

BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Nebraska Public)	Application No. NUSF-92. _____
Service Commission, on its Own Motion)	
to Administer the Nebraska Universal)	
Service Fund Broadband Program:)	
Application from United States Cellular)	
Corporation.)	

PETITION OF UNITED STATES CELLULAR CORPORATION REQUESTING SUPPORT FROM THE NEBRASKA UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND BROADBAND PROGRAM

United States Cellular Corporation (hereinafter referred to as “UScellular”) by and through its counsel hereby submits this Petition to the Nebraska Public Service Commission (“Commission”) to receive support from the NUSF-92 program, or the “NEBP”. This Petition is being submitted pursuant to the Commission Order entered in NUSF-92, Progression Order 16 on October 16, 2024.

UScellular respectfully files this Petition requesting support to bring improved wireless service to **five (5)** rural areas in Nebraska that are presently unserved or underserved. The locations are identified on the map attached hereto as *Exhibit 1a* and would improve wireless voice and broadband service near the towns of **Firth, Hildreth, Leshara, Riverdale and Uehling**. The approximate longitude and latitude coordinates of the sites are confidential and are included in *Confidential Exhibit 2*. In support of its Petition, UScellular submits the following:

1. APPLICANT

The companies associated with this Petition are United States Cellular Corporation, d/b/a UScellular and its FCC licensed operation entities USCOC Nebraska/Kansas LLC and USCOC of Greater Iowa Inc. which will provide the broadband service to consumers proposed by this Petition. UScellular operates in predominantly rural states, including

Nebraska. UScellular has been certified as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (“ETC”) annually by this Commission since 2007. The point of contact is:

Stephanie Cassioppi
United States Cellular Corporation
8410 W. Bryn Mawr
Chicago, IL 60631-3486
(773)399-7940
stephanie.cassioppi@USCellular.com

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECTS

UScellular’s Petition consists of bringing improved wireless service to Nebraskans via five (5) new towers across UScellular’s service area, as shown and described in *Exhibit 1a*. Each project is separate and can be funded at the Commission’s discretion.

UScellular commits to meeting requirements of the tower program at each location. All locations need improved wireless service, but absent support, they will not be prioritized for construction. *Exhibit 1b* is attached to illustrate the benefits UScellular will provide to Nebraskans in the proposed project areas.

3. “UNSERVED” AND “UNDERSERVED” ANALYSIS

UScellular identified “served” areas by researching publicly available network coverage maps and historical NEBP awards. Additional analysis included reviewing household density under NEBP requirements. As a result of its review, UScellular believes all projects are in underserved and/or unserved areas and meet the program requirements.

4. POLYGON SHAPE FILES

Confidential Exhibits 3a-3c provide the polygon shape files showing households where coverage will be delivered via the above-named towers. These exhibits are confidential and are being submitted electronically.

5. HOUSEHOLD AND TRAFFIC COUNT DATA

Confidential Exhibit 2 contains information on traffic count data. In addition, *Confidential Exhibit 4* provides census blocks and household coverage information for each site. These exhibits are confidential and are being submitted electronically.

6. DEPLOYMENT TIMELINE

UScellular commits to completing construction within 24 months from the date of Commission approval. Should any unforeseen consequences occur, such as delays experienced due to weather, supply chain, permitting or site acquisition, UScellular commits to keeping the Commission informed and to seek approval for extensions that exceed the 24-month timeline. UScellular has a proven history of completing its tower construction on or ahead of schedule.

7. BUDGET

The proposed budget is included as a part of *Confidential Exhibit 2*. The budget includes estimated costs for the construction of new towers.

8. LIST OF EQUIPMENT & USE OF PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT

The list of the equipment to be purchased and used in construction and deployment is contained in *Confidential Exhibit 2*. UScellular has never used Chinese-manufactured network equipment, such as Huawei products, and will not do so going forward.

9. RETAIL PRICING AND RATES

Up-to-date retail pricing for UScellular can be found on UScellular's website at <http://www.uscellular.com>. Customers have the option to purchase a wireless router or hotspot for use with laptops or other WiFi-connected devices; cellular-connected devices including smartphones and tablets do not require a router or hotspot. UScellular does not

charge a subscriber line charge. UScellular is a Lifeline provider in Nebraska and is committed to evaluating all future affordability programs.

10. SERVICE COMMITMENT

The service commitment is included as a part of *Confidential Exhibit 2*.

11. FINANCIAL, TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL COMPETENCE

Originally formed as TDS Cellular Communications Company in 1983, the company changed its name to United States Cellular Corporation in 1984. The company is headquartered in Chicago, Illinois and is led by an experienced leadership team consisting of the following:

- Laurent Therivel, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Douglas W. Chambers, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer
- Michael S. Irizarry, Ph.D., Chief Technology Officer
- Adriana Rios Welton, General Counsel and Chief of Government Affairs

UScellular uses a state-of-the art mobile switching center in Omaha which has a full power back-up system for redundancy. Field teams are based in Nebraska enabling quick dispatch of personnel if on-site repair is required. UScellular's financial qualifications, including its audited financial statements are at <http://www.investors.uscellular.com>.

