



NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

2025 ANNUAL REPORT ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Nebraska Public Service Commission
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NEBRASKA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE STATUS OF THE NEBRASKA TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY



**NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
September 30, 2025**

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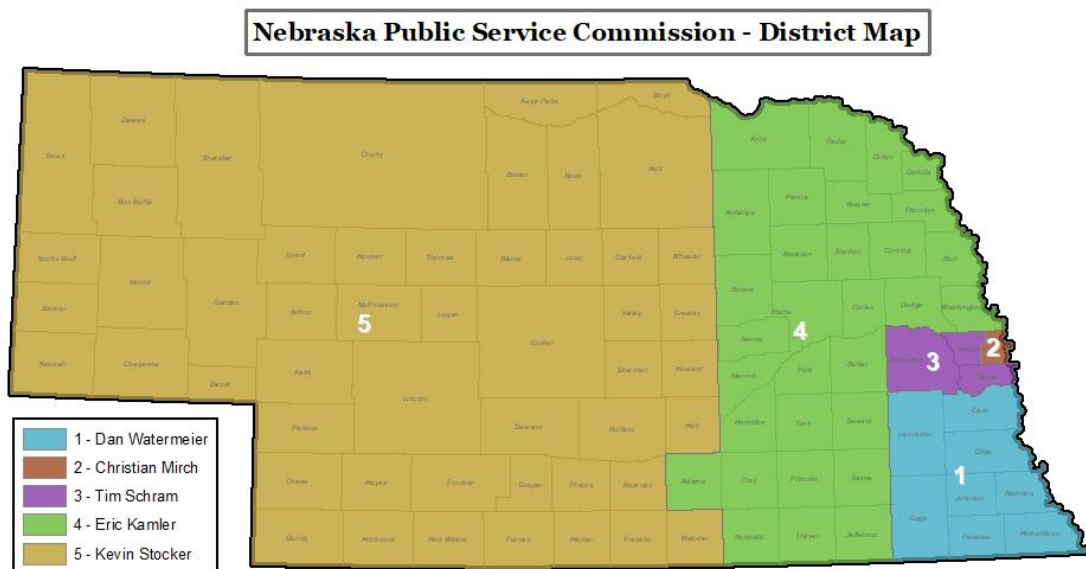
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ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The Nebraska Public Service Commission (Commission) is a constitutionally created executive body established under Article IV, Section 20 of the Nebraska Constitution. The Commission is comprised of five elected Commissioners serving six-year terms. The Commission was initially created by the Legislature in 1885 to regulate railroads but was not firmly established until the passage of a constitutional amendment in 1906 creating a three-member elected Railway Commission. Membership was increased to five Commissioners in 1964, and the state was divided into five districts, each to elect a commissioner. The name was changed to the Public Service Commission by a general election vote in 1972.

Today the Commission regulates telecommunications carriers, natural gas jurisdictional utilities, railroads, household goods movers and passenger carriers, grain warehouses and dealers, construction of manufactured and modular homes and recreational vehicles, high voltage electric transmission lines, and private water company rates. The Commission also oversees and administers several statutorily created funds with specific legislative purposes and goals including the Nebraska Universal Service Fund, the 911 Service System Fund, and the Nebraska Telecommunications Relay System Fund.

The Commission is active on local, state, and national levels and contributes on all levels to determine policy regarding the future of communications and universal service. Many Commissioners, past and present, have served on boards, committees, and advisory groups to recommend and give insight on policy matters to both state and federal agencies and legislative bodies.





COMMISSIONERS:
ERIC KAMLER
CHRISTIAN MIRCH
TIM SCHRAM
KEVIN STOCKER
DAN WATERMEIER



September 30, 2025

Pursuant to Nebraska Rev. Stat. § 86-163, the Public Service Commission (the Commission) hereby files the 2025 annual report with the Clerk of the Legislature. The Commission continues to make significant progress toward connecting all Nebraskans to broadband and ensuring that 911 services continue to evolve to make emergency response as efficient as possible.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Commission utilizes several programs and processes to fulfill its regulatory obligations to ensure quality telecommunications services are available across all of Nebraska. Through these efforts, the Commission approved several boundary change requests from consumers, so that they could receive telecommunications services from providers in adjacent exchanges. The Nebraska Specialized Equipment Program (NSTEP), which provides specialized telecommunications equipment at no expense to qualifying deaf, hard-of-hearing, and/or speech-disabled citizens, also continues to experience high rates of participation.

BROADBAND PROGRAMS

The Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program (NBBP) and the Capital Projects Fund program both brought fiber connectivity to thousands of Nebraskans in 2024/2025. Grant awards for the 4th NBBP grant cycle were announced in January 2025, and work has commenced on those projects. Capital Projects Funds grant projects that were awarded in the first round of grants are finishing construction and extending service to Nebraskans, while the second round of grant-funded projects are in various stages of construction. Nearly 18,000 unserved and underserved locations will be reached through the NBBP, while nearly 10,000 unserved and underserved locations will be reached through the CPF. Both programs have made significant progress towards connecting Nebraskans to high-speed internet.

The Commission has now conducted multiple grant cycles in the Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Grant Program created through LB 1144 in the 2022 Legislative Session. The program seeks to propel Nebraska agricultural producers to lead the nation in precision agriculture connectivity, sustainability, traceability, and autonomy to accelerate rural economic development. Grants awarded through this program support a variety of precision agriculture applications from wireless connectivity for water monitoring equipment to precision application drones, instant soil sampling, grain bin robots, and much more. The program has been important for supporting cutting-edge technologies in the agricultural field.

NEBRASKA UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND

The Nebraska Universal Service Fund continues to be an important mechanism for supporting broadband-capable voice networks. Approximately 24,000 unserved Nebraskans have had fiber-optic networks brought to their households since the Commission directed NUSF support for network buildout in 2019. With significant financial investments in new infrastructure through state and federally funded programs, it is important to ensure these networks continue to function and do not become stranded investments. The NUSF is positioned to meet that need and is now in the middle of a docket aimed at reforming the high-cost program to support existing broadband-capable networks.

The fund balance of the NUSF has been a significant focus of the Commission for several years. In an effort to protect the investment of public funds in broadband-capable networks, the Commission moved capital construction funding to a reimbursement-only model in the late 2010s. This meant that NUSF support would only be paid to recipients once they

showed that the work was done to complete the project. While that approach protected the public investment, it also led to a rapid increase in the fund balance since capital projects are multi-year endeavors. A substantial portion of the current fund balance is already committed to programs and projects underway, reflecting funds that are obligated rather than unallocated. While the balance is still high it has seen significant decreases over the last one-plus years. The Commission is committed to a continued reduction in the fund balance.

STATE 911

LB 993 (2018) authorized the Commission to begin implementation of the Next Generation 911 system in Nebraska, and in the last year much progress has been made. To date, all 68 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) have migrated to the 911 Service System. With 68 PSAPs and two State Patrol Communications Centers connected to the system, 100% of Nebraska's population and state's geography is served by the Next Generation 911 System.

In the Next Generation 911 environment, citizens seeking emergency assistance are able to contact 911 utilizing voice communications, and text messages. Photos, videos, and other digital media are enhancements that the system is transitioning towards. The identification of a caller's location and the routing of that call to the appropriate PSAP is greatly enhanced, ultimately improving the chances of receiving emergency assistance much faster and saving lives.

These are just a few of the highlights of what the Commission has accomplished over the past year. The annual report contains additional details on these programs, information about other achievements, data, and statistics that the Commission collects about the communications systems in place in Nebraska.

Sincerely,



Tim Schram
Chair – Nebraska Public Service Commission

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Regulatory Oversight

The Commission's Telecommunications/Nebraska Universal Service Fund (NUSF) Department is responsible for administering programs and enforcing rules and regulations that facilitate competition, maintain quality voice service, and ensure that all Nebraskans have access to quality telecommunications and information services at affordable and comparable rates. In addition to handling consumer complaints and certificating carriers to provide telecommunications services within the state, the department administers the NUSF as well as other grant programs described later in this report.

The Commission works within the confines of both national and state laws. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 identified priorities for universal service, including quality and reasonably priced services for all customers including those in rural, low-income, and high-cost regions, equitable and nondiscriminatory service, specific and predictable price structure, and access to service for schools, health care institutions, and libraries. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 further provided for competition in the local service market. The Commission continues to execute key provisions of the 1996 Telecommunications Act to further the goal of increased competition while maintaining quality and affordable service.

The regulatory authority of the Commission extends to certain types of carriers. Incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs) serve delineated areas, or exchanges. They have carrier of last resort responsibilities, meaning they are required to provide service within their boundaries of their exchange if there is no other carrier providing service. The Commission also has designated companies as competitive local exchange carriers (CLECs) to provide service in areas previously served by monopoly companies. CLECs serve customers by either using the facilities of the existing local company for a fee, similar to leasing, or using their own facilities. CLECs foster competition by giving customers more than one choice of telecommunications provider in a local market. The Commission has authorized several CLECs to compete with the incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs) for service in Nebraska.¹

The Commission also provides regulatory oversight to carriers that are divided into two categories: price cap companies and rate of return companies. A price cap company is an incumbent local exchange carrier that is regulated on the federal level under a price cap regime. Generally, under a price cap regime, limits are set on the prices that a provider can charge. In the context of telecommunications, there are limits on the prices that can be charged for basic telephone service. In Nebraska, the price cap carriers are large, publicly traded corporations that provide telecommunications service in multiple exchanges and cover a combination of rural and densely populated areas. Examples include Windstream, CenturyLink, and Frontier. A rate of return company is an incumbent local exchange carrier that is regulated on the federal level under a rate of return regime. An entity regulated within a rate of return regime is allowed to cover costs and earn a fair return. The regulatory framework in place is intended to help prevent anti-competitive or monopolistic practices such as exploitation of customers by charging higher rates than would be possible in a competitive market. In Nebraska these generally are small or medium sized, privately-owned or cooperative companies providing telecommunications service in one or several exchanges, mostly in rural areas. Hamilton Telephone Company and Great Plains Communications are examples of rate of return companies that operate in Nebraska

¹ Go to <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/telecommunications> and select "Competitive Local Telephone Companies" under "Lists of Carriers."

APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

Annually, the Commission receives and processes applications while fulfilling its regulatory responsibilities. The nature of these applications includes:

Authority withdrawal:	An application from a certificated entity to cease providing a certificated service.
Commission initiated:	No application: the Commission is opening the proceeding on its own behalf.
Eligible Telecommunication Carrier (ETC) certification:	Entities seeking to become eligible to receive universal service support.
Exchange boundary change:	The geographical area that a telephone company provides services, offering the same services and prices, is called an exchange. Nebraska law includes a process whereby a customer can seek a change in the boundary of telephone exchanges to allow the customer to receive service from an adjacent exchange, including both broadband and traditional telephone services. In the event the Commission grants a petition from a customer to change an exchange boundary, the Commission will update the boundaries and seek approval of the updated exchange boundaries from the affected companies.
Interconnection agreements/amendments:	To facilitate the transfer of voice traffic over the networks of more than one carrier, agreements are put in place to outline how, and for what cost, telephone traffic will be routed. They enter into an interconnection agreement by either negotiating the terms, adopting an approved agreement of two other carriers pursuant to section 252(i) of the 1996 Act, or through mediation or arbitration if negotiations fail to result in mutually acceptable agreement. Copies of all current approved agreements are available on the Commission's website. ²
Interexchange Carrier (IXC) certification:	Interexchange service is the access and transmission of communications between two or more local exchange areas, except for two-way switched communication between local exchanges that are grouped for extended area service. Carriers providing this service are required to be certificated by the Commission.
Loan:	An application by a certificated provider to the Commission to approve a debt financing arrangement.
Local Exchange Carrier (LEC) certification:	The Commission receives an application from a company that seeks to provide a certificated service.
Merger:	In the event that carriers merge into one entity, that activity is required to be registered with the Commission.
Name change:	All carriers are required to register name changes with the Commission.

