

**R746. Public Service Commission, Administration.**

**R746-360. Universal Public Telecommunications Service Support Fund.**

**R746-360-1. General Provisions.**

A. Authorization -- Section 54-8b-15 authorizes the Commission to establish an expendable trust fund, known as the Universal Public Telecommunications Service Support Fund, the "universal service fund," "USF" or the "fund," to promote equitable cost recovery and universal service by ensuring that customers have access to basic telecommunications service at just, reasonable and affordable rates, consistent with the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

B. Purpose -- The purposes of these rules are:

1. to govern the methods, practices and procedures by which:  
a. the USF is created, maintained, and funded by end-user surcharges applied to retail rates;

b. funds are collected for and disbursed from the USF to qualifying telecommunications corporations so that they [~~will provide~~] are able to recover the reasonable and prudent costs of providing basic telecommunications service [at] while charging just, reasonable and affordable rates; and,

2. [~~to govern the relationship between the fund and the trust fund established under 54-8b-12, and establish the mechanism for the phase out and expiration of the latter fund.] to ensure funds collected and disbursed from the USF are used efficiently and in the public interest.~~

C. Application of the Rules -- The rules apply to all retail providers that provide intrastate public telecommunications services.

**R746-360-2. Definitions.**

A. Affordable Base Rate (ABR) -- means the monthly per line retail rates, charges or fees for basic telecommunications service which the Commission determines to be just, reasonable, and affordable for a designated support area. The Affordable Base Rate shall be established by the Commission. The Affordable Base Rate does not include the applicable USF retail surcharge, municipal franchise fees, taxes, and other incidental surcharges.

B. Average Revenue Per Line -- means the average revenue for each access line computed by dividing the sum of all revenue derived from a telecommunications corporation's provision of public telecommunications services, including, but not limited to, revenues received from the provision of services in both the interstate and intrastate jurisdictions, whether designated "retail," "wholesale," or some other categorization, all revenues derived from providing network elements, services, functionalities, etc. required under the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, Pub. L. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56 or the Utah Telecommunications Reform Act, Laws of Utah 1995, Chapter 269, all support funds received from the Federal Universal Service Support Fund, and each and every other revenue source or support or funding mechanism used to assist in recovering the costs of providing public telecommunications services in a designated support area by that telecommunications corporation's number of access lines in the

designated support area.

C. Basic Telecommunications Service -- means a local exchange service consisting of access to the public switched network; touch-tone, or its functional equivalent; local flat-rated, unlimited usage, exclusive of extended area service; single-party service with telephone number listed free in directories that are received free; access to operator services; access to directory assistance, lifeline and telephone relay assistance; access to 911 and E911 emergency services; access to long-distance carriers; access to toll limitation services; and other services as may be determined by the Commission.

D. Designated Support Area -- means the geographic area used to determine USF support distributions. A designated support area, or "support area," need not be the same as a USF proxy model's geographic unit. The Commission will determine the appropriate designated support areas for determining USF support requirements. Unless otherwise specified by the Commission, the designated support area for a rate-of-return regulated Incumbent telephone corporation shall be its entire certificated service territory located in the State of Utah.

E. Facilities-Based Provider -- means a telecommunications corporation that uses its own facilities, a combination of its own facilities and essential facilities or unbundled network elements obtained from another telecommunications corporation, or a telecommunications corporation which solely uses essential facilities or unbundled network elements obtained from another telecommunications corporation to provide public telecommunications services.

F. Geographic Unit -- means the geographic area used by a USF proxy cost model for calculating costs of public telecommunications services. The Commission will determine the appropriate geographic area to be used in determining public telecommunications service costs.

G. Net Fund Distributions -- means the difference between the gross fund distribution to which a qualifying telecommunications corporation is entitled and the gross fund surcharge revenues collected by that company, when the former amount is greater than the latter amount.

H. Net Fund Contributions -- means the difference between the gross fund distribution to which a qualifying telecommunications corporation is entitled and the gross fund surcharge revenues generated by that company, when the latter amount is greater than the former amount.

~~[I. Trust Fund -- means the Trust Fund established by 54-8b-12.]~~

[F]I. USF Proxy Model Costs -- means the total, jurisdictionally unseparated, cost estimate for public telecommunications services, in a geographic unit, based on the forward-looking, economic cost proxy model(s) chosen by the Commission. The level of geographic cost disaggregation to be used for purposes of assessing the need for and the level of USF support within a geographic unit will be determined by the Commission. These models shall be provided by the Commission

by January 2, 2001.

[K]J. Universal Service Fund (USF or fund) -- means the Universal Public Telecommunications Service Support Fund established by 54-8b-15 and set forth by this rule.

