

**STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

At a session of the Public Service Commission held at its office in Jefferson City on the 12th day of July, 2023.

In the Matter of the Investigation of)
Aristotle Unified Communications, LLC)
Related to the Connect America Fund)
Phase II Auction)

File No. TO-2023-0436

ORDER OPENING INVESTIGATION AND DIRECTING RESPONSE

Issue Date: July 12, 2023

Effective Date: July 22, 2023

On June 22, 2023, the Staff of the Commission (Staff) filed a motion asking the Commission to open an investigation regarding Aristotle Unified Communications, LLC's (Aristotle) broadband deployment milestones necessary to meet its obligations for receiving broadband funding obligations under the federal universal service fund (USF) high-cost program's Connect America Fund Phase II auction. Aristotle is an authorized interconnected voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) service provider in Missouri and was granted eligible telecommunications carrier (ETC) status, effective February 2, 2019.

Staff explains in its motion that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) requires a company receiving federal USF to be designated as an ETC from the relevant state commission. Additionally, the FCC requires a state commission to annually certify that ETCs remain eligible to receive federal high-cost support. Staff further explains that failure to obtain ETC status will prevent a company from receiving any federal USF funding. Likewise, Staff explains that a failure of a company to receive annual certification from a state commission will stop a company from receiving high-cost support funding,

such as Connect America funds, for the next calendar year. Staff indicates in its motion that it has reason to believe that Aristotle has not met its obligations after receiving several years of funding for deploying broadband services in Missouri. Therefore, Staff asks the Commission to open this investigation file.

Additionally, Staff requests that the Commission direct Aristotle to respond to Staff's motion and to respond to various questions from Staff. The Commission will open an investigation and will direct Aristotle to respond to Staff's questions as follows:

1. Fully explain the company's broadband deployment progress, to date, in Missouri.
2. Provide a copy of any documentation submitted to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) regarding broadband deployment in Missouri.
3. Identify specific towers, location and date of installation of facilities used to deploy the company's fixed wireless broadband service in Missouri.
4. Explain why the company believes it is acceptable to claim broadband service has been deployed to a location when the company is unable to actually offer broadband service to that location. Cite any relevant FCC decisions supporting this belief.
5. Explain why the company is unable to currently provide broadband service to any Missouri consumers.
6. Explain the company's specific future plans for ensuring it meets subsequent broadband deployment milestones.

So that the Staff may timely conclude its investigation, the Commission finds it reasonable to make this order effective in less than 30 days.

THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. Staff's motion to open an investigation regarding Aristotle's broadband deployment milestones is granted.

2. No later than August 1, 2023, Aristotle shall respond to Staff's motion and provide the information requested as set out in the body of this order.

3. This order is effective on July 22, 2023.

BY THE COMMISSION



Nancy Dippell

Nancy Dippell
Secretary

Rupp, Chm., Coleman, Holsman, Kolkmeyer
and Hahn CC., concur.

Dippell, Chief Regulatory Law Judge

STATE OF MISSOURI

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

I have compared the preceding copy with the original on file in this office and I do hereby certify the same to be a true copy therefrom and the whole thereof.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the Public Service Commission, at Jefferson City, Missouri, this 12th day of July, 2023.



Nancy Dippell

Nancy Dippell
Secretary

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

July 12, 2023

File/Case No. TO-2023-0436

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Enclosed find a certified copy of an Order or Notice issued in the above-referenced matter(s).

Sincerely,



**Nancy Dippell
Secretary**

Recipients listed above with a valid e-mail address will receive electronic service. Recipients without a valid e-mail address will receive paper service.