² Go to <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/telecommunications> and select "Interconnection Information" under "Other."

Tariff:	An explanation of what each company provides and the rates at which they are provided; carriers are required to file these changes with the Commission. These are available on the Commission's website at < https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/local-tariffs >.
Trade name:	Certificated entities changing their name.
Transfer of control:	When the controlling interest of one company moves to another; typically, a purchase of a company by another.

A summary of those activities for FY 2024-2025 is below:

Category	No. of Applications	Category	No. of Applications
Authority withdrawal	5	LEC Certification	6
Boundary change	31	Trade name	5
Commission initiated	3	ETC Relinquishment	1
ETC certification	2	New communications provider	37
Interconnection	3	Tariff changes	67
Internet	2	Transfer of control	5
IXC Certification	5	Directory waiver	1
Loan	1		

Authorities Granted/Withdrawn FY 2024-25			
Docket	Carrier	Authority Type	Date Entered
C-5589	Action Communications, Inc.	CLEC/IXC Withdrawal	7/23/2024
C-5595	Mitel Cloud Services, Inc.	CLEC/IXC Withdrawal	7/23/2024
C-5576	Viaero Fiber Networks, LLC	CLEC Application	11/6/2024
C-5610	Windstream IT-Comm, LLC	CLEC/IXC Withdrawal	12/3/2024
C-5607	Applied Connective Technologies, LLC	IXC Application	12/3/2024
C-5609	ImOn Communication, LLC	CLEC/IXC Application	1/7/2025
C-5616	Northeast Nebraska Telephone Company	CLEC/IXC Application	1/7/2025
C-5624	Sirius Computer Solutions, LLC	CLEC/IXC Withdrawal	1/22/2025
C-5644	HunTel Communications, Inc.	CLEC/IXC Withdrawal	4/29/2025
C-5647	FiberComm, LLC	CLEC/IXC Withdrawal	8/1/2023

Boundary Change Requests- FY 2024-25

Exchange Boundary Change Requests FY 2024-2025		
Docket	Description	Date Filed
C-5601	Michael and Bethany Hansmire, Fairbury, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the Fairbury Exchange of Windstream Communications, LLC.	07/19/2024
C-5604	Charles and Tara Mundt, Alan and Tamara Merchant, Brenda Raile, Brian and Karen Helmberger, Bryce Feldman, Della Sawyer, Donna Sautter, Jacob Simmons, Jim Reynolds, Joshua Lueders, Julie Wetherington, Karl Keller, Mark Klute, Rick Stueven, Roger Lange, and Tim Spires, Marquette, each seeking authority to receive advance telecommunications capability service from the Hordville Exchange of the Hamilton Telephone Company	07/22/2024
C-5602	Cindy Melcher, Fairbury, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the Fairbury Exchange of Windstream Communications, LLC	07/25/2024
C-5603	David and Sharon Kathman, Superior, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the Blue Hill Exchange of Glenwood Telephone Membership Corporation	08/6/2024
C-5605	Keenan Wieseler, St. Helena, seeking authority to receive telecommunications service from the Hartington Exchange of Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc.	08/27/2024
C-5608	Sheila Schieffer, Mike Stevens, and Rita Schumacher, Cofton, each seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications service from the Hartington Exchange of Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc.	9/16/2024
C-5612	Curtis Nixon, Hemingford, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the Hemingford Exchange of Hemingford Cooperative Telephone Company	10/29/2024
C-5614	Nancy Nixon, Hemingford, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the Hemingford Exchange of Hemingford Cooperative Telephone Company	10/29/2024
C-5615	Rick and Betsy Horstman, Hemingford, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the Hemingford Exchange of Hemingford Cooperative Telephone Company	10/29/2024
C-5611	Sandra Roes, Hemingford, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the Hemingford Exchange of Hemingford Cooperative Telephone Company	10/29/2024
C-5613	Scott and Caitlin Schaefer, Hemingford, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications	10/29/2024

Exchange Boundary Change Requests FY 2024-2025		
Docket	Description	Date Filed
	capability service from the Hemingford Exchange of Hemingford Cooperative Telephone Company	
C-5617	Alan & Jeanette Koelling, Ord seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the North Loup Exchange of the Nebraska Central Telephone Company	11/18/2024
C-5618	Chris Tramp, Crofton, seeking authority to receive telecommunications service from the Hartington Exchange of Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc.	11/18/2024
C-5619	Brian Samuelson, Polk, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the Hordville Exchange of the Hamilton Telephone Company	11/21/2024
C-5620	Jared & Kelli Hodgson, Ayr, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the Blue Hill Exchange of Glenwood Telephone Membership Corporation	11/21/2024
C-5622	John Schwader, Crofton, seeking authority to receive telecommunications service from the Hartington Exchange of Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc.	11/26/2024
C-5626	Anne Bohan, Wood River, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the Doniphan Exchange of the Hamilton Telephone Company	12/19/2024
C-5628	Matthew Green, Marquette, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the Hordville Exchange of the Hamilton Telephone Company	01/06/2025
C-5630	Matthew Green, Christina Nokelby, Stephen Twiss, Nick Paschke, Todd Roehrs, Brian Bresnahan, Belinda Strobel, Andrew & Karrie Simmons, Kris Poppen, Doug Langemeier, Barry Denning, Jeremy Janzen, Paula Rhoades, Russel Gronewold , Troy Walling and Daniel Zierott, Marquette, each seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications capability service from the Hordville Exchange of the Hamilton Telephone Company	01/15/2025
C-5631	Mona Buschelman, Fordyce, seeking authority to receive telecommunications service from the Hartington Exchange of the Hartington Telephone Company	01/16/2025
C-5633	Shane Jorgensen, Minden, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunications service from the Blue Hill Exchange of Glenwood Telephone Membership Corporation	01/16/2025
C-5632	John Lange, Fordyce, seeking authority to receive telecommunication service from the Hartington Exchange of Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc.	01/17/2025
C-5634	Laura Steffen, Fordyce, seeking authority to receive telecommunication service from the Hartington Exchange of Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc	01/21/2025

Exchange Boundary Change Requests FY 2024-2025		
Docket	Description	Date Filed
C-5737	Andy Reinhardt, Zach Zimmer, and Sandra Messersmith, Crofton, each seeking authority to receive telecommunications service from the Hartington Exchange of Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc	02/03/2025
C-5643	Abel Martinez, Fordyce, seeking the authority to receive advanced telecommunications service from the Hartington Exchange of Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc.	03/12/2025
C-5648	Dean Jansen, Fordyce, seeking the authority to receive advanced telecommunications service from the Hartington Exchange of Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc.	4/08/2025
C-5654	Nebraska Central Telephone Company, Gibbon, Nebraska, seeking corrective adjustments to the exchange boundaries of its Taylor Exchange	6/05/2025
C-5653	Lisa Pedersen, Fordyce, seeking the authority to receive advanced telecommunications service from the Hartington Exchange of Hartington Telecommunications Co., Inc.	6/05/2025
C-5655	Kristy Wittler, Marquette, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunication capability service from the Marquette Exchange of the Hamilton Telephone Company	6/09/2025
C-5659	Jordan Baker, Marquette, seeking authority to receive advanced telecommunication capability service from the Marquette Exchange of the Hamilton Telephone Company	6/16/2025
C-5661	Art O'Connor, Crofton, seeking authority to receive telecommunications service from the Hartington Exchange of the Hartington Telephone Co., Inc.	6/20/2025

Telecommunications Relay Service

The Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) was created by Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). TRS provides a platform for a person who has a hearing or speech disability to communicate with voice telephone users through a relay provider and a Communications Assistant (CA). This includes services that enable two-way communication between an individual who uses a text telephone (TTY or TT) or other non-voice terminal device and an individual who does not have such a device. CAs transmit or relay written communication from a text telephone or other non-voice terminal device to a person using a standard telephone. The person using the standard telephone speaks to the CA who transmits the message to the hearing-impaired individual.

TRS in Nebraska is funded through a monthly surcharge on all telephone numbers or functional equivalent, including wireless and VoIP lines. The surcharge for the 2024/25 fiscal year was \$.05. Starting July 1, 2025, the surcharge is assessed at \$.04. The change in surcharge was due to a smaller increase in participation than originally anticipated in the program after statutory changes from LB 1031

Prepaid wireless users are assessed a surcharge as well (for TRS, NUSF, and E911), where the surcharge is collected directly from the consumer by the retailer at the point-of-sale. The amount of the surcharge collected per retail transaction is based on an annual determination by the Nebraska Department of

Revenue utilizing a formula of the amount of wireless prepaid surcharges established by finding the sum of the following:

- a) The percentage obtained by dividing the current annual Wireless E911 Surcharge by 50; and
- b) The percentage obtained by dividing the amount of the Nebraska TRS Fund Surcharge by 50.
- c) The percentage obtained by multiplying (i) the Nebraska Telecommunications Universal Service Fund surcharge percentage rate set by the Public Service Commission by (ii) one minus the Federal Communications Commission safe harbor percentage for determining the interstate portion of a fixed monthly wireless surcharge.

Amounts collected are remitted by retailers to the Department of Revenue. The Department of Revenue then remits the collected amounts, less administrative costs not to exceed 2%, to the State Treasurer for credit to the 911 Service System Fund, TRS Fund, and NUSF. For fiscal year 2024-25, total prepaid wireless remittances received for the TRS fund were \$54,521 compared to \$47,213 for fiscal year 2023-24.

NEBRASKA SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT PROGRAM

In 1995, the Legislature created the Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Program (NSTEP), which enables qualifying deaf, hard-of-hearing and/or speech-disabled citizens to obtain specialized telecommunications equipment at no expense, subject to certain program restrictions. Funded by the TRS Surcharge, expensive telecommunications equipment, such as mobile wireless devices, text telephones, amplifiers, amplified telephones, signaling devices and speech-generating devices have been made available to deaf, hard-of-hearing and/or speech-disabled consumers.

Fiscal year 2024-25 saw a slight decrease in participation and a large decrease in expenditures over 2023-24. For fiscal year 2023-24, \$933,327 was expended by NSTEP and provided equipment to 806 households compared to \$717,078 serving 791 households for fiscal year 2024-25.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE STATISTICS AND TABLE

For fiscal year 2024-25, intrastate minutes of use (session-basis) for traditional TRS (including Speech to Speech) increased 77.86% compared to fiscal year 2023-24. For fiscal year 2023-24 minutes of use increased 10.90% compared to fiscal year 2022-23. Most of the increases seen are tied to a change of base unit from Conversation minutes-of-use to Session minutes-of-use which occurred when a change to a new TRS provider was made in July 2004. After accounting for the change in tracking units, 2024-25 showed minor increases in overall TRS minutes. We continue to see increased use in the other devices/services which serve as alternatives to TRS services, such as smartphones, text-based devices, Video Relay Service, Internet Protocol (IP) and IP Captioned Telephone Services (IPCTS). TRS services have seen stable use over the past few years but do continue to trend below historic levels of TRS use overall. For fiscal years 2024-25 landline-based Captioned Telephone Service experienced an increase of 10.34%. This increase is also linked to the change in TRS provider tracking units. In 2023-24, Captioned Telephone Service experienced declines of 56.34% when compared to 2022-23.

The following table displays selected historical statistics that reflect the operation of the Nebraska Relay System and NSTEP. The Commission went to a session-based rate for traditional relay beginning in July 2024. Note, for presentation purposes, prepaid wireless receipts are included in the surcharge revenue totals. For questions or other inquiries regarding the data provided, please contact the Communications Department of the Commission.

