



USAC Updates CAF Map

July 12, 2023

USAC has released an updated version of the Connect America Fund Broadband Map – [CAF Map](#) – an interactive online map that shows the impact of the Connect America Fund (CAF) on broadband expansion to close the digital divide in rural America. The Connect America Fund – a centerpiece of the federal Universal Service Fund (USF) [High Cost program](#) – provides funding to telecommunications carriers to bring advanced communications networks and reliable, high-speed Internet access to rural communities that might otherwise go unserved.

First launched in 2018, the CAF Map displays the geographic locations – by latitude and longitude – where carriers that receive CAF support have built out mass-market, high-speed Internet service. The latest version of the map contains updated information to reflect broadband deployment through Dec. 31, 2022.

The CAF Map is a key source of information about CAF-supported broadband deployment for consumers, researchers and policy makers at the federal, state and local levels.

Background

High Cost, the largest of the four programs that make up the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [Universal Service Fund](#) (USF), ensures universal availability of essential telecommunications services in rural areas where the market alone cannot support the substantial cost of deploying network infrastructure and providing connectivity. The program distributes billions of dollars annually to carriers to deliver service in these communities at rates reasonably comparable to those charged in urban areas.

While High Cost has historically subsidized voice service to ensure universal access to basic phone lines, the FCC has reformed the program over the past decade to subsidize broadband through the Connect America Fund (CAF) to ensure that rural America is not left behind in the digital age.

The Connect America Fund consists of a series of modernized [programs](#) that rely mainly on competitive bidding and incentive-based models to give carriers a fixed amount of support to deploy and maintain broadband networks with certain speeds over a clear timeline—with interim and final deployment milestone deadlines—to a defined number of locations in unserved and underserved areas.

The CAF Map displays the geographic areas that are eligible for CAF support, as well as the specific fixed

locations where carriers participating in the program have built out broadband service. The dataset reflected in the map includes address, latitude and longitude coordinates, carrier name, deployment year and available speeds meeting FCC obligations. The dataset can be found [here](#).

The information in this map comes directly from carriers, which submit broadband deployment data annually through USAC's High Cost Universal Broadband ([HUBB](#)) portal. The latest version of CAF Map is based on data certified in the HUBB as of March 10, 2023, to reflect broadband deployment as of Dec. 31, 2022. USAC independently verifies deployment to a random sample of locations reported in the HUBB each year to monitor carrier compliance with CAF build-out obligations.

The map currently contains broadband deployment data submitted and certified by carriers participating in the following Connect America Fund programs:

- **[Connect America Fund Phase II Model \(CAF II Model\)](#)**: This program provided set monthly payments based on a cost model to “price cap carriers” to build broadband service with speeds of at least 10 megabits per second downstream and one megabit per second upstream (10/1 Mbps) to a specific number of fixed locations in areas eligible for funding. The CAF Phase II Model support term initially ran from 2015 to 2020, and all participating carriers then elected an optional seventh year of support for 2021. CAF II Model carriers had until the end of 2021 to complete deployment and were required to meet interim deployment milestones.
- **[Connect America Fund Phase II Auction \(CAF II Auction\)](#)**: This program provides set monthly payments to entities that successfully bid in a 2018 competitive reverse auction to deploy broadband in areas where the incumbent price cap carrier did not accept CAF II Model funding and other price cap areas that are most costly to serve. CAF II Auction payments began in 2019 on a rolling basis, with support terms running 10 years. CAF II Auction carriers have until the end of 2025 to complete deployment and must meet interim deployment milestones.
- **[Alternative Connect America Cost Model \(ACAM\)](#)**: This program provides set monthly payments based on a cost model to “rate of return” carriers to build broadband to a specific number of fixed locations in areas eligible for funding. [Revised ACAM](#) increased model-based support for existing ACAM carriers to meet expanded broadband buildout obligations. The original ACAM support term – for carriers that elected to participate in the original ACAM program, but not Revised ACAM – runs from 2017 to 2026. ACAM carriers have until the end of 2026 to complete deployment and must meet interim deployment milestones. The Revised ACAM support term runs from 2019 to 2028. Revised ACAM carriers have until the end of 2028 to complete deployment and must meet interim deployment milestones. ACAM locations in the CAF Map include locations funded by both the original ACAM program and Revised ACAM.
- **[Alternative Connect America Cost Model II \(ACAM II\)](#)**: This program provides set monthly payments based on a cost model to “rate of return” carriers that voluntarily elected to transition from CAF BLS funding to model-based support to build broadband to a specific number of fixed locations in areas eligible for funding. The ACAM II support term runs from 2017 to 2028. ACAM II carriers have until the end of 2028 to complete deployment and must meet interim deployment milestones.

