

Advisory Board Meeting Minutes for the State Universal Communications Services Program

INTRODUCTION:

The Advisory Board for the State Universal Communications Service Program (State USF), pursuant to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-123-150 and as described in Docket UT-150067, held its annual meeting on Friday, January 28, 2022.

The Commission issued a Public Notice of the virtual meeting on December 28, 2021 and the notice was on the calendar section on Commission's public website.

ATTENDEES:

The meeting began at 10:00 a.m. P.S.T.; all seven Board Members were in attendance:

Board Members in Virtual Attendance:

- Jing Roth, Assistant Director – Telecommunications section of the Commission and Chair of the board
- Rick Vitzthum, Chief Financial Officer Kalama and Tenino Telephone Companies – (ILECs serving fewer than 40,000 access lines in Washington)
- Carl Gipson, Director – External and Legislative Affairs, Washington, AT&T – (Wireless Providers)
- Erika Henry, Deputy Director, State Broadband Office
- Lisa Gafken, Assistant Attorney General – Public Counsel
- Rhonda Weaver, Senior Director of State Government Affairs, Comcast – (Competitive Local Exchange Companies or “CLECs”)
- Peter Gose, Regulatory Affairs Director, Northwest Region, CenturyLink – (ILECs serving more than 40,000 access lines in Washington)

Commission staff and assistant attorney from UTC division of the Attorney General's office also attended the virtual meeting:

- Sean Bennett, Commission Staff
- Tim Zawislak, Commission Staff
- Jennifer Cameron-Rulkowski, Assistant Attorney General

OPENING COMMENTS:

Jing Roth, chair of the board, convened the meeting. She gave a brief statement regarding the history and future of the program, welcomed new members, and thanked all the members for their service on the board. Each board member made a brief introduction.

AGENDA:

Summary of Fund Distributed and Timeline for Year Seven (8) 2022 Fiscal Year:

Sean Bennett summarized the amounts distributed on an annual basis, provided the total amount of funds distributed, and gave an overview of key program dates.

Program Results:

Sean Bennett described the program milestones as presented in the attachments to the board meeting agenda. Additional takeaways included the following:

- Discussed the requirements of receiving a distribution from the SUSF Program. Specifically, a petitioning company must include a broadband plan to maintain, enhance, or provide broadband and must have selected one of four criteria for eligibility. Staff provided a brief description of the eligibility criterion and the number of companies that petitioned in each criterion.
- FCC Form 477 reporting indicates that the percentage of Class B company broadband customers in aggregate, the percentage, and number of subscribers to speeds greater than 25/3 Mbps continues to increase while the number of subscribers to speeds less than 10/1 Mbps continues to decline.

Open Discussion and Comments:

Jing Roth and Sean Bennett responded to several board member questions regarding broadband speed requirements and accountability.

Conclusion:

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:00 am on January 28, 2022.