Telecommunications Relay Service
Selected Historical Statistics – Conversation Minutes for Traditional Relay and Captioned Telephone (CapTel)

Data Period	Avg. Call Length (completed, in mins.)	Combined Traditional & STS Relay			Avg. Call Length (answered in mins.)	Captioned Telephone Service			Monthly Activity Cost				Surcharge (non-prepaid) Remitted	Prepaid Surcharge Remitted	Total Surcharge Remitted
		Total Calls Completed	Total Mins. of Use	Intrastate Mins. of Use		Total Calls (answered)	Total Mins. of Use	Intrastate Mins. of Use	TRS Prg. Trad'l	TRS Prg. CapTel	Total TRS Prg.	Total NSTEP (equip. expense)			
Conversation-minutes													Surcharge Rate - \$0.03/Line		
Jan-24	4.42	183	809.70	617.50	2.86	278	796	586	\$2,266	\$1,323	\$3,590	\$113,527	\$61,393	\$3,883	\$65,276
Feb-24	5.16	198	1,022.60	782.70	3.52	277	974	691	\$1,563	\$2,873	\$4,435	\$27,675	\$60,772	\$3,962	\$64,734
Mar-24	6.08	162	984.80	667.00	4.55	189	860	471	\$2,448	\$1,063	\$3,511	\$46,970	\$61,634	\$3,770	\$65,404
Apr-24	6.30	217	1,367.00	939.00	2.92	141	412	161	\$3,446	\$363	\$3,809	\$0	\$60,893	\$3,600	\$64,493
May-24	7.55	209	1,577.50	918.50	2.11	150	316	161	\$3,371	\$364	\$3,735	\$77,131	\$61,545	\$3,833	\$65,378
Jun-24	6.84	111	759.00	468.80	3.15	133	419	205	\$1,721	\$464	\$2,185	\$20,165	\$61,001	\$3,674	\$64,676
Session-minutes													Surcharge Rate - \$0.05/Line		
Jul-24	3.44	2,652	1,871.00	1,469.06	4.77	113	539.37	302.91	\$6,451	\$576	\$9,727	\$125,939	\$103,286	\$3,890	\$107,176
Aug-24	3.47	2,618	1,854.45	1,443.73	4.28	104	445	153	\$6,350	\$290	\$9,340	\$108,242	\$93,242	\$3,673	\$96,915
Sep-24	2.66	2,096	1,387.59	1,154.54	4.57	125	572	310	\$5,031	\$589	\$8,320	\$21,663	\$101,260	\$3,775	\$105,035
Oct-24	4.77	2,453	1,979.83	1,583.12	3.42	141	483	264	\$6,953	\$501	\$10,154	\$79,755	\$105,049	\$3,899	\$108,948
Nov-24	4.43	2,344	1,824.73	1,444.18	4.92	122	600	249	\$6,354	\$473	\$9,528	\$43,595	\$29,729	\$3,778	\$33,508
Dec-24	5.35	2,017	1,582.87	1,210.56	5.71	178	1,016	618	\$5,326	\$1,174	\$9,201	\$22,001	\$172,175	\$3,825	\$176,000
Jan-25	3.30	1,873	1,301.85	1,154.08	5.33	187	997	520	\$5,078	\$988	\$8,766	\$32,493	\$104,009	\$3,818	\$107,827
Feb-25	4.77	1,641	1,639.10	1,153.60	7.11	228	1,621	769	\$4,858	\$1,461	\$9,019	\$112,458	\$102,631	\$3,855	\$106,486
Mar-25	6.02	1,958	1,501.13	1,148.10	6.81	200	1,361	629	\$5,052	\$1,195	\$8,947	\$20,722	\$99,430	\$5,885	\$105,315
Apr-25	4.07	1,971	1,179.72	1,030.77	6.30	200	1,260	534	\$4,535	\$1,015	\$8,250	\$28,771	\$101,499	\$5,933	\$107,432
May-25	3.94	2,529	1,773.76	1,567.92	6.65	154	1,024	460	\$6,894	\$874	\$10,468	\$106,433	\$105,855	\$6,280	\$112,135
Jun-25	1.95	2,371	1,324.57	1,269.67	7.33	121	887	133	\$5,581	\$252	\$18,533	\$17,768	\$95,156	\$5,910	\$101,066

Telecommunications Information and Data

LOCAL EXCHANGE CARRIERS

This section of the report provides information on local exchange carriers currently certificated to provide service in Nebraska, the business and residential local rates charged by Nebraska carriers, and a listing of communities and the local carriers offering service in those communities.

The financial information submitted to the Commission regarding local exchange company earnings is not included in this report. Competition has been introduced into portions of this market and company-specific data may reveal competitively sensitive information. Thus, the annual reports filed by the local exchange companies remain available at the Commission for use by Commissioners and Commission staff. Portions of the reports that are not proprietary are available for public inspection.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 provided for competition in the local exchange service market. The Commission has authorized several competitive local exchange carriers (CLEC) to compete with the incumbent local companies (ILEC) in Nebraska. The following table provides details on the local exchange market in Nebraska for the past two years.

	2023	2024	Change
Total Access Lines Served in the State	351,127	307,793	(12.3%)
Total Access Lines Served by ILECs	144,225	126,301	(12.4%)
Total Access Lines Served by CLECs	157,500	142,089	(9.8%)
Percentage of Total Access Lines Served by CLECs	44.9%	46.2%	1.3%
Total Access Lines Served by a VoIP Providers	49,402	39,403	(20.2%)

As of July 1, 2025, 44 incumbent local exchange carriers (including cooperative telephone companies) and 100 competitive local exchange carriers have been certificated by the Commission to operate in Nebraska. Cox Nebraska Telcom, LLC is the largest carrier with 81,569 access lines. A listing of Nebraska carriers, the number of residential lines and business lines served by each carrier, and the current residential and business rates charged by those companies can be found in Appendix A of this report. The rates listed are for basic dial-tone services as of July 1, 2025, and exclude subscriber line charges, extended area serves rates, and other optional charges.

EXPLANATION OF CHARGES ON TELEPHONE BILLS

Nebraska telephone service customers are assessed different charges on their telephone bills. A summary of those charges follows:

911 Service Surcharge:	A charge assessed by and remitted to a city or county to fund the operation of public safety answering points (PSAP) that receive 911 emergency calls. This charge ranges from \$.50 to \$1.00 per month per telephone number.
Basic Residential Service:	The monthly rate charged by companies to provide telecommunications service to a private residence, including single and multifamily dwellings, within the local calling area.

City Occupation or Franchise Tax:	A tax assessed on telephone companies by a city for the right to do business in the community. Telephone companies are allowed to recover the amount paid in occupation or franchise taxes directly on customer bills. Not every city imposes occupation or franchise taxes, and they vary by city.
City Sales Tax:	A tax assessed by a city to fund general municipal obligations. Not every city assesses a city sales tax, and they vary by city.
Extended Area Service:	A monthly flat fee charged by telecommunications companies that allows users to place and receive an unlimited number of calls from nearby communities with no additional charges.
Federal Subscriber Line Charge:	A charge set by the FCC that customers pay to their local phone company to cover part of the cost of connecting customers to the telephone network. It is currently capped at \$6.50 per month for the first residential line and single business lines. The monthly charge varies by company.
Federal Tax (Excise Tax):	3% federal tax which funds general federal government operations.
Federal Universal Service:	All telecommunications service providers must contribute to the Federal Universal Service Fund based on a percentage of their interstate end-user revenues. The fund supports the following four programs: Lifeline, High-cost, Schools, Libraries, and Rural Health Care. The rate is recalculated by the FCC quarterly and is usually passed on to consumers and varies by company.
Nebraska Universal Service Fund (NUSF) Surcharge:	All telecommunications service providers must contribute to NUSF based on number of connections. Telephone providers then recover the cost from their customers in the form of a surcharge collected from each customer. The NUSF surcharge is currently \$1.75 per connection.
Number Portability Charge:	A charge set by the FCC to allow telephone companies to recover costs associated with allowing customers to retain their telephone number when changing from one telephone company to another.
State Sales Tax:	A tax assessed by the state on local and in-state long distance telecommunications charges that funds general state government obligations. The current tax rate is 5.5%.
Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) Surcharge:	A charge set by the Commission to fund the operation of the statewide TRS system for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and speech impaired citizens. The TRS Surcharge also provides financial aid to eligible Nebraskans for the purchase of specialized telephone equipment necessary to use TRS. The TRS Surcharge is reviewed annually by the Commission and is currently \$.04 per month per telephone number or functional equivalent.

Wireless E911 Surcharge:	A charge assessed by the Commission to fund the implementation and operation of the State 911 Service System, which allows for the location and routing of 911 calls. Currently the charge is \$.70 per month on each telephone number in service, except in Douglas County where the rate is statutorily capped at \$.50
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LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE CARRIERS

The number of Interexchange Carriers (IXC), otherwise known as long-distance companies certificated to operate in the State of Nebraska, slightly decreased from the prior year. Currently, there are 168 companies authorized to provide long distance services in Nebraska. A listing of all long-distance carriers certificated to provide services in the state can be found on the Commission's website at < <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/telecommunications> >, (click on "Lists of Carriers" and select "Interexchange Carriers" from the list). Inclusion on the listing does not mean the company is offering service in Nebraska currently.

COMMUNICATIONS/INFORMATION PROVIDERS

The number of communication/information providers operating the State of Nebraska continues to grow. Currently, there are 411 companies providing wireless, VoIP, satellite, Internet, DSL, dark fiber, and/or paging in Nebraska. These services are not certificated by the Commission, but statute requires non-certificated communication providers to register with the Commission. A listing of these providers can be found on the Commission's website at < <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/telecommunications> >, (click on "Lists of Carriers" and select "Communications Provider Registry" from the list). Inclusion on the listing does not mean the company is offering service in Nebraska currently.

OUTAGE REPORTS

Reports are required to be filed with the Commission by local exchange carriers when service outages are experienced that meet certain thresholds – details regarding reporting requirements can be found at < <https://psc.nebraska.gov/sites/psc.nebraska.gov/files/doc/Service%20Outage%20Reporting%20Requirements.pdf> >. Outage reports must include the date and time of the outage, the geographic area affected, the cause of the outage, if known, and an estimate of the number of access lines affected. Within five days of resolving the trouble, a final report must be filed with the Commission showing the total number of trouble reports received from customers related to the outage and the corrective action taken.

2024-2025 Outage Report	
Primary Cause	Number of Outages
Cable Cut	16
Damaged Cable	8
Equipment	51
Other	26
Grand Total	101

COMPLAINTS

The Commission works to ensure Nebraskans are receiving quality telecommunications service by monitoring consumer complaints for indications of potential problems requiring further investigation. The Commission's staff offers assistance to consumers to identify the source of service problems and resolve service complaints. The Commission receives and helps remedy complaints for the communications services under its regulatory purview. Of the 383 complaints received during Fiscal Year 2024-2025 a total of \$48,279.74 was savings to the consumers in Nebraska. A summary of those complaints follows.

COMPLAINTS		
	2023-24	2024-25
Windstream	65	50
Century Link	232	94
NT&T	6	2
Cox	8	23
Frontier/Citizens	19	17
Great Plains	4	2
AT&T	0	0
Time Warner/Spectrum	15	5
Others	29	30
Total	369	223

While the Commission lacks statutory authority over wireless telecommunications service and billing, consumers do submit wireless complaints. Commission staff continues to review, process, and submit complaints, and is often successful at resolving these complaints.

