

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

[OMB 3060–1228; FR ID 42331]

**Information Collection Being Reviewed by the Federal Communications Commission****AGENCY:** Federal Communications Commission.**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** As part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork burdens, and as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on the following information collections. Comments are requested concerning: Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Commission, including whether the information shall have practical utility; the accuracy of the Commission's burden estimate; ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information collected; ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on the respondents, including the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and ways to further reduce the information collection burden on small business concerns with fewer than 25 employees. The FCC may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. No person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information subject to the PRA that does not display a valid OMB control number.

**DATES:** Written PRA comments should be submitted on or before October 12, 2021. If you anticipate that you will be submitting comments, but find it difficult to do so within the period of time allowed by this notice, you should advise the contact listed below as soon as possible.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all PRA comments to Nicole Ongele, FCC, via email [PRA@fcc.gov](mailto:PRA@fcc.gov) and to [Nicole.Ongele@fcc.gov](mailto:Nicole.Ongele@fcc.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For additional information about the information collection, contact Nicole Ongele, (202) 418–2991.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

OMB Control Number: 3060–1228.

Title: Connect America Fund—High Cost Portal Filing.

Form Number: N/A.

Type of Review: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Respondents: Business or other for-profit, not-for-profit institutions.

Number of Respondents and Responses: 2,024 unique respondents; 4,644 responses.

Estimated Time per Response: 8 hours–60 hours.

Frequency of Response: On occasion, quarterly reporting requirements, annual reporting requirements, and recordkeeping requirement.

Obligation to Respond: Required to obtain or retain benefits. Statutory authority for this information collection is contained in 47 U.S.C. 151–154, 155, 201–206, 214, 218–220, 251, 252, 254, 256, 303(r), 332, 403, 405, 410, and 1302.

Total Annual Burden: 86,727 hours.

Total Annual Cost: No cost.

Privacy Act Impact Assessment: No impact(s).

**Nature and Extent of Confidentiality:** Except for the middle-mile maps for Alaska Plan carriers, and the coverage maps and information for Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and Connect USVI Fund Stage 2 mobile support recipients, the Commission is not requesting respondents to submit confidential information to the Commission. We note that the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) must preserve the confidentiality of all data obtained from respondents and contributors to the universal service support program mechanism; must not use the data except for purposes of administering the universal service support program; and must not disclose data in company-specific form unless directed to do so by the Commission. Also, respondents may request materials or information submitted to the Commission or to the Administrator believed confidential to be withheld from public inspection under 47 CFR 0.459 of the FCC's rules.

**Needs and Uses:** Through several orders, the Commission has recently changed or modified reporting obligations for high-cost support. Pursuant to the following orders, this collection includes location reporting and related certification requirements of high-cost support recipients: *Connect America Fund et al.*, Report and Order, Order and Order on Reconsideration, and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 31 FCC Rcd 3087 (2016) (*2016 Rate-of-Return Order*); *Connect America Fund et al.*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 31 FCC Rcd 5949 (2016) (*Phase II Auction Order*); *Connect America Fund et al.*, Order, 31 FCC Rcd

12086 (2016) (*ACS Phase II Order*); *Connect America Fund et al.*, Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 29 FCC Rcd 876 (2014) (*Rural Broadband Experiments Order*); *Connect America Fund et al.*, Report and Order, 29 FCC Rcd 15644 (2014) (*Price Cap Order*); *Technology Transitions et al.*, Order et al., 29 FCC Rcd 1433 (2014) (*Tech Transitions Order*); *Connect America Fund et al.*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 31 FCC Rcd 10139 (2016) (*Alaska Plan Order*); *Connect America Fund et al.*, Order, 32 FCC Rcd 968 (2017) (*New York Auction Order*); *Connect America Fund et al.*, Report and Order, Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, and Order on Reconsideration, 33 FCC Rcd 11–893 (2018) (*2018 Rate-of-Return Order*); *Uniendo a Puerto Rico and Connect USVI Fund et al.*, Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration, 34 FCC Rcd 9109 (2019) (*PR-USVI Stage 2 Order*); *Rural Digital Opportunity Fund et al.*, Report and Order, 35 FCC Rcd 686 (2020) (*2020 Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Order*).

This information collection addresses the requirement that certain carriers with high-cost reporting obligations must file information about the locations to which they have deployed broadband service meeting applicable public interest requirements (location information). A web-based portal, the High-Cost Universal Broadband Portal (HUBB or portal), is used to accept this information. The Commission and USAC will use this information to monitor the deployment progress of reporting carriers and to verify the reporting carriers' claims of service at the reported locations. Such activities help the Commission ensure that support is being used as intended. In addition, because data filed in the HUBB is publicly accessible, the reporting helps ensure public accountability and transparency.

