



Approve by USFC on July 11, 2025

UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 16, 2024

Council members in attendance: (ExAB = Excused Absence) - 9 /12 members

ID	Name	Present	ID	Name	Present
1	Ted Hankins (Chair)	ExAB	7	Janet Zander	Y
2	Michelle Reinen (V.C.)	ExAB	8	Chris Stark	Y
3	Nicole Mauritz	ExAB	9	David Berka	Y
4	John Van Ooyen	Y	10	Amanda Miller	Y
5	David Byers	Y	11	Brian Peters	Y
6	Teri Hatchell	Y	12	John Kinstler	Y

Commission staff in attendance (5):

Milena Bernardinello (USF Director), Alyssa Kenney (Bureau Director), Jenna Schmidt (Chief Financial Officer), Peter Jahn (Principal Telecommunications Analyst), Damarr Purifoy (Policy Analyst).

1. Call to Order

- No-Chair or Vice-chair in attendance.
- Milena Bernardinello asked if anyone was willing to run the meeting .
- David Byers volunteered as acting-Chairman.

2. Approval of Minutes of May 30, 2024 - (attached to the meeting packet) **Action Item 1**

- Acting-Chair call the motion to approve the minutes
- Member David Berka call for correction.
- Member Brian Peters asked for quorum.
- Milena Bernardinello confirmed and report 9/12 members in attendance
- Amendment accepted by the Chair. No opposition were raised.
- Member Brian Peters moved for approval, John Van Ooyen second
- Acting-Chair calls for vote. In favor: all. Opposed: none Abstained: none
- Motion carried.

3. Council Member Exchange

- Introductions of Members and information sharing. All 9 attending USFC members , and all 5 PSC staff introduced themselves.
- Member C. Stark announce his retirement and therefore his resignation at the end of the year from the USFC.

4. USF 2024 Fiscal Updates -

- Jenna Schmidt-PSC discussed the 2024 audit report of the financial statement June 30, 2024, submitted by Baker Tilly US, LLP. (attached to the meeting packet).
Annual financial audit done as for Statute. No concern identified. Consistent with prior years.
- Acting-Chair David Byers asked, where the interests were recorded, and whether those interests

stay in the program, or rather get reallocated. He also asked, if the audit was informational only or it needs to be voted.

- Jenna Smith - The amount of the interests has not been significant in the past, but recently there are more, and those stay in the USF – how we utilize them is annually evaluated, but it will not reduce the providers' USF assessment. The audit is informational only.

5. **USF Programs Updates**, Staff presented the updates using a power point (attached)

- ***Wisconsin Lifeline Program.***

Peter Jahn provided this update; the Lifeline program is relatively stable with a slight increase and few anomalies. Bundles with Voice and Broadband are the primary service types that LL customers subscribe to.

- ***Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program (TEPP) Program***

- Milena Bernardinello provided this update in behalf of Billy Mauldin Director of the Telecommunications Relay Service & TEPP.
- The TRS program continues to see relatively stable numbers in terms of vouchers and expenditures compared to the previous year, with an overall steady declining trend.
- Outreach programs visit have been conducted at various Independent Living Centers (ILCs) in the state, providing training and support for staff and users of the equipment.
- Member Brian Peter asked, why we see less traction. He suggests the equipment might be inadequate. Running a survey might help.

6. **USF 2024 Grants - Brief Updates** Milena Bernardinello -in behalf of Billy Mauldin- and Damarr Purifoy provided an update on the USF related grants

- ***TEPP Outreach Grants***

- Grant applications for the 2025 TEPP Outreach Grant have been awarded, and the grant agreement are on the way to be executed before the beginning of the performance period Jan 1, 2025.

- ***Lifeline Outreach Grants***

- Damarr Purifoy provided an update of the 2024 awards and a status update of the 2023 grant round closed projects, including their 'impact' on the population planned to be served.
- Member Janet Zander commented that was great to see new grantees, but it seemed that not all awarded funds were spent. Where do they go? Jenna Smith responded: the unspent remain in the USF fund.
- Member David Byers asked for a five year snapshot with trend of all this grants.
- Damarr Purifoy responded: from the PSC Grant System we should be able a report of this type likely in May.
- Member C. Stark – who are the grantees? Is there a summary of each project? –
- Damarr Purifoy sent a link to webpage and order.

- ***Nonprofit Access Grants***

- Damarr Purifoy provided an update of the 2024 awards and a status update of the 2023 awarded projects halfway through their performance period, including their current 'impact' on the population planned to be served.
- Member Janet Zander comment that it is great to the number of HH / Individual benefitting

from the \$\$ spent.

- **TeleMedicine Grants**

- Damarr Purifoy provided an update of the 2024-25 awards and a status update of the 2022-2023 grant round closed projects, including their 'impact' on the patients served.
- David Byers asked, why 2 aw. were conditional?
Damarr Purifoy responded, referring to the order, and explaining he is helping these grantees running the cure.

7. PSC Updates

Milena Bernardinello provided an update on the PSC activities and some reminders.

1. USF Budget:

- Commission approved Order & difference for the USFC approved version (CO Memo)
- The Assessment Rates, related Order & Assessment Letters (2 type) to Telecom Providers (PSC -WebPage)
 - Overall declining trend of providers' total assessable revenues. For 2024- less than 800 millions available for assessment.-

2. USF Grants 2025

- Applications planned to open by Mid-Feb.
- Call for Reviewers

3. General

- WI Digital Equity Capacity state program approved by NTIA on Nov.1 (press release) & signed into a Grant Agreement on Dec.2nd.
- ACP closed of June 1 - program update & link to Lifeline
 - WI Enrolled HH [*USAC last WI data*] : **426,733** (50% of eligible HH *CETF ACP performance report (pdf))
 - WI Overall Claim Amount – Jan 2022-May2024: \$ 272 million (\$ 272,704,536)
 - Program Impact FCC Survey: pdf (nationwide >18y.) usage 72% healthcare – 75% schoolwork – 48% job/work
- Member Janet Zander asked for Lifeline claim data for the same period of time.
- Milena Bernardinello will provide a summary in the meeting follow up packet.

4. USFC Members:

- C. Stark departure - call out for new candidate.
- 2025 new 2 members, the Commission will officialize them in Jan.
- Expiring and reappointment – process reminded.
- Recruitment ongoing - a reminder to spread the voice.

5.Mandatory Training:

- 2024 Public Record training -all members complied and submitted on time. Record year-
- 2025 training reminder; Milena Bernardinello call for maintaining the record.

6. Next meeting:

- Around Memorial Day – Tentative W. May 28, 2025 *after* Memorial Day
- Doodle in Late January

Adjourn

- The acting-chair called to adjourn.

- Janet Zander made the motion – Chris Spark, second. All Ays - No nos. - Motion carried.
- The Counsel adjourned at 11:40 am.

MB – V.2