Wireless Complaints			
Name of Carrier	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
AT&T	6	6	4
Consumer Cellular	3	0	0
Sprint	2	0	0
T-Mobile	6	6	0
TracFone Wireless	6	2	0
US Cellular	10	1	2
Verizon Wireless	28	24	24
Viaero Wireless	2	4	1
Others	10	7	0
Total	73	50	37

Additionally, consumers often submit complaints about other services that the Commission does not regulate, such as cable or satellite television. The following tables show the complaints received, categorized by service type for the last two years, in the first table, in the second table by type of complaint for each service type, and in the third table by type of complaint for the last two years.

Historical Complaints by Carrier Type				
	2023-2024		2024-2025	
	Total	%	Total	%
Local Exchange Carriers	369	67.0	223	58.2
Wireless	50	9.1	37	9.7
Information Services	128	23.2	115	30.0
Cable TV	4	0.7	8	2.1
TOTAL	551	100.0	383	100.0

2024-2025 Complaint Type by Carrier Type				
	Wireline	Wireless	Information Services	Cable TV
Service	153	13	78	3
Billing	35	17	29	2
Customer Service	1	0	0	1
Directory	0	0	0	0
Auto Dialer	0	1	0	0
Miscellaneous	34	6	8	2
TOTAL	223	37	115	8

Historical Complaints by Type		
Types	2023-2024	2024-2025
Billing	81	83
Service	427	247
Customer Service	2	2
Directory	2	0
Auto Dialer	0	1
Miscellaneous	39	50
TOTAL	551	383

NSTEP complaints for this fiscal year were all tied to Verizon discount (coupon) codes not working for wireless device redemption. In each of these complaints the Verizon discount codes were not working in relation to pre-paid accounts. The following chart summarizes complaints and inquiries received for NSTEP.

NSTEP Complaints and Inquiries FY 2024-2025		
Primary Category	Sub-Category	Count
Billing Complaints	Lump-Sum Charges on Account for Wireless Device	0
	Monthly Device Charges on Account for Wireless Devices	0
	Other Billing Related	0
Service Complaints	Service Cannot Be Created or Attached to Business Account	0
Service Inquiries	Request for Assistance - Other	0
Technical Complaints	Manufacturer Equipment/Device Inoperable	0
	Verizon Discount Code Not Working	0
Vendor Customer Service	Vendor Did Not Follow Policies/Procedures	0
TOTAL		0

NEBRASKA UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND

Purpose of Fund

In 1997, the Legislature passed LB 686, authorizing the Commission to create the Nebraska Universal Service Fund (NUSF), now memorialized in statute at Neb. Rev. Stat. § 86-324. The NUSF was created in response to new provisions in the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, which embodied Congress's goal that consumers in all regions of the nation, including rural and high cost, should have access to telecommunications and information services at rates "reasonably comparable" to services and charges offered in urban areas. The goal of the NUSF, therefore, is to ensure that all Nebraskans have access to quality telecommunications and information services at affordable and comparable rates, in conjunction with federal universal service goals. This is accomplished through the provision of various programs that provide support to eligible telecommunications carriers operating in high-cost areas.

The Commission currently administers the following programs within the NUSF:

1. Broadband Program/Wireless Tower Fund: provides funding to construct mobile wireless towers in areas that lack coverage but would not otherwise be economically feasible. Docketed in NUSF-92
2. E-Rate Special Construction Program: provides funding toward the costs of construction for libraries and schools that are not fiber connected. Docketed in NUSF-117
3. High-Cost Program: makes telecommunications and information rates generally affordable and comparable across Nebraska. Docketed in NUSF-99, NUSF-108, and NUSF-131, among others.
4. Nebraska Telephone Assistance Program (NTAP): provides discounted rates to qualifying low-income Nebraskans (previously known as the Lifeline/Link-Up Program). Docketed in NUSF-2
5. Rural Telehealth Program: supports the provision of telecommunications services to Nebraska Health Care Providers. Docketed in NUSF-57

Fund Structure

FUNDING MECHANISM

Funding for the NUSF is collected via a surcharge on eligible telecommunications services. The Commission, by Order and after public hearing, has determined that the surcharge on residential and business services (wireline, mobile wireless, and VoIP) will be assessed on a per connection basis at \$1.75 per connection per month, where applicable, and at 6.95% of assessable revenues for all other services. The Commission reviews the level of the surcharge annually and makes a determination on the surcharges prior to the end of each fiscal year. Using this methodology, any residential device able to complete an intrastate voice call is assessed the per connection surcharge. Business services also moved to a per-connection surcharge on January 1, 2022. Interstate and Internet services are not subject to the NUSF surcharge. The Commission determines assessable services using FCC federal universal service definitions to reduce the amount of duplicate administrative work for telecommunications providers. Specific categories of services subject to the NUSF surcharge are:

- Local service, including connection charges, enhanced service, such as Caller ID, and Extended Area Services (EAS);
- Wireless services, including cellular, PCS, and paging;
- In-state long distance services, including prepaid calling card, operator-assisted, collect, calling card and private line; and
- Voice over the Internet Protocol (VoIP) service.

Prepaid wireless users are assessed a surcharge as well (for TRS, NUSF, and E911), where the surcharge is collected directly from the consumer by the retailer at the point-of-sale. The amount of the surcharge collected per retail transaction is based on an annual determination by the Nebraska Department of Revenue utilizing a formula of the amount of wireless prepaid surcharges established by finding the sum of the following:

- a) The percentage obtained by dividing the current annual Wireless E911 Surcharge by 50; and
- b) The percentage obtained by dividing the amount of the Nebraska TRS Fund Surcharge by 50.
- c) The percentage obtained by multiplying (i) the Nebraska Telecommunications Universal Service Fund surcharge percentage rate set by the Public Service Commission by (ii) one minus the Federal Communications Commission safe harbor percentage for determining the interstate portion of a fixed monthly wireless surcharge.

Amounts collected are remitted by retailers to the Department of Revenue. The Department of Revenue then remits the collected amounts, less administrative costs not to exceed 2%, to the State Treasurer for credit to the TRS Fund, 911 Service System Fund, and NUSF. For fiscal year 2024-25, total prepaid wireless remittances received for the NUSF fund were \$2,554,677.85 compared to \$2,778,694.38 for fiscal year 2023-24

HISTORICAL REMITTANCES

The annual contributions and allocations from NUSF for the last eight years are summarized below. The growth of the fund in recent years is attributed to two factors: (1) change in contribution mechanism implemented in April 2019 designed to stabilize the fund by utilizing a per-connection surcharge on residential services and (2) a further change in the contribution mechanism in 2021 to apply a per-connection surcharge to business services.

Year	Remittances	Year	Remittances
2016	\$ 39,901,472	2021	\$ 41,690,957
2017	\$ 35,340,014	2022	\$ 47,122,607
2018	\$ 32,829,316	2023	\$ 50,783,802
2019	\$ 39,726,438	2024	\$ 50,822,096
2020	\$ 42,621,136	2025 (through June)	\$ 25,589,520

FUND BALANCE AND BREAKDOWN OF OBLIGATIONS

As of the beginning of August 2025, the balance in the NUSF was approximately \$85.2 million. The balance represents an approximately 34% reduction over the prior year. The Commission has been working to reduce the size of the balance over the last few years, recognizing the Legislature’s ongoing interest in the fund. The buildup of funds was primarily due to accountability measures in place to make sure NUSF funding was being utilized as intended. The Commission has made changes over the last few years to maintain accountability and oversight while making sure that allocated funds for broadband-capable infrastructure deployment were being used in a timely manner. The majority of the current fund balance is committed to High-Cost programs totaling over \$63.7 million. Total commitments, including Telehealth and the E-Rate Special Construction program, are nearly \$83 million. The remaining balance is utilized to cover expenses from the Nebraska Telephone Assistance (NTAP) Program and administrative costs.

Program	Committed Funding
NUSF-92 - Wireless Tower Program	\$9,776,197.82
NUSF-92 - BB Adoption/COVID	\$48,010.90
NUSF-99 - High Cost (Price Cap Carriers)	\$32,193,916.57
NUSF-108 - High Cost (Rate of Return Carriers)	\$12,092,954.34
NUSF-131 - Reverse Auction	\$19,435,251.11
NUSF-57 - Telehealth	\$8,297,143.65
NUSF-117 - E-Rate Special Construction	\$965,882.00
Total	\$ 82,809,356.39

NUSF ADVISORY BOARD

Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute 86-327, the Commission convenes and appoints members to an advisory board to provide recommendations on the use of the fund. The advisory board meets annually at a public hearing held pursuant to the Open Meetings Act. Per By-Laws, members serve 3-year terms and can be reappointed at the Commission's discretion. Terms begin on January 1 of the first year and end on December 31 of the third year.

Advisory Board Membership Roster		
Public	Gene Hand, Chair	Appt: 4/2018 Reappt: 12/2020 Reappt: 12/2023 Term: 1/1/2024 – 12/31/26
K-12 Schools	Christina Struebing NE Dept. of Education	Appt: 3/2025 Term: 1/1/2025-1/1/2027
Libraries	Christa Porter, Vice Chair Nebraska Library Commission	Appt: 3/2016 Reappt: 4/2019 Reappt: 4/2022 Reappt: 4/2025 Term: 1/1/2025 – 12/31/2027
Rural Health Care	Rod Triplett Prairie Health Ventures	Appt: 9/1/2020 Reappt: 12/2023 Term: 1/1/2024 – 12/31/2026
Telecom Carriers	Andrew Vinton Mgr. Government & Regulatory/Legal Counsel Allo Communications	Appt: 4/2022 Reappt: 3/2025 Term: 1/1/2025 – 12/31/2027
Telecom Carriers	Peter Gose Lumen Technologies	Appt: 3/2025 Term: 1/1/2024 – 12/31/2027

Advisory Board Membership Roster		
Telecom Carriers	Tonya Mayer Mobius Communications	Appt: 12/2023 Term: 1/1/2024 – 12/31/2026
Public	Ben Backus	Appt: 4/2018 Reappt: 12/2020 Reappt: 12/2023 Term: 1/1/2024-12/31/2026 Term: 1/1/2024 – 12/31/2026
Commission	Victor Kapustin Public Service Commission	Appt: 12/2023 Term: 1/1/2024 – 12/31/2026

Programs

The Commission administers five separate programs within the NUSF, each of which is designed to achieve the goals of quality service at affordable, comparable rates across Nebraska. More information regarding each program, including robust program guidelines outlining application process, full eligibility criteria, grant-making process, reimbursement process, and reporting are found on each program's respective page on the Telecommunications landing page of the Commission's website < <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications> >.

BROADBAND PROGRAM/WIRELESS TOWER FUND

The Nebraska Broadband Grant Program was established to provide specific and targeted broadband support to unserved and underserved areas to close the broadband availability gap. Program grants are available to regulated wireline, wireless, and unregulated communications providers wishing to participate. Activities supported through this program are organized under docket NUSF-92 and generally delineated between wireline support (which has been limited in recent years), broadband adoption uses, and wireless projects that provide capital support for tower deployment in high-cost areas of the state (wireless tower fund). Today, this program primarily supports the construction of wireless towers.

Funding in the wireless tower fund is focused on high-cost areas that are least likely to provide sufficient operating revenues to support tower construction or the placement of a cell site without NUSF support. These areas were identified as areas that have less than 10 households per square mile. Funding recommendations are based on five factors:

- Location, household density, and households per square mile.
- Number of households served.
- Distance from nearest existing tower using same technology (CDMA or GSM);
- Average daily traffic of measured roadways within the proposed tower's footprint; and
- Amount of requested funds per household served.

Historically, NUSF 92 has supported a variety of broadband-related programs, including broadband adoption efforts, such as providing broadband service to low-income households in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, support during this program year was almost exclusively directed toward the wireless tower fund. The Commission received requests for approximately \$7.76 million in funding for the wireless tower fund in 2024. Towers approved in the 2024 grant cycle are shown in the chart below.