- **[Connect America Fund Broadband Loop Support \(CAF BLS\)](#)**: This program provides support based on carrier costs and other financial data to “rate of return” carriers to build broadband to a specific number of fixed locations in areas eligible for funding. The CAF BLS support term runs from 2019 to 2023, and carriers must complete deployment by the end of 2023. Please note that not all existing CAF BLS locations are on the map since CAF BLS carriers do not report locations deployed before May 25, 2016, in the HUBB.
- **[Rural Broadband Experiments \(RBE\)](#)**: This program provides set monthly payments to telecommunications carriers that successfully bid to deploy broadband in unserved price cap areas, including rural areas that are the most costly to serve. The RBE support term runs from 2015 to 2025. RBE carriers must meet interim and final deployment milestones on a rolling basis.
- **[Rural Digital Opportunity Fund \(RDOF\)](#)**: This program provides set monthly payments to entities that successfully bid in a 2020 competitive reverse auction to deploy broadband in certain areas that lack broadband service with speeds of at least 25 megabits per second downstream and 3 megabits per second upstream (25/3 Mbps). RDOF payments began in 2021 on a rolling basis, with support terms running 10 years. RDOF recipients have up to eight years to complete deployment and must meet interim deployment milestones.
- **[Alaska Plan \(AK Plan\)](#)**: This program provides set monthly payments to “rate of return” carriers to maintain, extend and upgrade broadband service across Alaska, with specific deployment obligations tailored to individual carriers to reflect the state’s unique climate and geography. The Alaska Plan support term runs from 2017 to 2026. Alaska Plan carriers have until the end of 2026 to complete deployment and were required to meet an interim, five-year service milestone established in each carrier’s individualized performance plan by the end of 2021.
- **[Bringing Puerto Rico Together \(Uniendo a Puerto Rico\) Fund and the Connect the USVI Fund \(PR Fixed\)](#)**: These programs provide support to carriers to rebuild, expand and harden voice and broadband networks in all locations across Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands after Hurricanes Irma and Maria caused massive damage in 2017. The CAF Map reflects deployment by carriers receiving PR/USVI Stage 2 fixed support, which funds the restoration, expansion and upgrade of fixed communications networks. The programs provide set monthly payments over a support term that runs from 2021 to 2031. Carriers have until the end of 2027 to complete deployment – with final deployment milestones by municipio in Puerto Rico – and must meet interim milestones. The current version of the map includes only locations deployed in Puerto Rico since carriers have not yet reported any locations deployed in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

USAC updates the CAF Map twice a year with additional broadband deployment data filed and certified by carriers in the HUBB. Information in the map is also subject to change as carriers increase network speeds, revise geographic coordinates and address information and/or correct inaccuracies.

The Tribal Boundaries on the CAF Map reflect the definition of Tribal lands that the FCC adopted for the purpose of awarding [ACAM II](#) support. This means that the Tribal boundaries depicted 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 Settlements Act (85

Stat. 688), Indian Allotments and Hawaiian Home Lands.

Please note that in certain instances, the FCC cost model identifies areas as eligible for CAF support even though these areas appear to be in or near urban centers. In other instances, a carrier's historic study area (service territory) crosses state lines, and locations deployed in one state may therefore count towards deployment obligations in another state.

Need Help? Contact Us!

For questions about the High Cost Program, call us at 844-357-0408 or email hcquestions@usac.org.