

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION'S SPENDING PLAN  
FOR THE FUNDS FROM THE CARES ACT AND  
DIVISION N OF THE CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2021**

The following is a spending plan from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in accordance with section 15011(b)(1)(B) of the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Pub. L. No 116-136, as amended by Title VIII of Division O of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. No. 116-260. The requirement in section 15011 of the CARES Act states that each agency shall submit to the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee a plan describing how the agency will use its covered funds. Pursuant to the CARES Act, the FCC received \$200 million in funding during fiscal year (FY) 2020 to provide support to health care providers for telehealth during the COVID-19 pandemic (COVID-19 Telehealth Program). In Division N of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, the FCC has now received additional funds for its COVID-19 Telehealth Program during FY 2021. Furthermore, the FCC received funding for three other programs in Division N during FY 2021. Please see the table below for a breakdown of the funding that the FCC has received in FY 2020 and FY 2021 from both the CARES Act and Division N of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. The FCC will expend the funds it has received for each of the Division N related programs throughout FY 2021. In addition, the FCC expects some of its spending on these programs to carry over into FY 2022 as well. In the pages that follow, the FCC has separate sections for each of the four programs listed below to describe each program's purpose and spending plan.

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION FUNDING  
RELATED TO SEC. 15011 SPENDING PLAN**

|   | FY 2021                   | FY 2020                  |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>PROGRAMS</b>                                   | <b>DIVISION N FUNDING</b> | <b>CARES ACT FUNDING</b> |
| COVID-19 Telehealth Program                       | \$249,950,000             | \$200,000,000            |
| Broadband DATA Act                                | \$65,000,000              | \$0                      |
| Emergency Broadband<br>Connectivity Fund          | \$3,200,000,000           | \$0                      |
| Secure and Trusted<br>Communications Networks Act | \$1,900,000,000           | \$0                      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                      | <b>\$5,414,950,000</b>    | <b>\$200,000,000</b>     |

## COVID-19 TELEHEALTH PROGRAM

### Program Purpose

The FCC's COVID-19 Telehealth Program has awarded \$200 million in funding appropriated by the CARES Act to help eligible health care providers provide telehealth and connected care services to patients at their homes or mobile locations in response to the public health emergency brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Telehealth Program provides direct support to nonprofit and public eligible health care providers responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by funding the telecommunications services, information services, and devices necessary to enable the provision of telehealth services. Congress appropriated an additional \$249.95 million for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.

### Spending Plan

Eligible health care providers were first required to apply for funding through an FCC application portal. Awards were made on a rolling basis and were based on the estimated costs of the eligible services and connected devices applicants intended to purchase, as described by each applicant in their respective applications and supporting documentation. Consistent with the guidance in its Report and Order establishing the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, the FCC considered a number of factors when reviewing and approving applications. For example, the FCC gave priority to health care providers that were located in areas hardest hit by COVID-19. In addition, the FCC took into consideration where the funding would have the most impact on addressing health care needs based on the amount of funding requested and the estimated number of patients to be served, or where the health care provider would serve Tribal communities. Beginning with the first award announcement on April 14, 2020, applicants received funding commitment letters announcing award amounts, and funds were committed until the \$200 million appropriation was exhausted on July 8, 2020.

Both the program application and request for reimbursement forms require program participants to certify to program rule compliance. Applicants that received a funding commitment must first pay their vendor or service provider for the costs of the eligible services and/or connected devices received before requesting reimbursement for those costs from the COVID-19 Telehealth Program. As of March 5, 2021, over \$150 million in program funds have been disbursed. The FCC continues to review and approve requests for reimbursement for these critical funds on an ongoing basis.

In the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Congress appropriated an additional \$249.95 million for the COVID-19 Telehealth Program. The FCC has sought public comment on matters identified in this new authorizing legislation and is working to launch the second round of this program. The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) will be administering the COVID-19 Telehealth Program functions for the upcoming phases of funding as well as any remaining work from the initial round of program funding. USAC is an independent, not-for-profit corporation designated as the permanent administrator of the Universal Service Fund by the FCC.

