



Form 481 and Broadband Deployment Data Now Available to Tribal Officials

July 20, 2023

Tribal governments may now access the most recent [FCC Form 481](#) filings submitted by telecommunications carriers that serve their lands with financing from the Universal Service Fund (USF) High Cost program, as well as deployment data for broadband networks supported by the Connect America Fund.

The High Cost Program ensures universal availability of essential telecommunications services in rural America, including Indian Country. The program provides funding to telecommunications carriers to reach rural communities where the market alone cannot support the high cost of deploying network infrastructure and supplying connectivity. Historically, High Cost has subsidized traditional voice service to ensure that rates in rural and urban areas are reasonably comparable. The FCC, however, is reforming the program to support broadband with the modernized Connect America Fund, or CAF.

The Connect America Fund consists of a series of modernized [funds](#) 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.

Accessing FCC Form 481

Tribal officials can now view and download the most recent Form 481 data submitted by carriers that serve their lands using High Cost support through the 54.314 system in [E-File](#).

[FCC Form 481](#) collects financial and operations information used to validate carrier support. This includes information about a carrier's holding company, operating companies, affiliates and branding designations (doing-business-as or DBA); ability to function in emergency situations; terrestrial backhaul; Tribal lands engagement; and comparability of voice and broadband service rates in rural and urban areas. Form 481 also includes a [supply chain certification](#), which requires carriers to certify that no universal service support is being used to purchase, rent, lease, obtain or maintain any equipment or services produced or provided by any company designated by the FCC as posing a national security threat to the integrity of communications networks or the communications supply chain.

The most recent Form 481 filing, which carriers certified with USAC by July 3, 2023, is for Program Year 2024 because the information in the filing will be used for disbursements for 2024. The data filed is from 2022, which is the most recent full calendar year for which data is available.

The 54.314 system allows Tribal officials to download a zip file containing a copy of the most recent certified Form 481 filing data and related attachments for carriers that serve them by individual Study Area Code (SAC). Carriers are no longer required to submit separate copies of the Form 481 filing to the FCC, state utility commissions or Tribal communities that they serve. Please see USAC's [Multifactor Authentication Troubleshooting Steps](#) for help logging into E-File.

In order to obtain access privileges to the 54.314 system, Tribal governments should contact the High Cost Division at Form481@usac.org to request an authorization form. Once granted access, Tribal officials will be able to log into the 54.314 system and view Form 481 data filed by the carriers serving their lands.

Accessing Broadband Deployment Data

Tribal officials may also access deployment data for broadband service supported by the Connect America Fund through the Connect America Fund Broadband Map ([CAF Map](#)), an interactive online map that shows the impact of the program on broadband expansion to close the digital divide in rural America. The [dataset](#) that serves as the foundation for the map is available through the [USAC Open Data platform](#).

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 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.

Need Help? Contact Us!

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