

**STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

At a session of the Public Service Commission held by telephone and internet audio conference on the 4th day of November, 2020.

In the Matter of Proposed Modifications to)
the Missouri Universal Service Fund) **File No. TO-2019-0346**

**ORDER CONTINUING SUSPENSION OF ASSESSMENT
RATE AND INCREASING MONTHLY SUPPORT RATE**

Issue Date: November 4, 2020

Effective Date: December 4, 2020

Procedural History

On May 10, 2019, the Staff of the Commission (Staff), acting at the request of the Missouri Universal Service Board, filed a motion asking the Commission to consider altering the Missouri Universal Service Fund (MoUSF) assessment rate. That same motion asked the Commission to increase the support amount provided to landline subscribers in the Lifeline and Disabled programs.

On November 21, 2019, the Commission granted Staff's request. That same order required Staff to file annual updates related to its MoUSF position. Staff filed such an update on October 6, 2020.

In its update, Staff recommends that the Commission continue its suspension of the MoUSF assessment through December 31, 2021. Additionally, Staff proposes that the MoUSF support amount for Lifeline voice-only service be increased from \$16.75 to \$18.75 if the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) continues with its plan to reduce support by \$2.00 on December 1, 2020.

The Commission solicited comments, and received them from the Missouri Small Telephone Company Group (STCG) and the Missouri Independent Telephone Company Group (MITG). The comments supported Staff's request.

Decision

Section 392.248.1, RSMo 2016 creates the Missouri Universal Service Board and charges it with the duty to "ensure just, reasonable, and affordable rates for reasonably comparable essential local telecommunications services throughout the state." That statute also creates a state Universal Service Fund that is funded through an assessment on all telecommunications companies in the state. The Commission is required to establish the level of funding needed to accomplish the purposes of the Universal Service Fund.

The Commission finds that the Universal Service Board's recommendation is reasonable. The Commission will suspend the assessment rate, and will further increase the amount of MoUSF support in the amount that Staff requested.

Staff shall file an annual update related to the suspension of the assessment with the Commission to determine if such suspension should continue, or an assessment should be reinstated. This assessment suspension shall last from December 4, 2020 until December 31, 2021, unless the Commission orders otherwise. This support amount shall continue until the Commission orders otherwise.

THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. The assessment for the MoUSF is suspended, effective December 4, 2020, until December 31, 2021.

2. The MoUSF support amount for Lifeline voice-only service shall be increased from \$16.75 to \$18.75 if the FCC continues with its plan to reduce support by \$2.00 on December 1, 2020.

3. The Commission's Data Center shall send a copy of this order to all interexchange carriers, competitive local exchange carriers, incumbent local exchange carriers and IVoIP providers doing business in Missouri.

4. The Missouri Universal Service Board, through the Staff of the Commission, shall report its position on Universal Service Fund assessment and support amounts to the Commission no later than November 30, 2021.

5. This order shall become effective on December 4, 2020.



BY THE COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Morris L. Woodruff".

Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary

Silvey, Chm., Kenney, Rupp, Coleman, and
Holsman CC., concur.

Pridgin, Regulatory Law Judge