Company	Exchange	Total Funded
US Cellular	Bancroft	\$504,750
US Cellular	Bancroft	\$504,750
US Cellular	Clearwater	\$519,750
US Cellular	Garland	\$584,750
US Cellular	Glenvil	\$589,750
US Cellular	Orleans	\$599,750
US Cellular	Page	\$599,750
US Cellular	Plymouth	\$504,750
US Cellular	Rising City	\$584,750
US Cellular	Sterling	\$505,750
Total		\$5,493,500

LB 683, passed during the 2023 legislative session, requires the Commission to withhold NUSF support from any carrier that utilizes communications equipment or services developed by organizations listed on the Federal Communications Commission's covered list, which can be viewed at <https://www.fcc.gov/supplychain/coveredlist>. Viaero, historically a frequent participant in the NUSF-92 program, affirmed to the Commission that it does have equipment in its networks that is on the FCC's covered list. The Commission had already approved approximately \$7.2 million in funding to Viaero for the construction of 14 towers in the cycles of the program prior to the signing of LB 683. As a result, the Commission continues to withhold support, including but not limited to the support listed for wireless tower construction, from Viaero until such a time as it can affirm that all prohibited equipment has been removed from its network.

The Commission opened a new docket (NUSF-143) to look at further modifications to the program. With limited participation historically and in anticipation of even fewer participants in future cycles, the Commission asked questions about whether the program should expand what is supported by the program and how to widen the potential pool of participants. The docket is open as of the submission date of this report.

E-RATE SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION

Nebraska's E-Rate Special Construction program is designed to maximize funding available through the federal E-Rate program and to incentivize new fiber special construction builds to connect E-Rate eligible entities where there is no existing fiber connection. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has adopted rules in the federal E-Rate program that includes a matching program for special construction charges for high-speed broadband. The federal program will increase an applicant's

discount rate for these charges up to an additional 10% on a dollar-to-dollar basis, not to exceed 100% of costs, if a state provides eligible entities with funding for special construction for broadband that meets the FCC's long-term connectivity targets. For the purposes of the E-Rate program, special construction charges are the upfront, non-recurring costs of deploying new fiber or upgrading facilities to E-Rate eligible entities. Special construction consists of three components: (1) Construction of network facilities; (2) Design and Engineering; and (3) Project management.

The Commission has allocated \$1 million from the NUSF for the E-Rate Special Construction Matching Program. As a supplemental support mechanism, NUSF-117 support will enable entities to maximize federal E-Rate special construction program support by providing E-Rate matching support of up to 10% of the total eligible one-time special construction charges but does not include funding for recurring costs or ongoing NUSF support. As the NUSF-117 dollars are intended to leverage additional federal E-Rate discounts, eligibility for the Nebraska E-Rate Special Construction Matching Program largely mirrors the Federal E-Rate program. Any applicant for NUSF-117 E-Rate Special Construction Matching Program support needs to avail itself of federal E-Rate support and go through the necessary steps in the FCC's E-Rate program. This process includes selecting a provider through a competitive bid process.

In Commission docket NUSF-117 Progression Order No 1, the Commission evaluated ways to improve the state funded E-Rate Special Construction Matching Program and encourage greater participation. On October 11, 2023, the Commission entered an order extending the program and removing the 10% cap on state support.

The following table reflects the total investment for the E-Rate Special Construction program, as based on participation in the state NUSF-117 E-Rate Special Construction Matching program:

E-Rate Special Construction Total Investment Costs and Support						
Funding Year (by fiscal year)	Participating Entity Count*	Estimated Total Eligible Special Construction Costs	Estimated Federal Discount	State Special Construction Commitment	Estimated Federal Match to State Special Construction	Estimated Participating Entity Contribution
2021	7	\$118,566.80	\$91,253.44	\$11,856.68	\$11,856.68	\$3,600.00
2022	3	\$58,496.00	\$44,096.80	\$5,849.60	\$5,849.60	\$2,700.00
2023	4	\$43,035.58	\$27,953.35	\$4,303.56	\$4,303.56	\$6,475.11
2024	3	\$80,250.46	\$42,433.43	\$29,791.98	\$8,025.05	\$0.00

**Only includes entities participating in the federal E-rate program that are also participating in the state E-Rate special construction matching program. This does not reflect all federal E-Rate participation for Nebraska entities, nor does it reflect other federal E-Rate discounts an entity may receive.*

HIGH-COST PROGRAM

The High-Cost program is the primary mechanism by which the Commission supports buildout and maintenance of rural networks. When initially implemented, the state program was focused on ensuring universal access to telephone service in the newly competitive market. Later, as broadband services emerged and rapidly expanded, both the state and federal programs began authorizing more funding towards broadband-capable networks. Over time, the Commission has modified its high-cost universal service program in response to policy decisions made by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) resulting in changes to the federal universal service support mechanisms, and also in response to specific changes driven by the communications landscape in Nebraska. The

Commission's high-cost support mechanism was last changed in its NUSF-99/NUSF-108 companion decisions to transition more support for specific broadband-capable infrastructure projects. Infrastructure projects supported by NUSF are required by statute to provide service capable of 100/100 Mbps minimum. In its NUSF-99 proceeding, the Commission focused on reforms for carriers categorized as "price cap" carriers. In its NUSF-108 proceeding, the Commission focused on reforming the high-cost mechanism for carriers categorized as "rate-of-return" (RoR) carriers. Price Cap and Rate of Return Carriers that serve in Nebraska are shown below.

Price Cap Carriers	
Windstream Nebraska, Inc.	
Citizens Telecommunications Company of Nebraska	
United Telephone Company of the West	
CenturyLink QC	

Rate of Return Carriers		
Arapahoe Telephone Company	Glenwood Telephone Membership Corporation	Northeast Nebraska Telephone Company
Arlington Telephone Company	Great Plains Communications, Inc.	Pierce Telephone Company, Inc.
Benkelman Telephone Company, Inc.	Hamilton Telephone Company	Plainview Telephone Company, Inc.
Cambridge Telephone Company	Hartington Telecommunications Company, Inc.	Southeast Nebraska Communications, Inc.
Consolidated Telco, Inc.	Hartman Telephone Exchanges, Inc.	Stanton Telecom, Inc.
Consolidated Telephone Company	Hemingford Cooperative Telephone Company	Three River Telco
Consolidated Telecom, Inc.	Henderson Cooperative Telephone Co.	Wauneta Telephone Company
Cozad Telephone Company	Hershey Cooperative Telephone Company	Blair Telephone Company
Curtis Telephone Company	Hooper Telephone Company	Eastern Nebraska Telephone Company
Dalton Telephone Company, Inc.	Glenwood Network Services, Inc.	Rock County Telephone Company
Diller Telephone Company	K & M Telephone Company, Inc.	Sodtown Communications, Inc.
Elsie Communications, Inc.	Nebraska Central Telephone Company	

In August 2023, the Commission opened a docket (NUSF-139) seeking to make notifications to the High-Cost program. With the influx of funding from both state and federal sources for the deployment of broadband infrastructure, the Commission determined it was the appropriate time to examine how the NUSF should be set up moving forward, including addressing whether funding should be shifted away from supporting capital construction towards supporting expenses incurred in the maintenance of existing broadband-capable infrastructure. While many issues are still undermined as of August 2025, the Commission did shift support to ongoing support starting with the 2025 calendar year funding cycles.

Through the NUSF-139 docket, the Commission determined that support should be provided to ILECs for locations that qualify as rural, have a broadband-capable voice network capable of speeds at 100 Mbps down and 20 Mbps up or greater, and are not served by another carrier with broadband-capable service at the 100/20 Mbps level. The Commission also determined that support would be determined by location, rather than by census block, since more granular broadband deployment data is available through the FCC's Broadband Data Collection mapping efforts.

The determination of whether a location is within a census block that is rural or urban is based on household density, and the census designation, utilizing information from the 2010 US Census. If a block has more than 20 households and greater than 42 households per square mile or is within an area designated as a city or village, it is classified as urban. Urban blocks are not eligible for support and are removed from the analysis for support.

To determine the location-specific costs to maintain the infrastructure, the Commission utilized the State Broadband Cost Model (SBCM). The SBCM model costs to serve locations within every census block in the state, and the Commission aggregates the appropriate costs for every eligible location for each ILEC.

Support allocations for individual companies are also subject to additional review to ensure support does not exceed levels required to recover reasonable costs, nor result in an excessive overall rate-of-return.

To facilitate this review, NETCs are required to annually submit investment, expense, and revenue data, to the Commission via the NUSF-EARN Form (EARN Form). Using agreed-upon-procedures, independent auditors certify EARN Form amounts to the financial statements of the NETC.

Allocations for companies are adjusted proportionally based on the overall support available for the program. The allocations for the 2025 calendar year can be found on the Commission website at < <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/high-cost-information> > click on the links with "NUSF High-Cost Support Distribution" in the name.

Ongoing support allocations for individual companies are also subject to additional review to ensure NUSF-HCP support does not exceed levels required to recover reasonable costs, nor result in an excessive overall rate-of-return.

In the calendar year 2025, the Commission allocated a total of \$42 million to price cap and RoR carriers. Through the High-Cost program, the Commission has administered funds that have brought broadband-capable service to nearly 24,000 households that lacked 25/3 Mbps service since 2019. More details about the areas served and project costs can be viewed on the PSC's Nebraska Broadband Map at < <https://broadbandmap.nebraska.gov> >.

The NUSF-139 docket is still open, and additional issues are being addressed through that docket, including examination of how support might be provided to non-ILEC entities that have built broadband-capable voice infrastructure. Additional details on that docket can be found on the Commission's website.

NEBRASKA RURAL TELEHEALTH PROGRAM

In January 2021, the Commission revised the Nebraska Rural Telehealth Program to mirror modifications made in the federal program. The Commission has allocated an annual amount of \$1.5 million to the Nebraska Rural Telehealth Program, which is designed to be a companion to the federal Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF), a subprogram of the Rural Health Care (RHC) program administered by the FCC.

Nebraska's telehealth program provides supplemental and secondary funding to health care providers or consortia receiving federal support through the HCF. Under the federal HCF, costs are paid at a rate of 65 percent of eligible costs with the remaining 35 percent to be contributed by the health care provider or consortium. The Commission will provide funding toward that portion remaining after federal funding and provide up to a maximum of 25 percent of total eligible costs, with the remaining 10 percent to be paid by the healthcare provider or consortium.

Since modifications were made to the Nebraska Rural Telehealth Program in 2021, participation has steadily increased, as described in the chart below. For the 2025 program year, the Commission received 475 applications totaling \$2.3 million in requested funds exceeding the \$1.5 million budgeted. The Commission plans to continue to explore ways in the next year to make sure that the program continues to meet the connectivity needs of health care providers serving rural Nebraska.

Three-Year Program History		
Year	No. of Applications	Amount
FY2021	146	\$415,579.19
FY2022	228	\$557,697.72
FY2023	441	\$1,602,036.18
FY2024	501	\$3,435,088.08
FY2025	475	\$2,286,742.48

NEBRASKA TELEPHONE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Nebraska Telephone Assistance Program (NTAP) assists eligible low-income individuals (income at or below 135% of the federal poverty level) with obtaining and keeping telephone services by lowering monthly telephone service rates. Eligible subscribers receive a monthly discount of up to \$12.75 on their telephone bill, which consists of up to \$9.25 through the federal Lifeline program and \$3.50 in NUSF support for eligible voice or bundled service. NTAP assistance is available for a landline or wireless telephone. Only one subscriber per household unit can receive NTAP support and each subscriber may only receive support for one telephone line, either wireline or wireless.