Exhibit 5 contains additional information on UScellular's operations in Nebraska.

12. TRUTH AND ACCURACY AFFIDAVIT

An Affidavit attesting to the accuracy of the information herein is attached as *Exhibit 6*.

13. FURTHER SATISFACTION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In further support of its Petition UScellular states:

- a. UScellular has never used or deployed equipment and services on the FCC's Covered List of prohibited equipment and commits to the same going forward;

- b. UScellular offers a voice grade service to customers and commits to continue to do so;
- c. UScellular offers access to emergency services throughout its service area and commits to continue to do so;
- d. UScellular commits to offer its services at reasonably comparable rates for comparable services in urban areas;
- e. UScellular commits to provide broadband mapping data to the Commission and its vendors as requested;
- f. UScellular commits to use support from the NEBP only for the purposes intended and which have been approved by the Commission;
- g. UScellular commits to fulfill all reporting and audit requirements by the Commission related to the NEBP program; and
- h. UScellular commits to abide by all applicable state statutes and Commission rules, regulations, and orders, including requirements established in NUSF-92, as well as in prior Dedicated Wireless Fund Orders pertaining to infrastructure sharing, roaming, E-911 capability and reporting requirements.

Conclusion

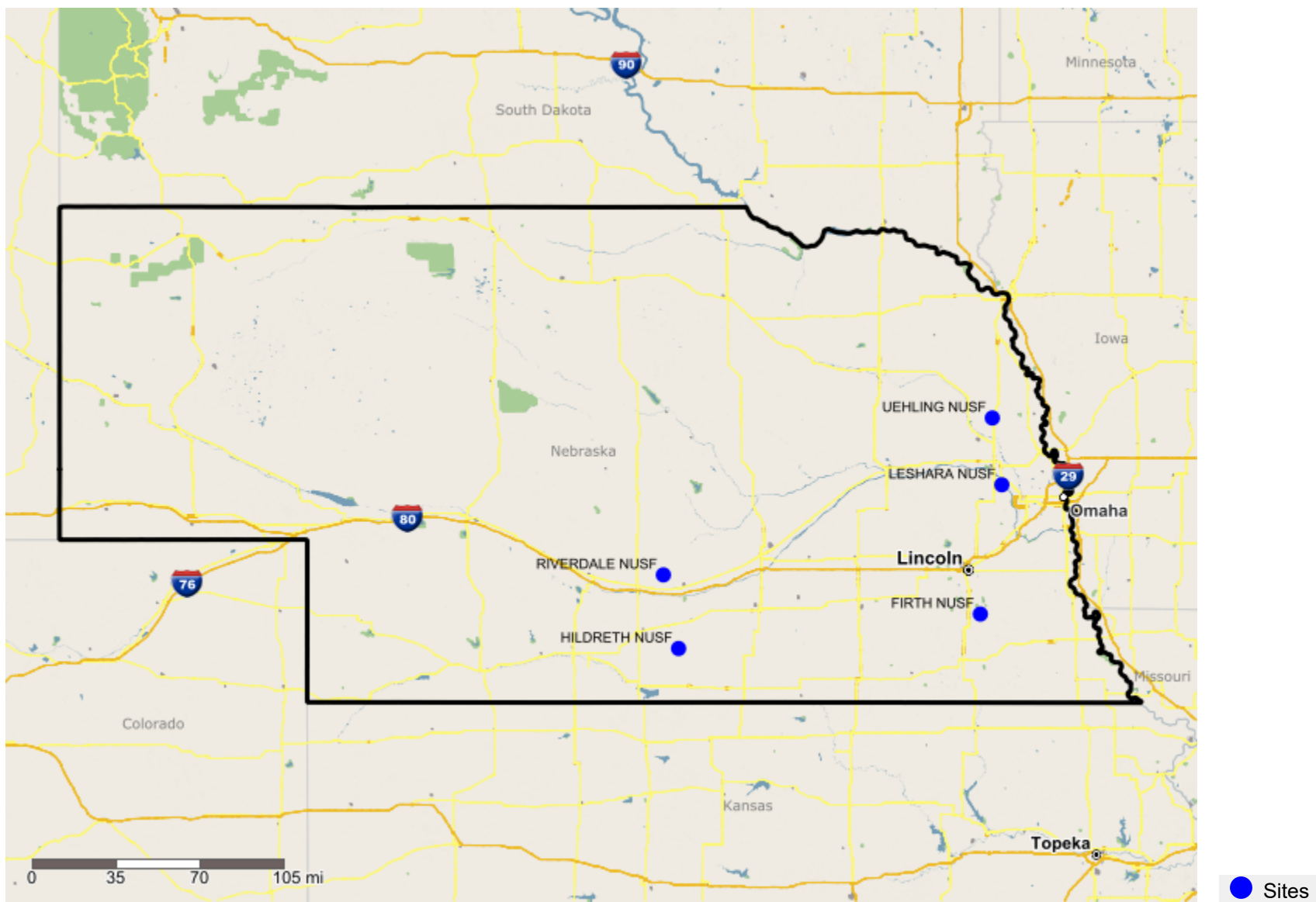
Constructing towers at the proposed locations will improve public safety and economic viability in rural areas where wireless service is presently inadequate. UScellular's Petition meets all criteria and objectives and furthers the Commission's goal of making wireless voice and broadband service available statewide. UScellular respectfully asks the Commission to enter an Order approving support for the projects described herein.

