



# PUBLIC NOTICE

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## WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS BUREAU PUBLISHES THE MOBILE INITIAL ELIGIBLE-AREAS MAP FOR THE ALASKA CONNECT FUND

### WC Docket No. 23-328

By this Public Notice, the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB), in coordination with the Office of Economics and Analytics (OEA), publishes the final version of the Initial Eligible-Areas (EA) Map, v.1.3, for the mobile part of the Alaska Connect Fund (ACF).<sup>1</sup> The Initial EA Map can be found at the following link: <https://www.fcc.gov/wireline-competition/alaska-connect-fund#mobile-eligible-areas-map>. Providers must rely upon the data in the Initial EA Map, v.1.3, to create their initial ACF performance plans.<sup>2</sup>

Alaska Plan and ACF have fundamental differences, such as different data sources and commitments.<sup>3</sup> In order to transition from the Alaska Plan to the ACF, for which support begins on January 1, 2027,<sup>4</sup> and to ensure that all providers fully understand which areas are eligible and ineligible for ACF mobile support,<sup>5</sup> the Commission, in the *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, required WTB, in coordination with OEA, to publish a map or maps of these areas.<sup>6</sup> The EA

<sup>1</sup> Subsequent releases will be version 2.0 and higher.

<sup>2</sup> 47 CFR § 54.318(c)(2), (f)(2), (f)(8); *Connect America Fund; Alaska Connect Fund; Connect America Fund—Alaska Plan; Universal Service Reform—Mobility Fund; ETC Annual Reports and Certifications; Telecommunications Carriers Eligible to Receive Universal Service Support*, WC Docket Nos. 10-90, 23-328, 16-271, 14-58, and 09-197; WT Docket No. 10-208, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 39 FCC Rcd 12099, 12148, para. 111 (2024) (*2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*).

<sup>3</sup> The Alaska Plan was based on the FCC Form 477 data set and relied on population-based commitments based on where Alaskans were likely to live. The ACF will require geographic commitments at the hexagon, resolution 9 (hex-9) level and rely on Broadband Data Collection data to ensure that coverage is provided where Americans live, work, and travel. *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12143, 12148-49, 12157-60, 12162-63, paras. 111-12, 137-42, 147-48, n.266.

<sup>4</sup> 47 CFR § 54.318(d).

<sup>5</sup> *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12148, para. 111

<sup>6</sup> 47 CFR § 54.318(c)(2); *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12148-49, paras. 111-12. The creation of the Initial Eligible Areas Map, v.1.3, was an iterative process that relied on substantial cooperation with the mobile Alaska Plan providers that will participate in the ACF. See *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Seeks Comment on the Initial Eligible-Areas Map and Performance Plan Template for the Alaska Connect Fund*, WC Docket No. 23-328, Public Notice DA 25-916 (WTB rel. Sept. 30, 2025) (*EA Map Notice*); *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Extends Comment Deadlines for Alaska Connect Fund Eligible-Areas Map And Performance Plan Template*, WC Docket No. 23-328, Public Notice, DA 25-959 (WTB rel. Nov. 19, 2025) (*EA Map Comment Extension Notice*); *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Extends Reply Comment Deadline for*

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maps also differentiate which eligible areas are duplicate-support areas, single-support areas, or other eligible areas.<sup>7</sup> The resulting Initial EA Map, v.1.3, shows where each provider is using support to offer service in their respective single- and duplicate-support areas<sup>8</sup> and the other eligible areas where support may be used and claimed as single-support areas in their ACF Performance Plans.<sup>9</sup>

*Using the Initial Eligible-Areas Map for Alaska Connect Fund Performance Plans.* Providers must rely on the Initial EA Map, v.1.3, to create their initial ACF performance plans, which are due no later than September 1, 2026.<sup>10</sup> Some areas that were eligible to receive support under the Alaska Plan are ineligible for support under the ACF, either because the area became competitive or was designated untestable.<sup>11</sup> After today's publication of the Initial EA Map, v.1.3, ineligible areas will not change, and no duplicate-support areas will be added or expanded for the duration of the ACF.<sup>12</sup> Because all ineligible areas and Alaska Plan support areas as assessed with the December 31, 2024 Broadband Data Collection (BDC)<sup>13</sup> data are now