To qualify for the NTAP, a member of the subscriber's household must participate in one of the following programs or have an income at or below 135% of the federal poverty level:

- Medicaid;
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
- Federal Public Housing Assistance;
- Children's Health Insurance Programs; or
- Veterans Pension Benefit/Survivors Pension Benefit.

For households located on qualifying Tribal lands, federal support of up to \$34.25 per month is available, and up to a \$100 reduction for initial connection charges. Eligibility criteria for consumers living in tribal areas includes participation in the following programs:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance;
- Tribally administered Temporary Assistance for Needy Families;
- Head Start (only those meeting its income qualifying standard); or
- National School Lunch Program free lunch program.

Verification for eligibility in both the federal and state programs is completed through the National Verifier, a platform managed by the Universal Services Administration Company (USAC).

Participation has declined in the last few years, mirroring declining participation in the federal program. Factors impacting this decline include the availability of other programs, like the Affordable Connectivity Program (which offers a \$30/month subsidy) that participants are taking advantage of, limited awareness of the program, and challenges for participants navigating the federal application process. Additionally, it is worth noting that not all providers participate in the Lifeline program.

The Commission budgets \$200,000 to support this program for each calendar year, with the following expenditures:

Three Year Program History		
Year	Amount Disbursed	Average No. of Participants per Month
2021	\$108,013.50	2572
2022	\$90,433.00	2153
2023	\$66,066.00	1573
2024 (through Aug)	\$27,296.50	975

BROADBAND PROGRAMS

The Commission has supported broadband-capable networks through the Nebraska Universal Service Fund since 2011 (See Chapter I). In 2021, the Nebraska Legislature granted the Commission the authority to conduct a broadband-specific grant program, the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program (NBBP), aimed at increasing access to high-speed Internet, or broadband, for Nebraskans across the state. The Commission also administers the federally funded Capital Projects Funds (CPF). These programs are focused on deploying broadband infrastructure in areas of the state that are considered unserved, meaning broadband speeds are below 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download (“down”) and three megabits per second upload (“up”) (stylized as 25/3 Mbps). Support can also be provided to underserved areas of the state, which are locations with service below 100/20 Mbps speeds, but above 25/3 Mbps. Projects funded by Commission-administered programs must provide broadband Internet service scalable to 100/100 Mbps.

The Commission’s application and evaluation processes ensure that funds are allocated to projects that will best meet the state’s priorities as identified in statute, primarily to connect Nebraskans to high-speed Internet. Complete program guidelines and lists of grant awardees for each broadband program can be found on the Commission’s website at < <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/nebraska-broadband-bridge-program-nbbpcapital-projects-fund-cpf> >.

Additionally, the Commission continues to support a broadband map that provides a wide variety of information about broadband availability and performance throughout the entire state. In 2020, the Commission worked to re-design the broadband map, and in July 2020 launched a new version. The Commission maintains up-to-date information on the projects supported through NUSF, NBBP, and the federal Capital Projects Fund grant program, and all of this information is displayed on the broadband map. The broadband map is also set up to display information about federal broadband programs, including areas supported through the various federal universal service fund programs. The site can be found at < <https://broadbandmap.nebraska.gov> >.

The Commission maintains a separate broadband map that is focused specifically on the broadband grant programs (NBBP and CPF). This map allows for more detailed and specific information about the grant program to be displayed. This map can be accessed at < <https://gis.ne.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=9dc876af8ea541daa28d7dc82378e5ca> >.

Broadband Bridge

Originally created during the 2021 Legislative Session through LB 388 and now found in Neb. Rev. Stat. starting in §§ 86-1301, the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program (NBBP) was created to facilitate and fund the deployment of broadband networks in unserved and underserved areas of Nebraska. Through the program, the Commission has the authority to grant awards to assist applicants with eligible infrastructure installation costs for qualifying projects. Qualifying projects must provide broadband Internet service scalable to 100 megabits per second download and 100 megabits per second upload, or greater (100Mbps/100 Mbps).

Applications are assigned to priority tiers based on whether the project will provide service to unserved or underserved locations. Once applications are assigned to tiers, they are scored according to a series of criteria that assess financial capability, legal capability, technical capability, whether rates are comparable, match source, match percentage, location-density, whether the applicant is an eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC), whether a digital inclusion plan is included, and whether the applicant is participating in a public private partnership as part of the project. Points are assigned in each category as appropriate.

A challenge process was put in place in the program to protect an area from being overbuilt if another carrier is already providing service or is in the process of constructing service to an application area. Challengers must provide evidence to support their claim that service is already available or that they are in the process of building out infrastructure capable of serving the area they are challenging.

Beginning in fiscal year 2021-22, the Legislature appropriated \$20 million annually to NBBP to be distributed as grants and to pay for associated administrative costs. The following table describes how the NBBP funds have been awarded since the program's inception:

Award Summary	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total number of applications received	76	115	51	27
Total number of applicants	23	29	19	7
Total number of applications approved	61	37	22	21
Total unserved location counts for approved projects	1,765	2,178	1,488	758

Total underserved location counts for approved projects	10,875	260	342	218
Total location counts for approved projects	12,640	2,438	1,830	976
Total amount of grant funding available*	\$19,732,318	\$20,370,448	\$19,795,788	\$20,882,533
Total amount of grant funding requested	\$30,085,292	\$69,396,132	\$46,059,230	\$30,168,885
Total amount of grant funding approved	\$19,217,657	\$20,351,778	\$19,795,788	\$20,135,599

**This amount represents the \$20 million annual amount set forth by Nebraska Rev. Stat. § 86-1303, less administrative costs. Unawarded grant amounts are made available in the following funding year, when possible. Unencumbered funds cannot be carried across bienniums.*

NBBP projects must be completed within 18 months after the award is made, though applicants can request extensions. Following deployment of the completed network, awardees are required to submit speed test information to the Commission as a condition of receiving final payment for the project. Speed tests reflect actual download and upload speed capabilities of the network during peak times of usage, using a random sample of subscriber locations. The number of locations required to be tested is depended upon the number of locations within the project area:

- 50 or fewer locations: 5 test locations;
- 51-500 location: 10% of the total number of locations as test locations; and
- Over 500: 50 test locations.

The Commission initiated a new grant round in 2025, but due to funding constraints, the NBBP was paused and the docket eventually closed. The Commission will evaluate whether future grant rounds will be conducted, contingent on funding being available for rewards.

Capital Projects Fund

Under Section 604 of the Social Security Act, as added by Section 9901 of American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the U.S. Department of the Treasury established the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF). The CPF addresses the following priorities:

1. Broadband infrastructure deployment designed to directly enable work, education, and healthcare monitoring;
2. Critical needs that resulted from or were made apparent or exacerbated by the COVID-19 public health emergency; and
3. Critical needs of the community to be served by the deployment.

Nebraska was awarded \$128,740,178 for the fulfillment of the goals established by the CPF, which includes administrative costs. Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-12,245, in accordance with the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Act, Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 86-1301 – 1312, and in cooperation with the Department of Economic Development, the Commission used the grant framework established under the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program to determine funding eligibility. The Nebraska Legislature determined that funding through the CPF would be subdivided amongst the three US Congressional Districts in Nebraska. The total funding amount available for use towards broadband infrastructure deployment is as follows:

1. Congressional District 1: No less than \$40,000,000 for eligible projects.
2. Congressional District 3: No less than \$40,000,000 for eligible projects within cities of the second class and villages.

In Congressional District 2, it was determined that no more than \$35,000,000 would be designated for the improvement of multipurpose community facilities. It was also determined that this funding would be administered directly by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development in a separate process.

Using the framework set forth in Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 86-1301 – 1312, the Commission may grant CPF awards to assist applicants with eligible infrastructure installation costs for qualifying projects. Consistent with Broadband Bridge and NUSF, qualified projects must provide broadband Internet service scalable to one hundred megabits per second for downloading and one hundred megabits per second for uploading, or greater (100/100 Mbps).

On August 30, 2022, the U.S. Department of Treasury authorized \$87.7 million of the CPF funding to proceed with the broadband deployment in Nebraska Congressional Districts 1 & 3. The Commission initiated the first grant cycle for CPF in January 2023. The Commission received 130 applications between both Congressional District 1 and Congressional District 3. The Commission did not fund projects that were successfully challenged by another provider or that did not adequately demonstrate financial, legal, or technical capability; address digital inclusion; or demonstrate rate comparability. Additional points that determined funding were awarded for a speed additive, source and amount of matching funds, low location densities, and projects submitted as a private-public partnership.

Award Summary	Congressional District 1	Congressional District 3	Congressional District 3 - 2024
Total number of applications received	65	65	60
Total number of applicants	13	14	13
Total number of applications approved	27	38	28
Total unserved location counts for approved projects	627	173	1,642
Total underserved location counts for approved projects	2,387	3,562	1,571
Total location counts for approved projects	3,014	3,735	3,213
Total amount of grant funding approved	\$40,311,361.47	\$21,033,925.62	\$30,921,432.88

While all funds for Congressional District 1 were awarded, there were still funds remaining for Congressional District 3. The Commission opened an additional round of funding for Congressional District 3, with applications due in January 2024 and awards made in June 2024. The Commission received 60 applications and approved 28. All remaining funds were awarded through the 2024 grant cycle.

Initial due dates for grant projects awarded through the first round of grants were December 27, 2024. While some grantees requested, and were approved for, an extension, most of the projects awarded in the first round are complete. The initial due date for the second round of grant projects is December 4, 2025.

Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Grant Program

In 2023, the Commission initiated a new grant program to fulfill the requirements of the Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Grant Act, outlined in Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 86-1401-1406. The purposes of the program are to:

- Propel Nebraska agricultural producers to lead the nation in precision agriculture connectivity, sustainability, traceability, and autonomy to accelerate rural economic development
- Provide high-speed Internet service to farm sites as defined in section 77-1359 in unserved areas of the state as defined in section 86-1302

The program provides funding for the purposes of supporting precision agriculture in two subprograms, Connectivity and Devices and Technology. Connectivity grants support the building of 100/20 Mbps wireless connectivity to on-farm structures and devices. Devices and Technology grants support the acquisition of precision agriculture tools such as on-farm traceability solutions, water and soil monitoring, and autonomous machinery. Grants are distributed with 90% of the grant being issued at the time of the award, and 10% of the grant issued upon successful completion of the project.

Approximately \$1 million per fiscal year is available through the grant program. The Commission conducted the first cycle of the program during the 2023-24 fiscal year, with awards issued in April 2024. The Commission awarded three grants totaling \$391,280 in the Connectivity subprogram, and eight applications totaling \$287,336 in the Devices and Technology subprogram. Additional information about the awards can be found on the Commission website: <

<https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/2023-2024-precision-agriculture-infrastructure-grant-program-c-5529> >.

The second cycle of the program was conducted during the 2024-25 fiscal year, with grants awarded in April 2025. Fourteen grants were awarded, all in the Devices and Technology subprogram, for \$552,364 in total support. Remaining funding was made available in an additional grant round, and one application was awarded funding for \$6,180.

Nebraska Broadband Office Collaboration

The Commission has a long history of coordination and collaboration with other agencies on efforts to increase broadband infrastructure and adoption across the state.

In 2010, the Commission helped lead a collaborative effort aimed at mapping broadband, identifying broadband needs, and developing an initial broadband plan. The group consisted of representatives from the Commission, the University of Nebraska, the Office of the CIO/Nebraska Information Technology Commission (OCIO/NITC), AIM, and Nebraska Extension. The broadband map developed through this process was a precursor to the nationwide broadband map developed later by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) through the FCC Form 477 broadband deployment mapping process and later the Broadband Data Collection, or BDC, process that led to the FCC's National Broadband Map < <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov> >.