**R746-360-8. Calculation of Fund Distributions in Rate-of-Return Incumbent Telephone Corporation Territories.**

(A) Determination of Support Amounts --

(1) Incumbent telephone corporation - Monies from the fund will equal the numerical difference between the Incumbent telephone corporation's total embedded costs of providing public telecommunications services, for a designated support area, less the product of the Incumbent telephone corporation's Average Revenue Per Line, for the designated support area, times the Incumbent telephone corporation's active access lines in the designated support area. To the extent the Commission finds that inclusion of any cost will result in an inefficient use of USF funds or in a use of USF funds that is inconsistent with the public interest, such cost will be excluded from total embedded costs. [±]Total embedded costs[±] shall include a weighted average rate of return on capital of the intrastate and interstate jurisdictions. For example, in the case of an Incumbent telephone corporation whose costs are allocated fifty percent to each jurisdiction and whose interstate return is 11.25 percent and whose intrastate return authorized by the Commission is 9 percent, the weighted average return on capital would be 10.125 percent.

(a) In order to determine the interstate return on capital to calculate the weighted average rate of return on capital for Incumbent telephone corporations, the Commission shall:

(i) use the prior year return reported by the National Exchange Carriers Association (NECA) to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on FCC Form 492 for Incumbent telephone corporations that do separations between intrastate and interstate jurisdictions under 47 CFR Part 36. In the event that the Incumbent local telephone corporation uses a future test period as provided in Utah Code Ann. Subsection 54-4-4(3)(b)(i), the interstate return for these Incumbent telephone corporations shall be the average of the actual return for the prior three years as reported on FCC Form 492.

(ii) use NECA's most recent interstate allocation computation filed at the FCC under 47 CFR Part 69.606 and the actual interstate return on capital reported by NECA as described in R746-360-8 A.1.a.i. for average schedule Incumbent telephone corporations.

(iii) use the actual interstate return of an Incumbent telephone corporation's relevant tariff group reported to the FCC in its most recent FCC Form 492A for Incumbent telephone corporations that are regulated on a price-cap basis in the interstate jurisdiction.

(2) Telecommunications corporations other than Incumbent telephone corporations - Monies from the fund will equal the respective Incumbent telephone corporation's average access line support amount for the designated support area, determined by dividing the Incumbent telephone corporation's USF monies for the designated support area

by the Incumbent telephone corporation's active access lines in the designated support area, times the eligible telecommunications corporation's number of active access lines in the designated support area.

(B) Lifeline Support -- Eligible telecommunications corporations shall receive additional USF funds to recover any discount granted to lifeline customers, participating in a Commission-approved Lifeline program, that is not recovered from federal lifeline support mechanisms.

(C) Exemptions -- Telecommunications corporations may petition to receive an exemption for any provision of this rule or to receive additional USF support, for use in designated support areas, to support additional services which the Commission determines to be consistent with universal service purposes and permitted by law.

#### **R746-360-9. One-Time Distributions From the Fund.**

A. Applications for One-Time Distributions -- Telecommunications corporations, whether they are or are not receiving USF funds under R746-360-7 or R746-360-8, potential customers not presently receiving service because facilities are not available, or customers receiving inadequate service may apply to the Commission for one-time distributions from the fund for extension of service to a customer, or customers, not presently served or for amelioration of inadequate service.

1. These distributions are to be made only in extraordinary circumstances, when traditional methods of funding and service provision are infeasible.

2. One-time distributions will not be made for:

a. New subdivision developments;

b. Property improvements, such as cable placement, when associated with curb and gutter installations; or

c. Seasonal developments that are exclusively vacation homes.

i. Vacation home is defined as: A secondary residence which is primarily used for recreation and is unoccupied for a period of four consecutive weeks per year.

3. An application for a one-time distribution may be filed with the Commission by an individual or group of consumers desiring telephone service or improved service, a telecommunications corporation on behalf of those consumers, the Division of Public Utilities, or any entity permitted by law to request agency action.

An application shall identify the service(s) sought, the area to be served and the individuals or entities that will be served if the one-time distribution is approved.

4. Following the application's filing, affected telecommunications corporations shall provide engineering, facilities, costs, and any other pertinent information that will assist in the Commission's consideration of the application.

5. In considering the one-time distribution application, the Commission will examine relevant facts including the type and grade of service to be provided, the cost of providing the service, the

demonstrated need for the service, whether the customer is within the service territory of a telecommunications corporation, whether the proposed service is for a primary residence, the provisions for service or line extension currently available, and other relevant factors to determine whether the one-time distribution is in the public interest.

