FCC Form 481 Filing Guidelines

ETCs receiving support from the High Cost and Lifeline programs must file the FCC Form 481 on or before July 1, 2016.

For ETCs with rates below the benchmark, report rates and lines on Rate Floor Data Collection Report and Certification (see 47 C.F.R. Sections 54.313(h) and 54.318). For 2016, ETCs do not have to file pursuant to Section 54.313(a)(11) – Reporting results of network performance tests. Please note that ETCs must now file for Section 54.313(a)(12) (broadband reasonable comparability rate certification) and Section 54.313(e) (Recipients of Connect America Phase II) where applicable. In addition, Rural Broadband Experiment (RBE) participants must now file as outlined below in Section 4005.

Please note that the recently released FCC Order 16-33 specifies that the updates identified do not alter the form and content of the July 2016 filing (Footnote 475). The five-year plan (section 100) is thus required as part of this filing.

Before filing, review the FCC Form 481 Instructions (revised November 2015). ETCs should complete sections of the FCC Form 481 electronically in E-File as follows:

481 Section and Issue	High Cost Program Rule	Guidelines	Lifeline Program Rule	Lifeline Program Filers
Section 100 - Five year plans and updates	54.313(a)(1)	• Rate of return filers should submit a progress report on the 5-Year plan and that progress report should address elements identified in Lines 2015-2019. • Price cap carriers are not required to file a 5-Year plan for this filing. • CETCs do not have to file new 5-Year Plans but FCC-designated. • CETCs must file progress reports for existing Plans (DA 13-332).	N/A	N/A
Section 200 - Outages	54.313(a)(2)	• File voice outages for 2015. • Do not file broadband outages (see DA 13-332, footnote 46).	54.422(b)(1)	Only FCC-designated Lifeline Program- only ETCs
Section 300 - Unfulfilled requests for service	54.313(a)(3)	• File unfulfilled voice requests and broadband requests for 2015. • Lines 320 and 330 (broadband) not required for CETCs.	N/A	N/A

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Section 400 - Complaints	54.313(a)(4)	• File voice complaints and broadband complaints for 2015. • Lifeline Program-only ETCs do not have to certify for broadband. • Lines 430, 440, and 450 (fixed and mobile broadband) not required for CETCs.	54.422(b)(2)	Only FCC-designated Lifeline Program- only ETCs
Section 500 - Quality and consumer protection certification	54.313(a)(5)	• Certify for voice and for broadband service. • Lifeline Program-only ETCs do not have to certify for broadband.	54.422(b)(3)	Only FCC-designated Lifeline Program- only ETCs
Section 600 - Emergency certification	54.313(a)(6)	• Certify for voice and for broadband service. • Lifeline Program-only ETCs do not have to certify for broadband.	54.422(b)(4)	Only FCC-designated Lifeline Program- only ETCs
Sections 700 & 710 – Voice and Broadband Prices	54.313(a)(7)	• Complete FCC Form 481 pricing worksheet for voice and broadband. • Sampling date for reported prices is January 1, 2016. • Line 710 (broadband service price offerings not required for CETCs.	N/A	N/A
Section 800 - Affiliates and D/B/A	54.313(a)(8)	• Complete FCC Form 481 affiliates worksheet. • Verify whether the holding company per the FCC Form 477 is accurate.	54.422(a)(1)	All ETCs that receive Lifeline Program
Section 900 -Tribal engagement	54.313(a)(9)	• For ETCs serving Tribal lands, complete FCC Form 481 Tribal engagement worksheet.	N/A	N/A
Section 1000 – Voice and broadband service rate comparability	54.313(a)(10) and (a)(12)	• Certify that voice and broadband rates are reasonably comparable. • Broadband rate comparability is new requirement – 54.313(a)(12). • Identify most recent wireline survey (see FAQ for details).	N/A	N/A
Section 1100 - Satellite backhaul	54.313(g)	• Carriers compelled to rely exclusively on satellite backhaul must certify annually that no terrestrial backhaul options exist and that they are offering 1 Mbps/256 kbps broadband service within that area.	N/A	N/A

Section 1200 - Lifeline terms and conditions	N/A	• Terms and conditions of plans offered to Lifeline Program subscribers.	54.422(a)(2)	All ETCs that receive Lifeline Program Support
Section 2005 - Incremental support (Round 2)	54.313(b)(1)(i)	• Price cap carriers that received Round 2 incremental support must certify they have deployed broadband service to no less than two-thirds of the required locations.	N/A	N/A
Section 2005 - Incremental support (Round 2)	54.313(b)(2)(i)	• Round 2 incremental support recipients must certify the locations are not receiving support from Broadband Initiatives Program or Broadband Technology Opportunities Program.	N/A	N/A
Section 2005 - Incremental support (Round 2)	54.313(b)(2)(ii)	• Round 2 incremental support recipients must provide the total amount of capital funding expended in the previous year in meeting Connect America Phase I deployment obligations accompanied by a list of census blocks indicating where funding was spent.	N/A	N/A
Section 2005 - Incremental support (Rounds 1 and 2)	FCC 13-73	• Round 1 and Round 2 incremental support recipients must provide geocoded location data for each location intended to count toward deployment obligations.	N/A	N/A
Section 2005 - Incremental support (Round 1)	54.313(b)(1)(ii)	• Price cap carriers that received Round 1 incremental support must certify they have deployed broadband service, at the minimum standards, to all required locations.	N/A	N/A
Section 2005 - Frozen support	54.313(c)(4)	• Price cap carriers that received frozen support must certify that all support received in 2015 was used to build and operate broadband-capable networks to offer broadband in areas substantially unserved by an unsubsidized competitor.	N/A	N/A
Section 2005 – ICC support	54.313(d)	• Price cap carriers that received ICC support pursuant to Section 54.304 in 2015 must certify that support was used to build and operate broadband-capable networks used to offer provider's own retail service in areas substantially unserved by an unsubsidized competitor.	N/A	N/A

Section 3005 – Milestone certification	54.313(f)(1)(i)	• Rate-of-return filers must certify that they have taken reasonable steps to provide upon reasonable request broadband service that meets the Commission's public interest obligations and that requests for such service were met within a reasonable amount of time.	N/A	N/A
Section 3005 – Community anchor institutions	54.313(f)(1)(ii)	• Rate-of-return filers must provide the number, names, and addresses of community anchor institutions to which the ETC began offering broadband service in the preceding calendar year.	N/A	N/A
Section 3005 – Privately held rate of return financials	54.313(f)(2)	• Privately held rate-of-return carriers must file financial information.	N/A	N/A
Section 4005 – RBE public interest obligations	FCC 14-98	• RBE participants must certify that they offer broadband to identified locations meeting the requisite public interest obligations, including speed, latency, usage capacity, and rates that are reasonably comparable to rates in urban areas.	N/A	N/A
Section 4005 – RBE Community Anchor Institutions	FCC 14-98	• RBE participants must provide the number, names, and addresses of community anchor institutions to which the ETC began offering broadband service in the preceding calendar year.	N/A	N/A
Section 4005 – RBE Broadband Deployment	FCC 14-98	• RBE participants must provide geocoded locations to which broadband has been deployed and also attach associated evidence demonstrating they have met the relevant public service obligations for these locations.	N/A	N/A