Respectfully submitted this 10th day of January, 2025.

United States Cellular Corporation

By: /s/ Deonne Bruning
Deonne Bruning, #20127
Deonne Bruning, P.C. L.L.O
2901 Bonacum Drive
Lincoln, NE 68502
(402) 440-1487
deonnebruning@neb.rr.com

NE Proposed sites



GIS Services
Data · Analytics · Mapping

Monday, 06 January,
2025



EXHIBIT 1b: NUSF-92

The Need. Based on UScellular’s analysis, many citizens of rural Nebraska lack affordable access to wireless voice and data service. UScellular’s application proposes rural wireless deployment in the towns depicted in the attached map. These are some of the most rural areas of the state, lacking adequate wireless service. With help from the NUSF-92 program, these towns and the surrounding areas will greatly benefit from added connectivity, including both voice mobility and broadband.

The current lack of wireless service in these areas restricts economic and business development essential to population and community growth. It also hinders public safety, remote education opportunities, and emerging essentials such as telehealth.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the need for investment, creating urgency for innovative, fiscally responsible, and quick to deploy wireless improvement plans.

A Reliable Solution. At UScellular, our mission is based on connectivity. We have always focused on the needs of underserved and unserved areas in rural America. We provide 4G/LTE wireless technology and are nearing completion of a multi-year program to enable 5G wireless technology across Nebraska where it’s economically feasible to do so. Through the NUSF-92 program, we will be able to provide the latest innovations in 5G including higher spectral efficiency, wider coverage, and voice service over 5G called “VoNR” in rural Nebraska. The towers proposed in this petition would have 5G Standalone and VoNR enabled.

Connectivity For All. Our technology, coupled with grant programs like NUSF-92 and BEAD enable us to close the digital divide regardless of how geographically dispersed the population might be. Our solution begins with cell towers and then takes advantage of the benefits of wireless technology, including voice, fixed wireless service (internet in-the-home) and mobile broadband (internet outside-the-home and on-the-go).

KEY BENEFITS:

- Broadband & Mobility
- Fast to Deploy
- Improved Connectivity

The Benefits. By making this investment, the citizens of Nebraska will receive the dual benefit of both improved connectivity in-the-home and on-the-go. The combination of in-home connectivity and better cell coverage on-the-go will produce numerous lifestyle, public safety and economic development benefits for Nebraska.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UScellular Invested \$11.9 in its Nebraska Network in 2023

Overall Nebraska investment totaled more than \$12.4 million

Omaha, Neb (Feb. 1, 2024) – UScellular invested \$11.9 million in its Nebraska network in 2023. This includes network upgrades and 5G modernizations that enhanced connectivity across the state and advanced the company’s ongoing 5G network evolution and expansion strategy.

Four Nebraska non-profits also received \$391,600 worth of hot spots and service to help youth connect to the Internet as part of the company’s [After School Access Project](#).

“At UScellular, our mission is to connect people to what matters most. These investments helped us fulfill that mission and enhance our community,” said Monique Moore, director of sales and operations for UScellular in Nebraska. “We are committed to providing essential connectivity and supporting our youth now and in the years to come.”

Additionally, UScellular invested \$159,000 in its Nebraska retail environments in 2023 to elevate the shopping experience. For more news and information about UScellular, please go to newsroom.uscellular.com.

About UScellular

UScellular is the fourth-largest full-service wireless carrier in the United States, providing national network coverage and industry-leading innovations designed to help customers stay connected to the things that matter most. The Chicago-based carrier provides a strong, reliable network supported by the latest technology and offers a wide range of communication services that enhance consumers’ lives, increase the competitiveness of local businesses and improve the efficiency of government operations. Through its [After School Access Project](#), the company has pledged to provide hotspots and service to help up to 50,000 youth connect to reliable internet. Additionally, UScellular has price protected all of its plans, promising not to increase prices through at least the end of 2024. To learn more about UScellular, visit one of its retail stores or www.uscellular.com. To get the latest news, visit newsroom.uscellular.com.

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For more information, contact:
uscdlmediarelations@uscellular.com

AFFIDAVIT OF UNITED STATES CELLULAR CORPORATION

Nebraska Broadband Program

NUSF-92

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
) ss.
COUNTY OF COOK)

I, the undersigned, being duly sworn, state as follows:

1. I am the Chief of Strategy, Partnerships and Towers, of United States Cellular Corporation, FCC service area number 379019.
2. I have read the foregoing Application seeking funding from the Nebraska Universal Service Fund Broadband Program and state the information provided herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.



Michael A. Summerford

Subscribed and sworn to before me

this 6th day of January, 2025.

Lorri A. Christensen, Notary Public
Cook County, Illinois



My Commission Expires 2-8-2027