

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 to the Nebraska Broadband)	
Program Received 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 “U.S. Cellular”) by and through its counsel hereby submits this Petition to the Nebraska Public Service Commission (“Commission”) to receive support from the Nebraska Broadband Program (“NEBP”). This Petition is being submitted pursuant to the Order entered in NUSF-92, Progression Order No. 13 on February 23, 2022.

U.S. Cellular respectfully files this Petition requesting NEBP support to bring improved wireless service to 15 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 rural towns of **ADAMS, AYR, BRAINARD, CEDAR RAPIDS, EDGAR, ELMWOOD, GREELEY, MERNA, MURRAY, NEWCASTLE, NIOBRARA, PONCA, RIVERTON, TOBIAS**, and near the town of **VALENTINE** (Prairie Club and CapRock Ranch golf courses). The approximate longitude and latitude coordinates of the sites are confidential and are included in *Confidential Exhibit 2*. In support of its Petition, U.S. Cellular submits the following:

1. APPLICANT

The companies associated with this Petition are United States Cellular Corporation, d/b/a U.S. Cellular 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. U.S. Cellular operates in predominantly rural states, including Nebraska. Its federal license does not include the panhandle of western Nebraska, but encompasses the remainder of the state. U.S. Cellular has been certified as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (“ETC”) annually by the Commission since 2007. The point of contact for this Petition is:

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2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECTS

U.S. Cellular’s Petition consists of bringing improved wireless voice and broadband service via 15 new towers distributed across the U.S. Cellular service area in the state, as shown, and described, in *Exhibit 1a*. Each project is separate and can be funded at the Commission’s discretion. U.S. Cellular commits to meeting or exceeding broadband speeds required by the program at each location. All of these locations need improved wireless service, but absent NEBP support will not be prioritized for construction. *Exhibit 1b* is attached to illustrate the benefits that U.S. Cellular would provide to Nebraskans in the 15 project areas.

3. “UNSERVED” AND “UNDERSERVED” ANALYSIS

U.S. Cellular identified “served” areas by researching publicly available network coverage maps and historical NEBP awards. Further analysis included household density and identification of “unserved” candidate areas eligible for NEBP support under NEBP requirements. As a result of its review, U.S. Cellular believes all the projects are in underserved and/or unserved areas.

4. POLYGON SHAPE FILES

Confidential Exhibits 3a-3e 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

U.S. Cellular 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, flooding, zoning or site acquisition, U.S. Cellular commits to keeping the Commission informed and to seek approval for extensions that exceed the 24-month timeline. U.S. Cellular has demonstrated a history of completing construction ahead of schedule; six sites awarded in 2020 were completed a year ahead of schedule in 2021.

7. BUDGET

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

8. LIST OF EQUIPMENT

The list of equipment to be purchased and used in the construction and deployment of any sites awarded funding is contained in *Confidential Exhibit 2*. U.S. Cellular 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 U.S. Cellular can be found on U.S. Cellular'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. U.S. Cellular does not charge a subscriber line charge. U.S. Cellular is a Lifeline and Affordable Connectivity Program ("ACP") provider in Nebraska.

10. SERVICE COMMITMENT

U.S. Cellular commits to offering NUSF broadband service to all households within the coverage area for at least five (5) years.

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 on January 26, 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
- John C. Gockley, Senior Vice President, Legal and Regulatory Affairs

U.S. Cellular 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. U.S. Cellular's financial qualifications, including its audited financial statements can be accessed at

<http://www.investors.uscellular.com>. Please see *Exhibit 5* for additional information on U.S. Cellular's operations and investments in Nebraska.

12. FINANCIAL MATCH

While a financial match is voluntary, U.S. Cellular has identified 9 locations where a match is feasible. U.S. Cellular will provide a match to lower the requested funding amount for these locations, as detailed in *Confidential Exhibit 2*. Full funding is requested at the remaining sites, as these locations are not economically feasible to build without complete support from the NEBP.