In the *2019 PR-USVI Stage 2 Order*, the Commission created a competitive process to determine support recipients for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. As a result, carriers receiving support in these areas are subject to specific public interest obligations related to speed, usage, latency, and price as well as certain deployment milestones. Specifically, the Commission imposed defined deployment obligations and associated HUBB reporting requirements (annual location reporting and build-out certifications) for all Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and Connect USVI Fund Stage 2 fixed support recipients as well as annual reporting and certification

requirements for all Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and Connect USVI Fund Stage 2 mobile support recipients.

Uniendo a Puerto Rico Fund and Connect USVI Fund Stage 2 mobile support recipients will also file network coverage and other data as required by the Commission's orders. The Commission and USAC will use this information to monitor the deployment progress of mobile carriers and to verify that carriers meet the public interest obligations for 4G LTE and 5G mobile broadband and voice services in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Instead of filing in the HUBB portal, mobile support recipients will submit their reports electronically as part of a web form accessed via the Commission's Form 477 portal (477 Portal) and the Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS). This collection mechanism is being used to reduce the technological burden on the public and the Commission, as carriers and the public are familiar with both of these systems. The Commission's Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) will specify the filing process by which Stage 2 mobile support recipients must file their reports in the 477 Portal prior to the filing deadlines.

In the *2020 Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Order*, the Commission adopted a support mechanism to provide funding through a competitive auction to connect rural homes and businesses to high-speed broadband networks. The Commission established specific public interest obligations and deployment milestones for all carriers receiving this support. Specifically, the Commission imposed defined deployment obligations and associated HUBB reporting requirements (annual location reporting and build-out certifications) for all support recipients. We therefore propose to revise this information collection. Finally, we propose to increase the burdens associated with existing and new reporting requirements to account for additional carriers that will be subject to these requirements.

Federal Communications Commission.

**Marlene Dortch,**

*Secretary, Office of the Secretary.*

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## FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

[FR ID: 42435]

### Privacy Act of 1974; Matching Program

**AGENCY:** Federal Communications Commission.

**ACTION:** Notice of a new matching program.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended ("Privacy Act"), this document announces the establishment of a computer matching program the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC" or "Commission" or "Agency") and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) will conduct with the Mississippi Department of Human Services (Department). The purpose of this matching program is to verify the eligibility of applicants to and subscribers of the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, which is administered by USAC under the direction of the FCC, or other federal programs that use qualification for the FCC's Lifeline Program as an eligibility criterion. More information about this program is provided in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below.

**DATES:** Written comments are due on or before September 10, 2021. This computer matching program will commence on September 10, 2021, and will conclude 18 months after becoming effective.

**ADDRESSES:** Send comments to Margaret Drake, FCC, 45 L Street NE, Washington, DC 20554, or to [Privacy@fcc.gov](mailto:Privacy@fcc.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Margaret Drake at 202-417-1707 or [Privacy@fcc.gov](mailto:Privacy@fcc.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP) was established by Congress in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, Public Law 116-260, 134 Stat. 1182. EBBP is a program that helps low-income Americans obtain discounted broadband service and one-time co-pay for a connected device (laptop, desktop computer or tablet). This program was created specifically to assist American families' access to broadband, which has proven to be essential for work, school, and healthcare during the public health emergency that exists as a result of COVID-19. A household may qualify for the EBBP benefit under various criteria, including an individual qualifying for the FCC's Lifeline program.

In a Report and Order adopted on March 31, 2016, the Commission ordered USAC to create a National

Lifeline Eligibility Verifier ("National Verifier"), including the National Lifeline Eligibility Database (LED), that would match data about Lifeline applicants and subscribers with other data sources to verify the eligibility of an applicant or subscriber. The Commission found that the National Verifier would reduce compliance costs for Lifeline service providers, improve service for Lifeline subscribers, and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the program. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 directs the FCC to leverage the National Verifier to verify applicants' eligibility for EBBP. The purpose of this matching program is to verify the eligibility of EBBP applicants and subscribers by determining whether they receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits administered by the Mississippi Department. Under FCC rules, consumers receiving these benefits qualify for Lifeline discounts and also for EBBP benefits.

#### Participating Non-Federal Agencies

Mississippi Department of Human Services (Department).

#### Authority for Conducting the Matching Program

Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, Public Law 116-260, 134 Stat. 1182; 47 CFR part 54.

#### Purpose(s)

In the 2016 Lifeline Modernization Order, the FCC required USAC to develop and operate the National Verifier to improve efficiency and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the Lifeline program. The stated purpose of the National Verifier is "to increase the integrity and improve the performance of the Lifeline program for the benefit of a variety of Lifeline participants, including Lifeline providers, subscribers, states, community-based organizations, USAC, and the Commission." 31 FCC Rcd 3962, 4006, para. 126. To help determine whether Lifeline applicants and subscribers are eligible for Lifeline benefits, the Order contemplates that the USAC-operated LED will communicate with information systems and databases operated by other Federal and State agencies. *Id.* at 4011-2, paras. 135-7.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 directs the FCC to leverage the National Verifier to verify applicants' eligibility for EBBP. The purpose of this matching program is to verify the eligibility of EBBP applicants and subscribers by determining whether they receive SNAP benefits administered by the Mississippi