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*Alaska Connect Fund Eligible-Areas Map and Performance Plan Template And Provides Additional Information Regarding Updated Eligible Areas Map*, WC Docket No. 23-328, DA 25-1061, Public Notice (WTB rel. Dec. 16, 2025) (extending reply comment period until Jan. 7, 2026); *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Seeks Comment on Eligible-Areas Map Version 1.2*, WC Docket No. 23-328, Public Notice, DA 26-426 (WTB rel. May 1, 2026) (*EA Map v1.2 Notice*); *Wireless Telecommunications Bureau Extends Comment Deadline for Alaska Connect Fund Eligible-Areas Map v.1.2*, WC Docket No. 23-328, Public Notice, DA 26-519 (WTB rel. May 22, 2026). Previous versions of the EA Map can be found on the ACF webpage. See FCC, Alaska Connect Fund, Mobile Eligible Areas Map—Version History, <https://www.fcc.gov/wireline-competition/mobile-eligible-areas-map-version-history>.

<sup>7</sup> 47 CFR § 54.318(c)(2); *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12148-49, paras. 111-12.

<sup>8</sup> 47 CFR § 54.318(d)(1); *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12134, para. 75 (defining single-support areas as areas “where only one mobile provider receives support and offers service”); *Connect American Fund; Alaska Connect Fund et al.*, WC Docket Nos. 23-328 et al., Alaska Connect Fund Order on Reconsideration and Clarification, Alaska Plan Waiver Order, and Order, 40 FCC Rcd 7716, 7719, para. 7 (2025) (*ACF Reconsideration Order*).

<sup>9</sup> See 47 CFR § 54.318(e), (h); see also *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12161, para. 145.

<sup>10</sup> 47 CFR § 54.318(c)(2), (f)(2), (f)(5), (f)(8); *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12148-49, para. 111-12. The Bureau released the *Performance Plan Template Order*, which adopted the Performance Plan Template that mobile providers must use to submit their ACF performance plans for Bureau review and approval. *Alaska Connect Fund*, WC Docket No. 23-328, Order, DA 26-631 (WTB Jun. 25, 2026) (*Performance Plan Template Order*). The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) will provide more details for submitting these performance plans via a portal. While all performance plans must be submitted through USAC's portal and performance plan submissions to USAC's portal is sufficient to opt in, to ensure proper opt in before September 1, 2026, a provider may also email their initial performance plans to [ACF@fcc.gov](mailto:ACF@fcc.gov) if they experience difficulties with the USAC performance plan portal. 47 CFR § 54.318(b).

<sup>11</sup> See 47 CFR § 54.318(c)(1)(ii)-(iii).

<sup>12</sup> See 47 CFR § 54.318(c)(1) (defining all ineligible areas as having been previously ineligible or set with the Broadband Data Collection availability data as of December 31, 2024); *ACF Reconsideration Order*, 40 FCC Rcd at 7736-37, para. 43. The *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order* also asked as part of a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking about how support should be awarded long term in duplicate-support areas. See *Alaska Connect Fund Order and FNPRM*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12184-91, paras. 206-29.

<sup>13</sup> The Initial Eligible Areas Map relies on December 2024 BDC data. *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12148, para. 111. As a practical matter, this data set will be locked with the April 9, 2026 updates to December 31, 2024 BDC coverage data.

settled,<sup>14</sup> providers can now determine the number of hex-9s<sup>15</sup> for which they are currently receiving support but that are newly ineligible under the ACF.

Mobile providers that receive support under the Alaska Plan for coverage of newly ineligible areas in the ACF and wish to retain the support attributed to those areas must cover a comparable number of otherwise uncovered hex-9s elsewhere.<sup>16</sup> When a provider submits its ACF Performance Plan, all comparable areas that it may seek to claim are limited to those available from the “other eligible areas,”<sup>17</sup> as all other hexes are either ineligible or part of another provider’s recognized support area.<sup>18</sup> Where more than one provider has a pending performance plan that seeks to claim the same “other eligible” hex-9, the provider that shows coverage to that hex-9 first, based on BDC data, will be given the preference to claim that hex-9 as part of its single-support area.<sup>19</sup> In the event that both providers report their first coverage of the hex-9 in the same data set, the hex-9 will be considered a single-support area attributed to whichever provider has its updated performance plan accepted first.<sup>20</sup>