13. TRUTH AND ACCURACY AFFIDAVIT

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

14. FURTHER SATISFACTION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In further support of its Petition U.S. Cellular states:

- a. U.S. Cellular offers a voice grade service to customers and commits to continue to do so;
- b. U.S. Cellular offers access to emergency services throughout its service area and commits to continue to do so;
- c. U.S. Cellular commits to offering broadband service to all households within the coverage area for at least five (5) years;

- d. U.S. Cellular commits to offer its services at reasonably comparable rates for comparable services in urban areas;
- e. U.S. Cellular commits to provide broadband mapping data to the Commission and its vendors as requested;
- f. U.S. Cellular commits to use support from the NEBP only for the purposes intended and which have been approved by the Commission;
- g. U.S. Cellular commits to fulfill all reporting and audit requirements by the Commission related to the NEBP program; and
- h. U.S. Cellular commits to abide by all applicable Commission Rules, Regulations and Orders, including requirements established in NUSF-92, as well as in in prior Dedicated Wireless Fund Orders pertaining to infrastructure sharing, roaming, Phase II 911 capability and reporting requirements

Conclusion

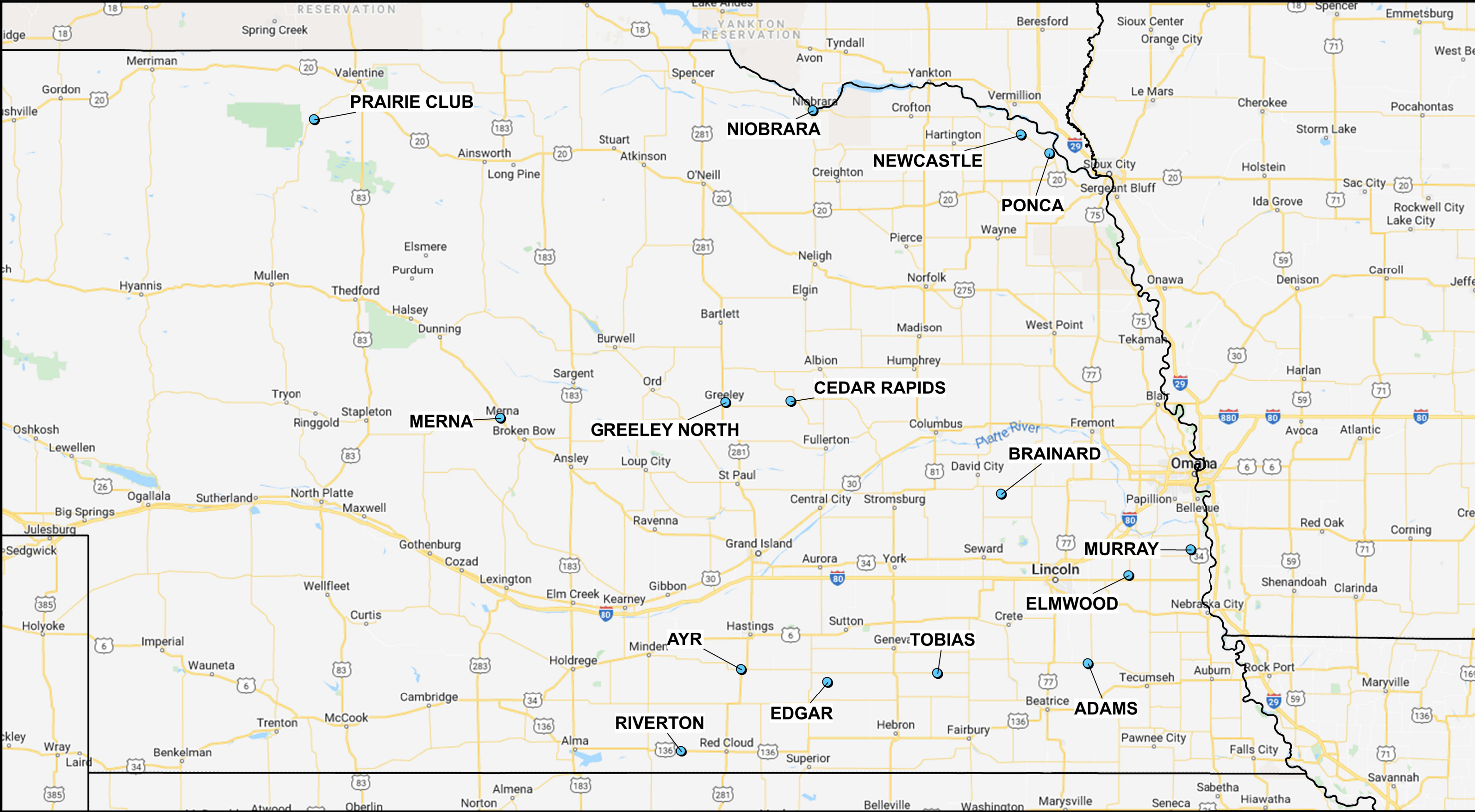
Constructing towers at the proposed locations will improve public safety and economic viability in rural areas where wireless service is presently inadequate. U.S. Cellular's Petition meets the criteria and objectives of the NEBP and furthers the Commission's goal of making wireless voice and broadband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

