

Federal Communications Commission

§ 54.5

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AUTHORITY: 47 U.S.C. 151, 154(i), 155, 201, 205, 214, 219, 220, 254, 303(r), 403, and 1302, unless otherwise noted.

SOURCE: 62 FR 32948, June 17, 1997, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Information

§ 54.1 Basis and purpose.

(a) *Basis.* These rules are issued pursuant to the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.

(b) *Purpose.* The purpose of these rules is to implement section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 USC 254.

§ 54.5 Terms and definitions.

Terms used in this part have the following meanings:

Act. The term “Act” refers to the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.

Administrator. The term “Administrator” shall refer to the Universal Service Administrative Company that is an independent subsidiary of the National Exchange Carrier Association, Inc., and that has been appointed the permanent Administrator of the federal universal service support mechanisms.

Community anchor institutions. For the purpose of high-cost support, “community anchor institutions” refers to schools, libraries, health care providers, community colleges, other institutions of higher education, and other community support organizations and entities.

Competitive eligible telecommunications carrier. A “competitive eligible telecommunications carrier” is a carrier that meets the definition of an “eligible telecommunications carrier” below and does not meet the definition of an “incumbent local exchange carrier” in § 51.5 of this chapter.

Contributor. The term “contributor” shall refer to an entity required to contribute to the universal service support mechanisms pursuant to § 54.706.

Eligible telecommunications carrier. “Eligible telecommunications carrier” means a carrier designated as such under subpart C of this part.

High-cost support. “High-cost support” refers to those support mechanisms in existence as of October 1, 2011, specifically, high-cost loop support, safety net additive and safety valve provided pursuant to subpart F of part 36, local switching support pursuant to § 54.301, forward-looking support pursuant to § 54.309, interstate access support pursuant to §§ 54.800 through 54.809, and interstate common line support pursuant to §§ 54.901 through 54.904, support provided pursuant to §§ 51.915, 51.917, and 54.304, support provided to competitive eligible telecommunications carriers as set forth in § 54.307(e), Connect America Fund support provided pursuant to § 54.312, and Mobility Fund support provided pursuant to subpart L of this part.

Incumbent local exchange carrier. “Incumbent local exchange carrier” or “ILEC” has the same meaning as that term is defined in § 51.5 of this chapter.

Information service. “Information service” is the offering of a capability

for generating, acquiring, storing, transforming, processing, retrieving, utilizing, or making available information via telecommunications, and includes electronic publishing, but does not include any use of any such capability for the management, control, or operation of a telecommunications system or the management of a telecommunications service.

Interconnected VoIP Provider. An “interconnected VoIP provider” is an entity that provides interconnected VoIP service, as that term is defined in section 9.3 of these rules.

Internet access. “Internet access” includes the following elements:

(1) The transmission of information as common carriage; and

(2) The transmission of information as part of a gateway to an information service, when that transmission does not involve the generation or alteration of the content of information, but may include data transmission, address translation, protocol conversion, billing management, introductory information content, and navigational systems that enable users to access information services, and that do not affect the presentation of such information to users.

Interstate telecommunication. “Interstate telecommunication” is a communication or transmission:

(1) From any State, Territory, or possession of the United States (other than the Canal zone), or the District of Columbia, to any other State, Territory, or possession of the United States (other than the Canal Zone), or the District of Columbia,

(2) From or to the United States to or from the Canal Zone, insofar as such communication or transmission takes place within the United States, or

(3) Between points within the United States but through a foreign country.

Interstate transmission. “Interstate transmission” is the same as interstate telecommunication.

Intrastate telecommunication. “Intrastate telecommunication” is a communication or transmission from within any State, Territory, or possession of the United States, or the District of Columbia to a location within that same State, Territory, or possession of

the United States, or the District of Columbia.

Intrastate transmission. “Intrastate transmission” is the same as intrastate telecommunication.

LAN. “LAN” is a local area network, which is a set of high-speed links connecting devices, generally computers, on a single shared medium, usually on the user’s premises.

Qualifying competitor. A “qualifying competitor” is a facilities-based terrestrial provider of residential fixed voice and broadband service access meeting or exceeding 3 Mbps downstream and 768 kbps upstream.

Rate-of-return carrier. “Rate-of-return carrier” shall refer to any incumbent local exchange carrier not subject to price cap regulation as that term is defined in §61.3(ee) of this chapter.

Rural incumbent local exchange carrier. “Rural incumbent local exchange carrier” is a carrier that meets the definitions of “rural telephone company” and “incumbent local exchange carrier,” as those terms are defined in §51.5 of this chapter.

Rural telephone company. “Rural telephone company” has the same meaning as that term is defined in §51.5 of this chapter.

State commission. The term “state commission” means the commission, board or official (by whatever name designated) that, under the laws of any state, has regulatory jurisdiction with respect to intrastate operations of carriers.

Technically feasible. “Technically feasible” means capable of accomplishment as evidenced by prior success under similar circumstances. For example, preexisting access at a particular point evidences the technical feasibility of access at substantially similar points. A determination of technical feasibility does not consider economic, accounting, billing, space or site except that space and site may be considered if there is no possibility of expanding available space.