*Making Updates for Future Eligible-Areas Map Releases.* For performance plans that claim additional hex-9s,<sup>21</sup> the provider must also fully complete and submit the EA Map Updates Template with the list of hex-9s it wants credited to its support area.<sup>22</sup> As providers claim areas as their additional single-support areas, WTB, in coordination with OEA, will publish additional

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<sup>14</sup> *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12148, para. 111; 47 CFR § 54.318(c)(1)(ii)-(iii), (d)(1)(ii), (f)(8). While the number of newly ineligible hex-9s are locked, WTB must provide an additional assessment of the provider’s Alaska Plan service areas after the Alaska Plan ends on December 31, 2026. *ACF Reconsideration Order*, 40 FCC Rcd at 7730 n.104. To the extent that a mobile provider needs to expand its coverage to meet its Alaska Plan commitments after the release of the Initial EA Map, v.1.3, WTB may conclude that a provider used Alaska Plan support in additional newly ineligible areas, requiring the provider to owe additional comparable areas. 47 CFR § 54.318(h).

<sup>15</sup> Alaska Connect Fund, Frequently Asked Question #1, <https://www.fcc.gov/wireline-competition/alaska-connect-fund#eligible-areas-map-faq>.

<sup>16</sup> See 47 CFR § 54.318(h); *ACF Reconsideration Order*, 40 FCC Rcd at 7738, para. 45 n.178; see also *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12150, para. 116 (“Where a provider commits to cover the same number of uncovered hex-9s, that will be considered a safe harbor, . . . However, if a provider wishes to commit to fewer hex-9s than the number of hex-9s that were deemed ineligible, it must demonstrate why this lower number constitutes “comparable” coverage.”). The Commission delegated authority to WTB, in coordination with OEA, to work with providers regarding the number of comparable hexes they must commit to cover to meet the requirements for preserving existing support for an area of the Alaska Plan that is newly ineligible for the ACF. 47 CFR § 54.318(h); *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12150, para. 116.

<sup>17</sup> *ACF Reconsideration Order*, 40 FCC Rcd at 7738, para. 45 n.178; Alaska Connect Fund, Frequently Asked Question #6, <https://www.fcc.gov/wireline-competition/alaska-connect-fund#eligible-areas-map-faq>.

<sup>18</sup> See 47 CFR § 54.318(e) (“A mobile provider . . . is prohibited from using Alaska Connect Fund support to provide service in areas other than its own single-support or duplicate-support areas or other eligible areas, . . .”).

<sup>19</sup> 47 CFR § 54.318(h)(5); *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12150, para. 117.

<sup>20</sup> 47 CFR § 54.318(h)(5); *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12150, para. 117.

<sup>21</sup> Providers may expand their single support areas by claiming additional hex-9s through comparable areas or voluntary expansion.

<sup>22</sup> The EA Map Updates Template will be available for download at <https://www.fcc.gov/wireline-competition/alaska-connect-fund#mobile-eligible-areas-map>. Going forward, a provider should solely use the EA Map Update Template to request a change of a classification of a hex-9 from “other eligible” to “single support.”

versions of the Eligible-Areas Map so that other providers do not attempt to claim the same areas.<sup>23</sup>

For further information about this proceeding, email [ACF@fcc.gov](mailto:ACF@fcc.gov).

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<sup>23</sup> See 47 CFR § 54.318(e); *2024 Alaska Connect Fund Order*, 39 FCC Rcd at 12148-50, paras. 111-12, 117; *ACF Reconsideration Order*, 40 FCC Rcd at 7737-38, para. 45, n.178. WTB recognizes the indeterminate and greenfield nature of many comparable-areas or voluntary expansion claims and will consider shifts in support areas if, in the course of building out to those areas, providers find that they cannot cover some previously claimed hex-9s but can cover other eligible hex-9s. Cf. Letter from John T. Nakahata and Annick M. Banoun, Counsel, GCI, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, WC Docket No. 23-328 (Apr. 30, 2026) (“To comply with performance commitments, providers should be able to substitute an adjacent non-designated other eligible hex(s) for a designated hex(s).”). With an exception for where hex-9s cross a census tract, these corrections would solely be addressed with the EA Map Update Template.