

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 Orders entered in NUSF-92, Progression Order 15 on April 9, 2024 and May 14, 2024.

UScellular respectfully files this Petition requesting support to bring improved wireless service to **14** 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 **Bancroft, Bradshaw, Clearwater, Firth, Garland, Glenvil, Leshara, Orleans, Page, Plymouth, Rising City, Riverdale, Staplehurst and Sterling**. 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 14 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, zoning 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 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. UScellular is providing a \$12 credit to former Affordable Connectivity Program ("ACP") customers through April 2025. <https://newsroom.uscellular.com/uscellular-extending-support-for-acp-customers/>

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 17th day of June, 2024.

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