



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

News Media Information 202-418-0500
Internet: www.fcc.gov
TTY: 888-835-5322

DA 22-859

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URBAN RATE SURVEY TIMELINE FOR 2023

WC Docket No. 10-90

The Office of Economics and Analytics (OEA) and the Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) hereby initiate the urban rate survey for 2023.¹ The information collected in this survey will be used to develop voice and broadband reasonable comparability benchmarks that will be in place in 2023.

In accordance with the *URS Order*, to set next year's benchmarks we will be collecting the rates offered by a random sample of providers of fixed services identified using December 2021 FCC Form 477 data. We will collect separate samples for fixed voice and fixed broadband services, in up to 500 urban census tracts for voice services and up to 2,000 urban census tracts for broadband services.² Because some providers serve many urban census tracts, these providers may receive surveys for multiple census tracts. Notifications that a provider is required to complete a survey will be sent via email to each selected provider's FCC Form 477 contact person and certifying official on **August 15, 2022**. The survey consists of an online reporting form, which will be accessible only to the selected providers. The email notification will provide detailed information on how to access and complete the survey online and how to obtain technical assistance. Completed surveys will be due on **September 19, 2022**.

Additional information on the urban rate survey, including the *URS Order* referenced in this Public Notice, can be found on the Commission's urban rate survey webpage at

¹ In April 2013, WCB adopted an Order setting the form and content for the annual survey of urban rates for fixed voice and fixed broadband residential services. *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90, Order, 28 FCC Rcd 4242 (WCB/WTB 2013) (*URS Order*).

² For this year's survey, on our own motion, we find good cause to waive, to the extent necessary, the definition of "urban" in the *URS Order*, which relies on 2010 census data and definitions. *See id.* at 4244, para. 10 (defining "urban" as "all 2010 Census urban areas and urban clusters that sit within an MSA [Metropolitan Statistical Area]"). The release of 2020 census data requires a new definition of "urban" for this year's survey because the Census Bureau redrew census tract boundaries and modified its definition of urban areas, but the Census Bureau has not yet published the boundaries of urban areas. These constitute special circumstances that warrant a deviation from our use of the prior definition of "urban." Moreover, it is in the public interest for us to use the most recently available census data and definitions so that the survey collects rates on today's urban areas, rather than areas previously determined to be urban. *See generally Cross Telephone Company, LLC Request for Waiver of Tribal Land Bidding Credit Rule Concerning Osage County, OK*, Order, DA 21-1533 (WTB 2021) (finding good cause to rely on alternative data than the 20 year-old data specified in the rule); *TV 34, Inc. Petition for Waiver of Section 76.66(e)(3) of the Commission's Rules*, 20 FCC Rcd 20522, 20530, para. 23 (MB 2005) (granting a waiver of section 76.66(e)(3) to allow the use of 2004-2005 Nielsen data rather than the 2003-2004 Nielsen data specified by the rule). Accordingly, for the purposes of this year's survey we define an urban tract as a 2020 census tract in which at least 80% of housing units are within a 2010 census urban area with a population of 50,000 or more. This definition will exclude certain census tracts that were previously encompassed by the definition of "urban," which we expect will allow us to more precisely target urban areas. We plan to seek comment on a permanent change to the definition of "urban" in a forthcoming public notice.

<https://www.fcc.gov/general/urban-rate-survey-data-resources>.

For questions about the urban rate survey, please contact Craig Stroup in the Industry Analysis Division of the Office of Economics and Analytics at Craig.Stroup@fcc.gov or (202) 418-0989. For additional information about this Public Notice, please contact Suzanne Yelen at Suzanne.Yelen@fcc.gov or (202) 418-0626.

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