AND MADE EFFECTIVE at Lincoln, Nebraska this 24th day of March, 2020.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

Rick Johnson
Cystal Koadler
Jim Schram
Dee Waddell

Mary Fiddler
Chair

ATTEST:
Michelle H. 20
Executive Director