B. Presumed Reasonable Amounts and Terms -- Unless otherwise ordered by the Commission, the maximum one-time distribution will be no more than \$10,000 per customer for customers of rate-of-return regulated companies. For customers of non-rate of return companies, the maximum one-time distribution shall be calculated so that the required customer payments would equal the payments required from a customer of a rate-of-return regulated company. The Commission will presume a company's service or line extension terms and conditions reasonable, for a subscriber in connection with one-time universal service fund distribution requests, if the costs of service extension, for each extension, are recovered as follows:

1. For rate-of-return regulated Local Exchange Carriers who request USF One-Time Distribution support for facility placement: The first \$2,500 of cost coverage per account is provided by the company; and for cost amounts exceeding \$2,500 per account up to two times the statewide average loop investment per account for rate-of-return regulated telecommunication companies, as determined annually by the Division of Public Utilities, the company will pay 50 percent of the costs of the project.

2. For non-rate-of-return Local Exchange Carriers who request USF One-Time Distribution support for facility placement the first \$2,500 of cost coverage per account is provided by the company; and all other costs are shared between the customer and the fund as provided herein.

3. For projects that exceed \$2,500 per account, but are equal to or less than \$10,000 per account, the customer shall pay 25 percent of the costs that exceed \$2,500. For projects that exceed \$10,000 per account, but are equal to or less than \$20,000 per account, the customer shall pay 50 percent of the costs that are greater than \$10,000 plus the previously calculated amount. For projects exceeding \$20,000 per account the customer shall pay 75 percent of the cost above \$20,000 until the State Universal Service Support Fund has paid the maximum amount as provided herein, any project costs above that level will be paid for 100 percent by the customer.

4. The State Universal Service Support Fund shall pay the difference between the sum of the defined company contributions plus customer contribution amounts and the total project cost up to the maximum amount provided herein. To the extent the Commission finds that inclusion of any cost will result in an inefficient use of USF funds or in a use of USF funds that is inconsistent with the public interest, such cost will be excluded from the total project cost.

5. Other terms and conditions for service extension shall be reviewed by the Commission in its consideration of an application and may be altered by the Commission in order to approve the use of

universal service funds through the requested one-time distribution.

C. Combination of One-Time Distribution Funds with Additional Customer Funds and Future Customer Payment Recovery --

1. At least 51 percent of the potential customers must be full-time residents in the geographic area being petitioned for and must be willing to pay the initial up-front contribution to the project as calculated by the Commission or its agent.

2. Qualified customers in the area shall be notified by the telecommunications corporation of the nature and extent of the proposed service extension including the necessary customer contribution amounts to participate in the project. Customer contribution payments shall be made prior to the start of construction.

In addition to qualified customers, the Local Exchange Company needs to make a good faith effort to contact all known property owners within the geographic boundaries of the proposed project and invite them to participate on the same terms as the qualified customers. Local Exchange Companies may ask potential customers to help in the process of contacting other potential customers.

3. New developments and empty lots will not be considered in the cost analysis for USF construction projects unless the property owner is willing to pay the per account costs for each lot as specified in this rule.

4. Potential customers who are notified and initially decline participation in the line extension project, but subsequently decide to participate, prior to completion of the project, may participate in the project if they make a customer contribution payment, prior to completion of the project, of 105 percent of the original customer contribution amount.

5. For a period of five years following completion of a project, new customers who seek telecommunications service in the project area, shall pay a customer contribution payment equal to 110 percent of the amount paid by the original customers in the project.

6. The telecommunications corporation shall ensure that all customer contribution payments required by R746-360-9(C)(3), (4), and (5) are collected. Funds received through these payments shall be sent to the universal service fund administrator. The company is responsible for tracking and notification to the Commission when the USF has been fully compensated. All monies will be collected and reported by the end of each calendar year, December 31st.

7. For each customer added during the five-year period following project completion, the telecommunications corporation and new customers shall bear the costs to extend service pursuant to the company's service or line extension terms and conditions, up to the telecommunications corporation's original contribution per customer for the project and the customer contributions required by this rule.

The company may petition the Commission for a determination of the recovery from the universal service fund and the new customer for costs which exceed this amount.

D. Impact of Distribution on Rate of Return Companies -- A one-time distribution from the fund shall be recorded on the books

of a rate base, rate of return regulated LEC as an aid to construction and treated as an offset to rate base.

E. Notice and Hearing -- Following notice that a one-time distribution application has been filed, any interested person may request a hearing or seek to intervene to protect his interests.

F. Bidding for Unserved Areas -- If only one telecommunications corporation is involved in the one-time distribution request, the distribution will be provided based on the reasonable and prudent actual or estimated costs of that company. If additional telecommunications corporations are involved, the distribution will be determined on the basis of a competitive bid. The estimated amount of the one-time distribution will be considered in evaluating each bid. Fund distributions in that area will be based on the winning bid.