

SECRETARY'S RECORD, 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 GRANTING MODIFICATION
) REQUEST
)
) Entered: May 5, 2020

BY THE COMMISSION:

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

On March 24, 2020, the Commission allocated \$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. Support will be made available for services provided beginning March 15 and through the end of May, 2020. The Commission opened the grant window for carriers to request support beginning May 1 and concluding on August 31, 2020. On April 16, 2020, the Commission received a request from the Nebraska Rural Independent Companies (RIC) seeking modifications to the program criteria.

In summary, RIC requested the Commission revise the minimum speed specified in the March 24, 2020 Order from 25/3 Mbps to 10/1 Mbps, stating that in some areas speeds of 25/3 Mbps are not available. In addition, RIC requested the Commission modify the criteria for subscribers to qualify as "low-income" to include persons that have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and consequently have made application for unemployment compensation benefits. Finally, the RIC members ask the Commission to waive or remove the requirement that a carrier must certify to the low-income status of the subscriber as a condition to qualify for reimbursement of the discounted or free broadband service provided by the carrier.

While the Commission has concerns with lowering the speed threshold to 10/1 Mbps in areas where 25/3 Mbps is not available, the Commission finds that it may be better than the alternative, which could be a lack of service altogether. Accordingly, the Commission finds that NUSF support will be made available where the carrier offers speeds of at least 25/3 Mbps or the fastest service the carrier has available between 10/1 Mbps and up to the 25/3 Mbps speed standard. Further, upon consideration of the other modifications requested in RIC's April 16 filing, the Commission finds that such

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modifications are reasonable. Accordingly, the Commission modifies the program criteria as requested.

The Commission further clarifies that costs related to providing free wi-fi hotspots will also be eligible for reimbursement to the extent that these costs are related to providing free broadband availability to consumers due to the pandemic. Carriers asking for reimbursement should outline the specific costs related to providing this service in their applications for reimbursement.

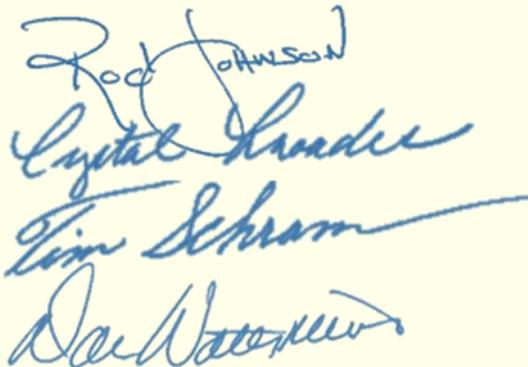
O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that the modifications requested by the Nebraska Rural Independent Companies as presented in the filing dated April 16, 2020, shall be, and they are hereby adopted.

ENTERED AND MADE EFFECTIVE at Lincoln, Nebraska this 5th day of May, 2020.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:





Chair

ATTEST:


Executive Director