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For Immediate Release

FCC ANNOUNCES OVER \$1.2 BILLION FOR BROADBAND THROUGH RURAL DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY FUND WHILE ADDING NEW ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY MEASURES

New Rural Broadband Accountability Plan Will Increase Audits, Verifications and Transparency

WASHINGTON, January 28, 2022—The Federal Communications Commission today announced that it is ready to authorize more than \$1.2 billion through the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund to fund new broadband deployments in 32 states. In the largest funding round to date, 23 broadband providers will bring broadband service to over 1 million locations. The Commission also has created the Rural Broadband Accountability Plan, a new effort to monitor and ensure compliance for universal service high-cost programs including the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund.

“Today’s announcement means more connectivity is coming to consumers, while we continue our commitment to make sure that funding goes to areas that truly need it,” **said Chairwoman Rosenworcel**. “The new Rural Broadband Accountability Plan will speed up our audit and verification processes and for the first time make public the results of verifications, audits, and speed and latency testing. These new measures will help ensure that the providers we fund in this program will do the job.”

The Rural Broadband Accountability Plan makes a number of changes and enhancements to existing audit and verification procedures, including:

- ***Increasing audits and verifications of support recipients*** – The number of audits and verifications will double in 2022 as compared to 2021, and include on-site audits as well as audits and verifications based upon random selection.
- ***Increasing audits and verifications of large and higher-risk support recipients*** – The largest dollar recipients will be subject to an on-site audit in at least one state and higher-risk recipients will be subject to additional audits and verifications.
- ***Increasing program transparency*** – For the first time, results of verifications, audits, and speed and latency performance testing will be made public on USAC’s website.

A fact sheet on the Rural Broadband Accountability Plan is available here:

<https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-creates-rural-broadband-accountability-plan>

With today’s sixth funding wave, the Commission has now announced over \$4 billion in funding to winning bidders for new deployments. Meanwhile, Commission staff continue to carefully review and process long-form applications on a rolling basis. Over the past year the Commission has taken a number of actions to strengthen its oversight of the program, including:

- Sending letters to 197 applicants concerning areas where there was evidence of existing service or questions of waste. Bidders have already chosen not to pursue support in approximately 5,000 census blocks in response to the Commission's letters.
- Denying waivers for winning bidders that have not made appropriate efforts to secure state approvals or prosecute their applications. These bidders would have otherwise received approximately \$350 million.
- Publishing a list of areas where providers had defaulted, thereby making those places available for other broadband funding opportunities.
- Conducting an exhaustive technical, financial, and legal review of all winning bidders.

For a list of RDOF providers and funding amounts by state, see <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).