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For Immediate Release

**FCC RELEASES LIST OF QUALIFIED BIDDERS FOR PHASE I OF
RURAL DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY FUND AUCTION**

***Beginning on October 29, 386 Applicants May Bid for Up to \$16 Billion in Support
to Bring Broadband to Up to 10.25 Million Unserved Americans***

WASHINGTON, October 13, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission today announced that 386 applicants are qualified to bid in the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase I auction. In a Public Notice, the Rural Broadband Auctions Task Force, Office of Economics and Analytics, and Wireline Competition Bureau identified the qualified applicants and provided educational materials for participating in the auction.

The number of qualified bidders represents a more than 75% increase in the number of bidders in 2018’s successful Connect America Fund Phase II auction and also includes bidding consortia that contain multiple service providers. Qualified bidders will compete to receive up to \$16 billion over ten years to provide broadband to wholly unserved areas, with priority given to bids for higher speeds (up to 1 Gbps) and lower latency.

“With today’s announcement, we are taking one of the last steps before ringing the opening bell for the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, our biggest and boldest step yet to bridge the digital divide for over 10 million unserved consumers across rural America,” said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. “The unprecedented interest in this auction is due in large part to key decisions by the FCC, including providing substantial funding and promoting technological neutrality toward potential bidding participants, as well as our staff’s extensive work to spread awareness of the program and ensure the broadest participation in a competitive auction that will deliver real benefits to rural Americans across the country.”

Last week the Commission [released](#) the state-by-state list of areas eligible for bidding in the Phase I auction, which will prioritize bids for the deployment of broadband networks providing higher speeds up to 1 Gbps and lower latency. Once the auction concludes, the Commission will release the auction results, including identifying which bidders won support and which areas were awarded. Additional information about the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase I (Auction 904) can be found at: <https://www.fcc.gov/auction/904>.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).