Additional information is posted on the FCC's COVID-19 Telehealth Program webpage at: <https://www.fcc.gov/covid-19-telehealth-program>.

## BROADBAND DATA ACT

### Program Purpose

In March of 2020, Congress passed the Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability Act (the Broadband DATA Act), Pub. L. No. 116-130. The Broadband DATA Act among other things, requires the FCC to collect standardized, granular data on the availability and quality of both fixed and mobile broadband Internet access services, to create publicly available coverage maps, to establish processes for members of the public and other entities to challenge and verify the coverage maps, and to create a common dataset of all locations where fixed broadband Internet access service can be installed. In July 2020 and January 2021, the FCC adopted rules for the Digital Opportunity Data Collection, now referred to as the Broadband Data Collection, which will fulfill the mandates of the Broadband DATA Act. In Division N of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Congress appropriated \$65 million for the FCC to carry out its responsibilities related to the Broadband DATA Act.

### Spending Plan

The FCC established the Broadband Data Task Force in February of 2021 to direct the implementation of the FCC's Broadband Data Collection. The FCC will spend the appropriated funds from Division N to implement the Broadband DATA Act requirements through the Broadband Data Collection.

The Broadband Data Collection includes several components. To fulfill the requirements of the Broadband DATA Act, the FCC first must collect data on the availability and quality of broadband Internet access service from both fixed and mobile providers, as well as from State, local, and Tribal government entities, other federal agencies, and third parties, if determined to be in the public interest. Second, to support this collection, the FCC must also establish the Fabric, a database of all locations in the United States where fixed broadband Internet access service has been or could be installed, and incorporate the Fabric into the availability collection. Fixed broadband providers must report their service area in the form of either a polygon shapefile or a list of addresses or locations, and the Fabric will form the foundation for the location-or address-based reporting. Third, the FCC must create and publish, based on the availability collections, maps that depict the availability of fixed and mobile broadband services (both separately and combined). Fourth, the FCC must establish a user-friendly challenge process for the public, as well as State, local, and Tribal governmental entities, to challenge the information included in the Fabric or depicted in the public availability maps, and for providers to respond to such challenges. Fifth, the FCC must verify the accuracy and reliability of the availability data collected from providers and other entities. Sixth, to improve data accuracy, the FCC must conduct audits and collect crowdsourced data from entities or individuals on an ongoing basis about the deployment and availability of broadband service. Finally, the FCC must provide technical assistance to: 1) small broadband service providers, those with less than 100,000 connections, to assist them in complying with the requirements of the availability collection; 2) consumers and State, local, and Tribal governments to support their participation in the challenge process; and 3) Indian Tribes, in the form of 12 regional workshops to assist them with submitting verified deployment data.

Additional information about the FCC's Broadband Data Collection efforts is available at:

<https://www.fcc.gov/broadband-data-collection>

## EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT PROGRAM

### Program Purpose

Closures of businesses and schools have led people to turn to virtual learning, telemedicine, and telework to enable social distancing measures, which has only increased the need for access to broadband services by households across the United States. The cost of broadband services can be difficult to overcome for low-income families and for families that have been struggling during the pandemic. As part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Congress established an Emergency Broadband Connectivity Fund of \$3.2 billion for the FCC to use to develop and implement an Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) Program. Through the EBB Program, eligible low-income households may receive a discount off the cost of broadband service and certain connected devices during an emergency period relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, and participating providers can receive a reimbursement for such discounts. Through the discount and support provided by the EBB Program, low-income households will have the opportunity to stay connected through broadband during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Spending Plan