Respectfully submitted this 13th day of April, 2022.

United States Cellular Corporation

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Proposed Sites



LEGEND

● Proposed Sites

Notes:



GIS Services
Data · Analytics · Mapping

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 will greatly benefit from added mobility, including both voice 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 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 have begun to provide the latest 5G wireless technology across Nebraska where it’s economically feasible to do so. As in the past, when rural areas in America lacked universal access to electricity, the low population density in some areas makes it difficult to justify investment without government subsidies.

How we Fix This. Our technology, coupled with grant programs like NUSF-92, enables 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).

Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) is a wireless “last mile” solution that delivers broadband connectivity to homes and businesses in rural areas at reasonable cost and without the long timelines associated with the deployment of typical wired solutions.

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 internet connectivity in-the-home and on-the-go. The combination of in-home/business broadband and better cell coverage on-the-go will produce numerous lifestyle and economic development benefits for Nebraska.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UScellular Made \$74.9 Million Network Investment in Nebraska During 2021

Omaha, Nebraska (Feb. 10, 2022) – UScellular made a \$74.9 million investment in its Nebraska network during 2021. This includes \$8.2 million in general network upgrades, \$20.5 million in 5G modernizations and \$46.2 million in 5G spectrum that will bring additional benefits in the coming years and advances the company's multi-year 5G network strategy.

Additionally last year, UScellular provided \$31,932 in funding to nonprofit organizations, teachers and youth organizations across Nebraska. That includes \$30,000 to the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands, \$1,522 to teachers through donations to [DonorsChoose.org](https://www.donorschoose.org) and \$410 through its [Community Connections](#) program. There were two Nebraska Boys & Girls Clubs that also received \$408,285 worth of hotspots and service to help their members connect to the Internet at the Clubs or at home as part of the company's [After School Access Project](#).

"Connectivity is more important than ever right now and at UScellular, we are committed to keeping our customers connected to the people and places that matter most to them," said Jared Blecha, UScellular's director of sales in Nebraska and western Iowa. "We will continue to invest in creating a great wireless experience for customers, while also ensuring we provide critical resources for youth in our local communities."

To help ensure customers have a great shopping experience, UScellular also invested \$549,000 in its Nebraska retail store environments in 2021. This includes seven relocated, redesigned or upgraded stores that better showcase the variety of products and services the company provides, which makes it easier for customers to find what they need.

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 elevate the customer experience. 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. To learn more about UScellular, visit one of its retail stores or www.uscellular.com. To get the latest news, visit newsroom.uscellular.com. Connect with UScellular on social media at facebook.com/uscellular, twitter.com/uscellular, instagram.com/uscellular, YouTube.com/uscellularcorp and linkedin.com/company/uscellular.

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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 Vice President, Business Development and Partnerships, 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 12th day of April, 2022.

Ellen M Groh, Notary Public
Cook County, Illinois



My Commission Expires 1/22/2025