The Nebraska Broadband Office is statutorily required to direct the coordination among state agencies, boards, and commissions on policy matters affecting use of federal or state funding for broadband infrastructure deployment, operation, and maintenance. Prior to the creation of the Broadband Office by executive order in January 2023, the Commission was collaborating with other agencies on the use of federal funds to support broadband deployment and will continue to do so with the Broadband Office.

STATE 911

In 2016, the Nebraska Legislature adopted LB 938, creating the 911 Service System Act. The act designated the Commission the statewide authority to plan, implement, coordinate, manage, maintain, and provide funding assistance for a statewide 911 System, created the State 911 Department, and required that an implementation plan be developed to transition Nebraska's aging 911 system to a statewide Next Generation 911 (NG911) System.

The NG911 Master Plan was adopted by the Commission in November 2017. In the 2018 session, the Nebraska Legislature adopted LB993 creating the 911 Service System Advisory Committee, amending the 911 Service System Fund and authorizing the implementation of NG911 in Nebraska.

LB993 combined the Wireless E911 Fund created in 2001, with the 911 Service System Fund. The 911 Service System Fund supports the implementation, coordination, deployment, management, and maintenance of 911 Service System.

The History of 911

As technology has advanced over the last 57-years since the first 911 call was made in Haleyville, Alabama, the need for 911 capabilities has evolved as well. In the beginning, citizens had the ability to make basic 911 calls to a 911 center, or Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). With basic service, the PSAP received no location or identifying information with the call. The information had to be communicated by the calling party to the PSAP. As capabilities increased technology transitioned to Enhanced 911. With Enhanced 911, the PSAP received location and telephone number information with the 911 call based on the address of the wireline caller. Having this information allowed the PSAP to dispatch emergency services more quickly, even if the caller was not able to communicate their location or the nature of their emergency.

With the invention of wireless cellular phones, new challenges were identified with the location identification of 911 callers. 911 calls made from wireless cellular phones developed into Wireless Enhanced 911. There are three phases of Wireless E911. The most basic of these is "Wireless Phase 0." This means that when a person calls 911 from their wireless device, the PSAP in a city or county, possibly up to hundreds of miles away from the caller, may receive the call, but not receive the telephone number of the wireless device or the location of the caller. This presents potentially life-threatening issues due to delayed response time if the caller is unable to speak, does not know where they are, does not know their wireless telephone number, or if the call is dropped.

With "Wireless Phase I", a wireless call is received into the PSAP with the wireless device's telephone number and the location of the wireless cellular tower that received the call. This allows the PSAP to determine the general location of the calling party, usually within a few square miles. Although not ideal, this allows the call taker to identify the wireless carrier and the wireless subscriber's name.

With "Wireless Phase II", PSAP's have the ability to receive both the wireless caller's telephone number and their specific location by latitude and longitude.

When a wireless phone is turned on, whether or not it is in use, it periodically transmits signals to the wireless network, so the wireless network knows which cellular towers to deliver calls to if the device is used. With the network-based solution, special radio intercept equipment is installed on cellular towers to accomplish the location task.

When a wireless call is placed, the towers can compare signals from any active wireless device and pinpoint the call using triangulation (the difference in time between the arrival of the signal at different receiving stations or by the signal's angle of arrival at each tower). It takes at least three towers to get an accurate location. This solution is called network-based because the signal measurements and location calculations are performed in the wireless network.

The handset-based solution utilizes a wireless device equipped with Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment that can measure the time of arrival of signals transmitted from GPS satellites in order to calculate its position. These call routing solutions are referred to as Legacy Call Routing.

Nebraska's Current 911 Service System

On April 4, 2018, LB993 was signed into law paving the way for the Commission to begin implementation of Next Generation 911 (NG911) service in Nebraska. LB993 authorized the Commission to establish a 911 Service System Advisory Committee, merged the E911 Wireless fund with the 911 Service System Fund, and authorized the Commission to proceed with the implementation of the 911 Service System.

Next Generation 911 utilizes an Emergency Services Internet Protocol Network (ESInet) to allow PSAPs to receive voice communication, data, photos, and video from mobile devices. To implement Next Generation 911, a robust broadband network interconnects regions of PSAPs. Nebraska PSAPs have organized into seven Host/Remote regions. In the regional environment, two PSAPs function as the "Hosts" and the remainder function as "Remotes".

The "Host" PSAPs are equipped with the expensive Call Handling Equipment (CHE) necessary to receive 911 calls. The "Remote" PSAPs interconnect to the "Hosts" via a regional Internet Protocol (IP) network. This configuration allows for the sharing of equipment and resources and drives the expensive costs of call handling equipment down. It also adds resiliency and redundancy to the 911 system.

In addition to the establishment of an ESInet, Next Generation 911 involves locating and routing calls geospatially, which requires the use of precise Geographic Information System (GIS) data. The Commission is working with the PSAPs and GIS specialists to create and maintain the necessary data to locate and route 911 calls in the Next Generation 911 environment. The Commission contracted with West Safety Services/Intrado to conduct Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) checks on Nebraska's GIS data so the requirements of a NENA i3³ NG911 system can be achieved. To date, over 70% of 911 calls in Nebraska are located and routed geospatially.

After issuing a Request For Proposal (RFP) for a statewide ESInet and NG911 Core Services, the Commission executed a five-year contract in January 2021 with Lumen (formerly CenturyLink) and its partner Intrado to provide these services. Beginning in early 2022, PSAPs began transitioning to Nebraska's Next Generation 911 Service System. All 68 PSAPs and two Nebraska State Patrol Communication Centers are now connected to the NG911 System.

Established in 2018, the 911 Service System Advisory Committee (911 SSAC) includes representatives of State, County, and City Government officials, Law Enforcement, Fire, EMS, and Emergency Management personnel, as well as representatives of the telecommunications industry.

The Committee utilizes several working groups to make recommendations in the following areas: technical, GIS, training, operations, and funding. In the last year, ad hoc working groups were created to develop 911 Rules and Regulations and 911/988 Standards. 988 is the three-digit number assigned to the National Suicide Hotline. The working groups make recommendations to the 911 Service System Advisory Committee. The Committee in turn makes recommendations to the Commission.

³ NENA i3 is the national standard that all states are working to achieve to implement Next Generation 911

In the Next Generation 911 environment, citizens seeking emergency assistance will be able to contact 911 utilizing voice communications, text messages, photos, videos, and other digital media means. The identification of a caller's location and the routing of that call to the appropriate PSAP will be greatly enhanced, ultimately improving the chances of receiving emergency assistance much faster and saving lives.



911 Service System Advisory Committee meeting.

Funding

Since July 1, 2001, a surcharge had been collected from each subscriber of a wireless phone with a billing address in Nebraska. Wireless carriers remit the surcharge to the Commission 60 days after the last day of the month. The surcharge is currently set at \$.70 per line for each wireless subscriber in Nebraska except for residents of Douglas County. There is a statutory cap for Douglas County that limits the surcharge rate to \$.50 per line. For fiscal year 2024-2025, the 911 Service System fund collected approximately \$14 million dollars.

The Prepaid Wireless Surcharge Act was passed by the Legislature in 2012 and updated as a result of LB 157 in 2018. Under this Act, each retail seller of prepaid wireless telecommunication services collects the Wireless surcharges directly from the consumer at the point-of-sale. The amount of the surcharge collected per retail transaction is based on an annual determination by the Nebraska Department of Revenue utilizing a formula of the amount of prepaid wireless surcharges.

Amounts collected are remitted by retailers to the Department of Revenue. In fiscal year 2024-2025 this amounted to over 1% of the total sale. Retailers are permitted to deduct and retain 3% of prepaid wireless surcharges. The Department of Revenue will then remit the collected amounts, less administrative costs not to exceed 2%, to the State Treasurer for credit to the 911 Service System Fund.

As Nebraska transitioned to Next Generation 911, the Commission adopted a new NG911 funding model. This model prioritizes funding for the statewide Next Generation 911 Service System, to include the costs of the ESInet, NG911 Core Services, GIS data maintenance, and a statewide Management Information System.

Additionally, the 911 Service System Fund continues to allocate money to the PSAPs using a formula that identifies 40% of available funds for a base amount that each PSAP receives, 40% based on a PSAPs call volume, and 20% based on the population of the area served. As PSAPs connected to the ESInet and the NG911 Service System, they transitioned to the new NG911 funding model.

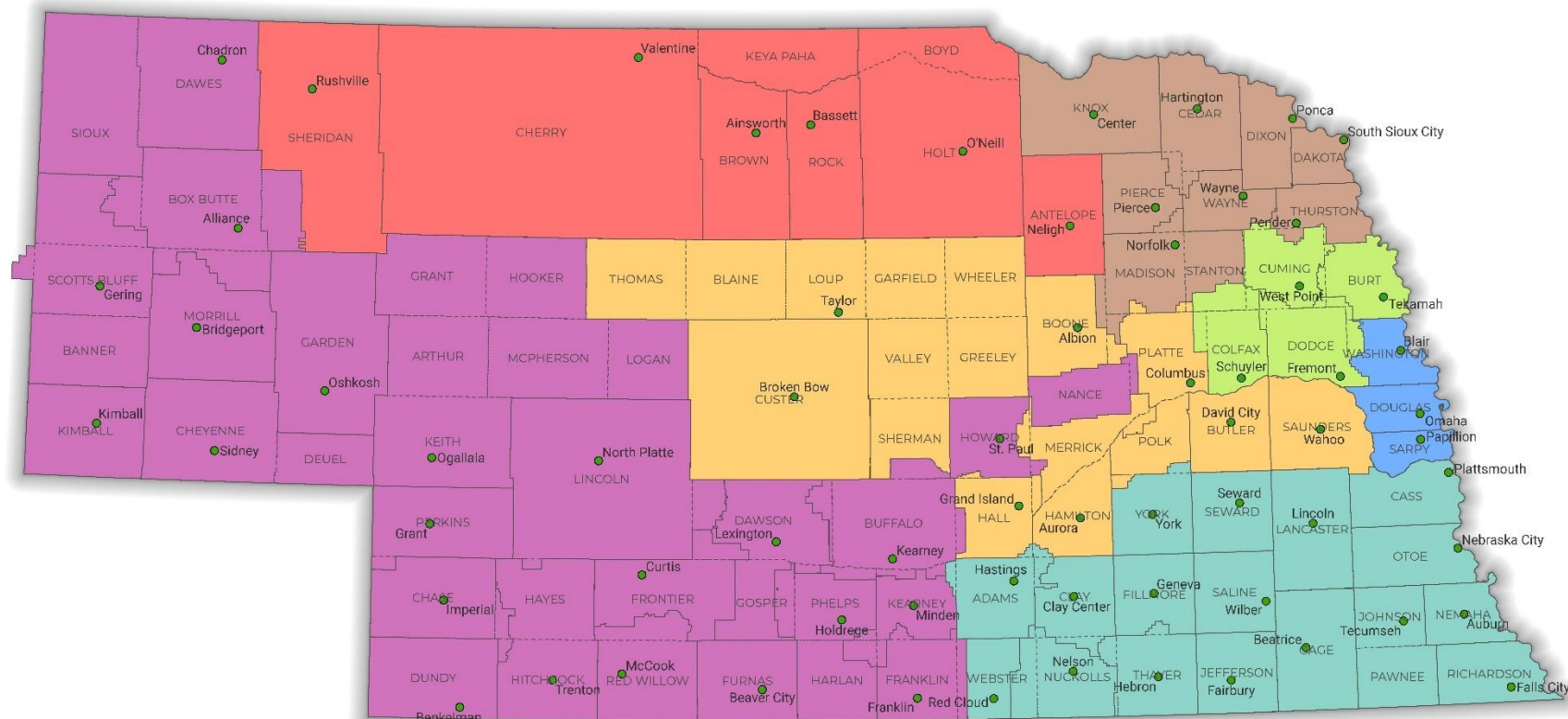
Training and Technical Standards

Since the inception of 911 in Nebraska, statewide mandatory training standards have not existed. The Training Working Group and the 911Service System Advisory Committee have worked to develop mandatory training standards that each telecommunicator must complete. In the fall of 2021, the Commission adopted the training standards. Effective January 1, 2022, all telecommunicators were required to complete a 911 40-hour basic course. The standards include a requirement for continuing education as well.