The EBB Program will use funding from the Emergency Broadband Connectivity Fund to support participating providers' provision of qualifying broadband service offerings and connected devices to eligible households. Participating providers will make available to eligible households a monthly discount off the standard rate for an Internet service offering and associated equipment, up to \$50.00 per month. On Tribal lands, the monthly discount may be up to \$75.00 per month. Participating providers will receive reimbursement from the EBB Program for the discounts provided. Participating providers that also supply an eligible household with a connected device, defined in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 as a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet, for use during the emergency period, may receive a single reimbursement of up to \$100.00 for the connected device, if the charge to the eligible household for that device is more than \$10.00 but less than \$50.00.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 provided that no more than 2% of the Emergency Broadband Connectivity Fund, or \$64 million, is to be used for the administration of the EBB Program and granted the FCC the authority to use the services of USAC to implement the EBB Program. The FCC has an agreement in place with USAC to provide programmatic support for the EBB Program throughout the duration of the program. USAC operates the Lifeline National Verifier and National Lifeline Accountability Database, which the FCC will leverage for eligibility verifications and reimbursement processing.

Furthermore, the FCC is required by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 to adopt audit requirements to ensure that participating providers are in compliance with the program rules and to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse in the EBB Program. The FCC is developing an audit plan by which payments through the EBB Program will be sampled, analyzed, and tested to ensure that those payments are made in accordance with the EBB Program's rules as well as the internal controls for the EBB Program application and payment processes. The FCC is contracting with a third party to assist the FCC with its audit program. Additional information about the FCC's EBB Program is available at: <https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-broadband-benefit-program>.

# SECURE AND TRUSTED NETWORK COMMUNICATIONS ACT

## Program Purpose

On March 12, 2020, the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019 (Secure Networks Act), Pub. L. No. 116-124 was signed into law. The Secure Networks Act, among other measures, directs the FCC to establish the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Reimbursement Program (Reimbursement Program) to fund the removal, replacement, and disposal of covered communications equipment or services that pose an unacceptable risk to the national security of the United States or the security and safety of U.S. persons from the networks of providers of advanced communications service. With the passage and signature of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Congress appropriated \$1.9 billion to the FCC to carry out the Secure Networks Act, of which \$1.895 billion shall be used to carry out the Reimbursement Program.

## Spending Plan

Pursuant to the requirements established by the FCC for the Reimbursement Program, recipients of Reimbursement Program funds shall use these funds solely to: (1) permanently remove covered communications equipment and services from their networks, (2) replace the covered communications equipment and services with non-covered equipment or services, and (3) dispose of the covered communications equipment and services in accordance with the Secure Networks Act.

Reimbursement Program participants will file applications seeking funding allocations based on cost estimates for the costs reasonably incurred for the removal, replacement, and disposal of covered communications equipment or services.

The FCC is contracting with a third party to serve as Reimbursement Program Administrator (Administrator). The Administrator will assist the FCC by reviewing and providing recommendations as to whether, among other things, applications submitted for reimbursement are complete, whether the applicants are eligible to participate in the Reimbursement Program, and whether, after reviewing relevant cost documentation, the expenses reported for the removal, replacement, and disposal of covered equipment or services are eligible for reimbursement. Once the initial applications are approved, the FCC will issue funding allocations for draw down by recipients as expenses are incurred. Prior to disbursing funds, the Administrator will need to review and approve submitted requests by recipients providing documentation of costs incurred to support requests. The Reimbursement Program will be a multiple year process that will carry over into future fiscal years.

The Secure Networks Act also requires the FCC to take “all necessary steps” to combat waste, fraud, and abuse in the Reimbursement Program, including: requiring recipients to submit status updates, detailed spending reports, and documentation of invoices, and conducting routine audits and random field investigations of recipients. The FCC may contract with a third party to assist the FCC with its audit program, and recipients must comply the FCC’s audit requirements. Recipients must also allow any representative appointed by the FCC to enter the premises of the recipient to conduct compliance inspections. Additional information about the FCC’s Reimbursement Program is available at:

<https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-adopts-rules-secure-communications-networks-and-supply-chain-0>