Telecommunications. “Telecommunications” is the transmission, between or among points specified by the user, of information of the user’s choosing, without change in the form or content of the information as sent and received.

Telecommunications carrier. A “telecommunications carrier” is any provider of telecommunications services, except that such term does not include aggregators of telecommunications services as defined in section 226 of the Act. A telecommunications carrier shall be treated as a common carrier under the Act only to the extent that it is engaged in providing telecommunications services, except that the Commission shall determine whether the provision of fixed and mobile satellite service shall be treated as common carriage. This definition includes cellular mobile radio service (CMRS) providers, interexchange carriers (IXCs) and, to the extent they are acting as telecommunications carriers, companies that provide both telecommunications and information services. Private mobile radio service (PMRS) providers are telecommunications carriers to the extent they provide domestic or international telecommunications for a fee directly to the public.

Telecommunications channel. “Telecommunications channel” means a telephone line, or, in the case of wireless communications, a transmittal line or cell site.

Telecommunications service. “Telecommunications service” is the offering of telecommunications for a fee directly to the public, or to such classes of users as to be effectively available directly to the public, regardless of the facilities used.

Tribal lands. For the purposes of high-cost support, “Tribal lands” include any federally recognized Indian tribe’s reservation, pueblo or colony, including former reservations in Oklahoma, Alaska Native regions established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (85 Stat. 688) and Indian Allotments, see §54.400(e), as well as Hawaiian Home Lands—areas held in trust for native Hawaiians by the state of Hawaii, pursuant to the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920, July 9, 1921, 42 Stat 108, *et seq.*, as amended.

Unsubsidized competitor. An “unsubsidized competitor” is a facilities-based provider of residential fixed voice and broadband service that does not receive high-cost support.

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Website. The term “website” shall refer to any websites operated by the Administrator in connection with the schools and libraries support mechanism, the rural health care support mechanism, the high cost mechanism, and the low income mechanism.

Wire center. A wire center is the location of a local switching facility containing one or more central offices, as defined in the Appendix to part 36 of this chapter. The wire center boundaries define the area in which all customers served by a given wire center are located.

[62 FR 32948, June 17, 1997]

EDITORIAL NOTE: For FEDERAL REGISTER citations affecting § 54.5, see the List of CFR Sections Affected, which appears in the Finding Aids section of the printed volume and at www.govinfo.gov.

§ 54.7 Intended use of federal universal service support.

(a) A carrier that receives federal universal service support shall use that support only for the provision, maintenance, and upgrading of facilities and services for which the support is intended.

(b) The use of federal universal service support that is authorized by paragraph (a) of this section shall include investments in plant that can, either as built or with the addition of plant elements, when available, provide access to advanced telecommunications and information services.

(c) For those eligible telecommunications carriers as defined in § 54.5 receiving universal service support pursuant to subparts K and M of this part, ineligible expenses include but are not limited to the following:

(1) Personal expenses of employees, executives, board members, and contractors, and family members thereof, or any other individuals affiliated with the eligible telecommunications carrier, including but not limited to personal expenses for housing, such as rent or mortgages, vehicles for personal use and personal travel, including transportation, lodging and meals;

(2) Gifts to employees; childcare; housing allowances or other forms of mortgage or rent assistance for employees except that a reasonable amount of assistance shall be allowed

for work-related temporary or seasonal lodging; cafeterias and dining facilities; food and beverage except that a reasonable amount shall be allowed for work-related travel; entertainment;

(3) Expenses associated with: Tangible property not logically related or necessary to the offering of voice or broadband services; corporate aircraft, watercraft, and other motor vehicles designed for off-road use except insofar as necessary or reasonable to access portions of the study area not readily accessible by motor vehicles travelling on roads; tangible property used for entertainment purposes; consumer electronics used for personal use; kitchen appliances except as part of work-related temporary or seasonal lodging assistance; artwork and other objects which possess aesthetic value;

(4) Political contributions; charitable donations; scholarships; membership fees and dues in clubs and organizations; sponsorships of conferences or community events; nonproduct-related corporate image advertising; and

(5) Penalties or fines for statutory or regulatory violations; penalties or fees for any late payments on debt, loans, or other payments.

[76 FR 73869, Nov. 29, 2011, as amended at 83 FR 18964, May 1, 2018]

§ 54.8 Prohibition on participation: suspension and debarment.

(a) *Definitions*—(1) Activities associated with or related to the schools and libraries support mechanism, the high-cost support mechanism, the rural health care support mechanism, and the low-income support mechanism. Such matters include the receipt of funds or discounted services through one or more of these support mechanisms, or consulting with, assisting, or advising applicants or service providers regarding one or more of these support mechanisms.

(2) *Civil liability.* The disposition of a civil action by any court of competent jurisdiction, whether entered by verdict, decision, settlement with admission of liability, stipulation, or otherwise creating a civil liability for the wrongful acts complained of, or a final determination of liability under the Program Fraud Civil Remedies Act of 1988 (31 U.S.C. 3801–12).