Wireline 911 Information

Wireline 911 surcharge information reported to the Commission by local telephone carriers in Nebraska can be found on the Commission's website < <https://psc.nebraska.gov/2025-annual-report-legislature> >, (select 2025 911 Wireline Report). If specific exchange information is not listed, it is because the local telephone carrier did not file the information.

Nebraska PSAP Regions



Legend

- East Central 911
 Northeast Nebraska 911
 PSAP Locations
- Metro
 South Central/Panhandle
- MidEast Regional 911
 Southeast 911
- North Central



Prepared by: NPSC
7/15/2025



LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The 2025 Legislative session saw several bills introduced that involved aspects of the Commission's regulatory oversight. The session included one bill introduced (LB 362) that sought to combine three different 911 acts into the 911 Service System Act. That bill was signed into law on March 11, 2025. The new law harmonizes existing definitions and eliminates unnecessary outdated provisions. The statute also eliminated the Enhanced Wireless 911 Advisory Board whose duties are largely duplicative of the 911 Service System Advisory Committee (911SSAC).

Several telecommunications-related bills (LB 4, LB 191, LB 347, and LB 666) introduced during the session were combined into one bill LB 311, prior to passage. LB 4 sought to provide an additional avenue for carriers to seek removal of obligations to serve customers in exchanges that have multiple options for service. LB 191 added the terms "broadband" and "communications" to statutory language regarding willful and malicious damage to utilities. LB 347 removed language requiring common carriers to obtain approval from the Commission when entering into long-term debt. LB 311, as originally introduced added language to existing statutes defining what cannot be regulated by the Commission. LB 666 adjusted the Rural Communications Sustainability Act to allow competitive providers (CLECs) to apply to have an incumbent provider's (ILEC's) carrier of last resort obligations terminated. The Commission is presently reviewing its existing regulations to ensure compliance with the requirements of LB 311 in its final form. The Commission appreciates the work of the Legislature in removing what it considered outdated and unnecessary language regarding debt financing for telecommunications common carriers and adding broadband and communications infrastructure to penalty provisions for damaging utilities.

Recommendations

The Commission appreciates the preservation of the statutory language for the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program. Originally, LB 264 sought to remove the language that guided the administration of the program, which had the potential to impact grant awards already made and projects in progress, as well as remove a potential tool that could be needed in the future to fill holes in broadband availability that other programs may not completely fill.

The Commission also appreciates the opportunity to coordinate and cooperate with legislators on relevant legislative matters. Particularly when bills are being considered that are 'deregulatory' in nature. This coordination provides opportunities to discuss the potential implications of bills on consumers and the telecommunications industry prior to introduction.

The Commission appreciated the attention paid by the Legislature to matters involving telecommunications and 911 and looks forward to working collaboratively with the Legislature in future sessions.

APPENDIX A – LOCAL EXCHANGE CARRIERS, ACCESS LINES, AND RATES

Carrier	Residential Rates	Residential Lines Served	Business Rates	Business Lines Served
AT&T Communication of the Midwest	\$25.95	0	34.95	2,255
Action Communications, Inc.	VoIP	1	VoIP	6
Airespring, Inc.	VoIP	0	VoIP	49
Allo Communications, LLC	\$18.00	8,466	31.00	25,503
Applied Communications Technology Inc.	\$21.40	1	44.80	0
Arapahoe Telephone Company	\$19.95	531	23.25	347
Arlington Telephone Company	\$24.95	180	30.00	70
Aureon Communications, LLC	N/A	0	N/A	123
Benkelman Telephone Company	\$19.95	325	27.50	215
Blair Telephone Company	\$24.95	1,021	30.00	562
Broadview Networks, Inc.	VoIP	0	VoIP	40
Cambridge Telephone Company	\$19.95	192	27.50	214
CBTS Technology Solutions	VoIP	0	VoIP	104
Citizens Telecommunications Company of Nebraska (d/b/a Frontier)	\$21.50	2,392	31.50	3,280
Clear Rate Communications, LLC	VoIP	29	VoIP	158
Consolidated Telco, Inc.	\$19.95	366	27.50	223
Consolidated Telecom, Inc.	\$19.95	276	27.50	104
Consolidated Telephone Company	\$19.95	1,126	27.50	371
Cox Nebraska Telecom LLC	\$19.99	35,409	ICB	46,187
Cozad Telephone Company	\$19.95	401	29.95	475
Crexendo Business Solutions, Inc.	VoIP	0	VoIP	637
Curtis Telephone Company	\$19.95	138	27.50	131
Dalton Telephone Company, Inc.	\$19.25	299	29.95	96
Diller Telephone Company	\$19.95	413	27.50	101
dishNET Wireline, LLC	\$42.00	65	N/A	0
Eastern Nebraska Telephone Company	\$24.95	607	30.00	700
Elsie Communications, Inc.	\$19.25	45	29.95	21
First Communications, LLC	N/A	0	27.55	4

France Telecom Corporate Solutions, LLC	VoIP	0	VoIP	68
Fusion Communications, LLC	N/A	0		160
Glenwood Network Services, Inc. (Keystone-Arthur)	\$19.95	463	29.95	53
Glenwood Telecommunications, Inc.	\$19.95	195	29.95	879
Glenwood Telephone Membership Corporation	\$19.95	1,423	29.95	256
Granite Telecommunications	N/A	0	30.00	3,082
Great Plains Broadband, Inc.	\$17.50	644	27.50	10,011
Great Plains Communications, Inc.	\$19.20	6,842	29.95	4,300
Hamilton Long Distance Company	\$17.95	31	ICB	401
Hamilton Telephone Company	\$17.95	1,559	17.95	1,027
Hartington Telephone Co., Inc.	\$20.00	425	27.50	338
Hartman Telephone Exchanges, Inc.	\$19.95	157	27.50	44
Hemingford Cooperative Telephone Company	\$19.90	377	27.50	124
Henderson Cooperative Telephone d/b/a Mainstay	\$19.95	276	27.50	147
Hershey Cooperative Telecom, Inc.	\$20.00	202	27.50	68
Hooper Telephone d/b/a Westel Systems	\$19.95	269	27.50	107
Huntel Cablevision, Inc. d/b/a American Broadband Nebraska Communications, Inc.	\$20.59	458	24.59	528
K & M Telephone Company	\$17.50	269	17.50	79
Level 3 Communications, LLC	VoIP	0	VoIP	3,186
Level 3 Telecom Data Services, LLC	VoIP	0	VoIP	85
Long Lines Siouxland LLC	\$10.00	204	25.00	318
MCImetro Access Transmission Services	\$20.99	0	30.99	27
McLeodUSA Telecommunications Services, Inc. d/b/a Paetec Business Services	N/A	0	29.50	661
Metropolitan Telecommunications of Nebraska Inc.	N/A	226	27.55	854
Midstates Data Transport, LLC	VoIP	183	VoIP	1,365

Mobius Communications Company	\$17.50	295	27.50	138
Nebraska Technology & Telecommunications, Inc. (NT&T)	\$17.50	2,039	27.50	348
Nebraska Central Telephone Company	\$17.95	2,113	17.95	885
Northeast Nebraska Telephone Company	\$20.00	3,026	27.50	437
NOS Communications, Inc.		0		2
PBN, LLC	\$17.50	3	20.45	111
Pierce Telephone Company, Inc.	\$19.95	617	29.95	241
Pinpoint Communications, Inc.	\$17.50	438	27.50	451
Plainview Telephone Company	\$19.95	371	27.50	175
Quantumshift Communications, Inc.	N/A	0	32.84	1
Qwest Corporation d/b/a CenturyLink QC	\$34.00	14,017	47.50	18,557
Rock County Telephone Company	\$24.95	246	30.00	165
Sodtoun Telephone Company	\$17.50	35	17.50	24
Southeast Nebraska Telephone Company	\$19.95	1,047	29.95	429
Spectrotel of the West, LLC	VoIP	0	VoIP	220
Spectrum Advanced Services	VoIP	23,885	VoIP	8,972
Stanton Telephone Company, Inc.	\$19.95	295	29.95	153
Teleport Communications of America, LLC	N/A	0	42.55	680
Three River Communications, LLC	\$18.00	226	27.50	272
Three River Telco	\$20.00	691	27.50	153
United Telephone Co. of the West (d/b/a CenturyLink)	\$23.00	866	40.00	1814
Wauneta Telephone Company	\$19.95	178	27.50	87
Windstream Nebraska, Inc.	\$17.50	24,650	31.99	22,613
Windstream New Edge, LLC	N/A	0		37
Windstream of the Midwest, Inc.	\$16.00	0	37.00	368
XO Communications Services, LLC	VoIP	0	VoIP	29

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Telecommunications

COMPETITIVE LOCAL EXCHANGE CARRIERS (CLECS)

To view a list of certificated competitive local exchange carriers, visit <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/telecommunications> and select "Competitive Local Telephone Companies" from the "Lists of Carriers" section.

COMMUNICATIONS INFORMATION PROVIDERS:

To view a list of communications information providers, visit the Commission's website at <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/telecommunications>. Click on "Lists of Carriers" and select "Communications Provider Registry" from the list.

LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE CARRIERS

To view a list of long-distance telephone carriers, visit the Commission's website at <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/telecommunications>. Click on "Lists of Carriers" and select "Interexchange Carriers" from the list.

INTERCONNECTION AGREEMENTS/AMENDMENTS

Go to <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/telecommunications> and select "Interconnection Information" under "Other." Select "Interconnection Agreements" to search for agreements by company.

SERVICE OUTAGE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

To view reporting requirements carriers are required to follow for service outages, visit <https://psc.nebraska.gov/sites/psc.nebraska.gov/files/doc/Service%20Outage%20Reporting%20Requirements.pdf>.

TARIFFS

Go to <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/local-tariffs> to see all tariffs submitted to the Commission.

Nebraska Universal Service Fund

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT LIST

Information regarding the Commission's efforts with respect to the FCC's Prohibited Equipment proceedings can be found here: <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/c-5493c-5520-prohibited-equipment>.

HIGH-COST PROGRAM ALLOCATIONS

The allocations for the 2025, 2024, and 2023 calendar years can be found on the Commission website at <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/high-cost-information> – click on the links with "NUSF High Cost Support Distribution" in the name.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Guidelines for all NUSF programs can be found on the Commission's website by visiting, <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications>. Click on "Nebraska Universal Service Fund (NUSF) and select the appropriate program.

Broadband Programs

BROADBAND BRIDGE AND CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND MAP

The Commission maps all project areas for proposed projects submitted through the application process these two programs. To see the map, visit <https://gis.ne.gov/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=9dc876af8ea541daa28d7dc82378e5ca>.

BROADBAND MAP

Visit <http://broadbandmap.nebraska.gov> to view information about broadband deployment projects in Nebraska.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

To view the program guide made available for Broadband Bridge and Capital Projects Funds grant programs, visit the Commission's website at <https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/nebraska-broadband-bridge-program-nbbpcapital-projects-fund-cpf>. Guidelines can be found under "Applicant Instructions and Materials" for each program.

State 911

911 WIRELINE REPORT

To view the 2024 911 Wireline Report, <https://psc.nebraska.gov/2025-annual-report-legislature> Select 911 Wireline Report.

