

**Universal Service Fund Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Open Meeting Agenda for Thursday, December 1, 2022, at 1:00 p.m.**

1. **Call to Order 1:00 PM**, Jim Jermain
2. **Approval of Minutes of July 27, 2022**, Motion to approve by David Byers, Ted Hankins second
3. **Council Member Exchange**
  - a. **Introductions of Members and information sharing**

Jim Jermain provided an introduction and advised that he will retire from AT&T after 35 years. Jim asked council members to introduce themselves.

Council members present: Jim Jermain, AT&T, Council Chairperson; Ted Hankins, CenturyLink, Council Vice Chairperson; Michele Ahlman, Clear Sounds Communications, Business Community; Nicole Mauritz, TDS Telecom, Compliance Manager; Scott Bohler, Frontier Communication; David Byers, Upper Midwest Wireless, Chief Operating Officer; John Van Ooyen, Mt. Horeb Telephone Company; Brad Paul WISCAP Association; David Mortimer Hospital Sisters Health System, Director of Government Grants; Amanda Miller, Independent Living Centers; Brian Peters, Independent Living Centers; Christopher Stark, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension; David Berka, United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County; Helen Marks Dicks, AARP; John Kinster, Ultratec/Captel, TDI; Michelle Reinen, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection;

\*Mike Hill of Charter Communications attended on behalf of Adam Raschka

Lori Flores of HEAR Wisconsin attended the call as a guest

Commission Staff present: Laura Fay, Tara Kiley, Alyssa Kenney, Billy Mauldin, Dennis Klaila, Rita Hargot, Jenna Schmidt, Kathy Endres, Peter Jahn, Samantha Jurvich

#### 4. **USF Grant Programs update**

Laura Fay provided an update on the Nonprofit Access Grant Program. Sixteen grants funded using the full amount of the \$500,000 allocated for the program. Laura explained that all grants are now using the new PSC online grant system. Nonprofit Report provides analysis and research on how funded programs are meeting Commission goals and highlights the work of grant recipients. Major feedback indicated a desire to extend the performance period to two years. Laura also discussed two grants awarded through the 2022 Nonprofit Access Grant Program, the Benedict Center and Golden House Inc.

Dennis Klaila provided an update on the Telemedicine Grant. Advised that there has been a large increase in the number of applications, 12 grants awarded in the 2022 grant round. Grantees have mostly complete grant agreements and are in the process of purchasing medical equipment. Dennis also highlighted some of the grant programs, through the telemedicine grant. Two grantees were awarded funds for retinal cameras to diagnose diabetic retinopathy. Dennis discussed several other issues addressed through the telemedicine grant.

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**5. Telecommunication Equipment Purchase Program (TEPP) Program updates**

Billy Mauldin provided a TEPP update. TEPP outreach connected with the ILCs that receive 350,000 on an annual basis. Currently in the fourth quarter with reports due. Starting to work on grant agreements for 2023, just waiting on budget numbers. Last USF grant to transition to the online program. Billy shared his screen for the group to see voucher numbers, close to last years numbers. Billy showed a graph of disability categories by voucher amounts. Technology is better so it is lasting longer, individuals cannot pay above the voucher amount. Vouchers can be renewed or reapplied for every three years.

Jim Jermain asked how many awards are rolling three-year renewals versus new individual. Billy explained the data would be hard to track, but he could check in with Solix for the information. Billy explained the majority are reoccurring customers. New customers who have recently acquired a hearing loss, but deaf category are mostly reoccurring.

**6. Universal Service Fund Program updates**

Jenna Schmidt provided an update on the annual financial audit for the USF. Cannot present the audit at the meeting because it is still in progress. Will share the audit via email within the next month and will be posted to the website.

Pete Jahn provided an update on the Lifeline program. 110,000 Wisconsin residents using the program on a monthly basis. The majority of customers are using cell phones or prepaid cell phones. Fair number of traditional wireline service using Lifeline around the state. The payout for Lifeline varies, but average at \$60,000 a month.

**7. Adjourn**, Jim Jermain entertained a motion to Adjourn. Motion by Janet Zander, second by Ted Hankins. Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.