

SUBCHAPTER VII—GENERAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

§ 950cc. Public notice, assessments, and reporting requirements

(a) Notice requirements

The Secretary shall promptly make available to the public,¹ a fully searchable database on the website of the Rural Utilities Service that contains information on all retail broadband projects provided assistance or for which assistance is sought that are administered by the Secretary, including, at a minimum—

(1) notice of each application for assistance describing the application, including—

- (A) the identity of the applicant;
- (B) a description of each application, including—
 - (i) a map of the proposed service area of the applicant; and
 - (ii) the amount and type of support requested by each applicant;
- (C) the status of each application; and
- (D) the estimated number and proportion of service points in the proposed service territory without fixed broadband service, whether terrestrial or wireless;

(2) notice of each entity receiving assistance administered by the Secretary, including—

- (A) the name of the entity;
- (B) the type of assistance being received;
- (C) the purpose for which the entity is receiving the assistance; and
- (D) each annual report submitted under subsection (c) (redacted to protect any proprietary information in the report); and

(3) such other information as is sufficient to allow the public to understand assistance provided.

(b) Service area assessment

(1) In general

The Secretary shall, with respect to a retail broadband application for assistance, which is outside an area in which the applicant receives Federal universal service support—

(A) after giving notice required by subsection (a)(1), afford service providers not less than 45 days to voluntarily submit information required by the Secretary onto the agency's online mapping tool with respect to areas that are coterminous with the proposed service area of the application (or any parts thereof), such that the Secretary may assess whether the application submitted meets the eligibility requirements under this subchapter; and

(B) if no broadband service provider submits information under paragraph (1), consider the number of providers in the proposed service area to be established by using any other data regarding the availability of broadband service that the Secretary may collect or obtain through reasonable efforts.

(2) Assessment of unserved communities

In the case of an application given the highest priority under section 950bb(c)(2)(A)(i) of

this title, the Secretary shall confirm that each unserved rural community identified in the application is eligible for funding by—

(A) conferring with, and obtaining data from, the Chair of the Federal Communications Commission and the Administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration with respect to the service level in the service area proposed in the application;

(B) reviewing any other source that is relevant to service data validation, as determined by the Secretary; and

(C) performing site-specific testing to verify the unavailability of any retail broadband service.

(3) FOIA exemption

For purposes of section 552 of title 5, information received by the Secretary pursuant to paragraph (1)(A) of this subsection shall be exempt from disclosure pursuant to subsection (b)(2)(B) of such section 552.

(c) Reporting broadband improvements to USDA

(1) In general

The Secretary shall require any entity receiving assistance for a project which provides retail broadband service to submit an annual report for 3 years after completion of the project, in a format specified by the Secretary, that describes—

(A) the use by the entity of the assistance, including new equipment and capacity enhancements that support high-speed broadband access for educational institutions, health care providers, and public safety service providers (including the estimated number of end users who are currently using or forecasted to use the new or upgraded infrastructure); and

(B) the progress towards fulfilling the objectives for which the assistance was granted, including—

(i) the number of service points that will receive new broadband service, existing network service improvements, and facility upgrades resulting from the Federal assistance;

(ii) the speed of broadband service;

(iii) the average price of the most subscribed tier of broadband service in a proposed service area;

(iv) new subscribers generated from the project; and

(v) any metrics the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(2) Additional reporting

(A) Broadband buildout data

As a condition of receiving assistance under section 950bb of this title, a recipient of assistance shall provide to the Secretary complete, reliable, and precise geolocation information that indicates the location of new broadband service that is being provided or upgraded within the service territory supported by the grant, loan, or loan guarantee not later than 30 days after the earlier of—

(i) the date of completion of any project milestone established by the Secretary; or

¹ So in original. The comma probably should not appear.

(ii) the date of completion of the project.

(B) Reporting for middle mile projects

The Secretary shall require any entity receiving assistance under section 950bb-1 of this title to submit a semiannual report for 5 years after completion of the project, in a format specified by the Secretary, that describes—

(i) the use by the entity of the assistance to construct, improve, or acquire middle mile infrastructure;

(ii) the progress towards meeting the end-user connection plan submitted under section 950bb-1(d)(1)(A)(iii) of this title; and

(iii) any additional metrics the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(C) Additional reporting

The Secretary may require any additional reporting and information by any recipient of any broadband assistance under this chapter so as to ensure compliance with this section.

(d) Annual report on broadband projects and service to Congress

Each year, the Secretary shall submit to the Congress a report that describes the extent of participation in the broadband assistance programs administered by the Secretary for the preceding fiscal year, including a description of—

(1) the number of applications received and accepted, including any special loan terms or conditions for which the Secretary provided additional assistance to unserved areas;

(2)(A) the communities proposed to be served in each application submitted for the fiscal year; and

(B) the communities served by projects funded by broadband assistance programs;

(3) the period of time required to approve each loan application under broadband programs;

(4) any outreach activities carried out by the Secretary to encourage entities in rural areas without broadband service to submit applications under this chapter;

(5) the method by which the Secretary determines that a service enables a subscriber to originate and receive high-quality voice, data, graphics, and video for purposes of providing broadband service under this chapter;

(6) each broadband service, including the type and speed of broadband service, for which assistance was sought, and each broadband service for which assistance was provided, under this chapter; and

(7) the overall progress towards fulfilling the goal of improving the quality of rural life by expanding rural broadband access, as demonstrated by metrics, including—

(A) the number of residences and businesses receiving new broadband services;

(B) network improvements, including facility upgrades and equipment purchases;

(C) average broadband speeds and prices on a local and statewide basis;

(D) any changes in broadband adoption rates; and

(E) any specific activities that increased high speed broadband access for educational institutions, health care providers, and public safety service providers.

(e) Limitations on reservation of funds

Not less than 3 but not more than 5 percent of program level amounts available pursuant to amounts appropriated to carry out subchapter VI shall be set aside to be used for—

(1) conducting oversight under such subchapter;

(2) implementing accountability measures and related activities authorized under such subchapter; and

(3) carrying out this section.

(May 20, 1936, ch. 432, title VII, §701, as added Pub. L. 115-334, title VI, §6207, Dec. 20, 2018, 132 Stat. 4740.)

§ 950cc-1. Environmental reviews

The Secretary may obligate, but not disperse, funds under this chapter before the completion of otherwise required environmental, historical, or other types of reviews if the Secretary determines that a subsequent site-specific review shall be adequate and easily accomplished for the location of towers, poles, or other broadband facilities in the service area of the borrower without compromising the project or the required reviews.

(May 20, 1936, ch. 432, title VII, §702, as added Pub. L. 115-334, title VI, §6208, Dec. 20, 2018, 132 Stat. 4743.)

§ 950cc-2. Use of loan proceeds to refinance loans for deployment of broadband service

Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the proceeds of any loan made or guaranteed by the Secretary under this chapter may be used by the recipient of the loan for the purpose of refinancing an outstanding obligation of the recipient on another telecommunications loan made under this chapter, or on any other loan if that loan would have been for an eligible telecommunications purpose under this chapter.

(May 20, 1936, ch. 432, title VII, §703, as added Pub. L. 115-334, title VI, §6209, Dec. 20, 2018, 132 Stat. 4743.)

CHAPTER 31A—TELEMEDICINE AND DISTANCE LEARNING SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS

Sec.	Purpose.
950aaa.	Purpose.
950aaa-1.	Definitions.
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950aaa-3.	Administration.
950aaa-4.	Regulations.
950aaa-5.	Authorization of appropriations.

TERMINATION OF CHAPTER

For termination of chapter by section 1(b) of Pub. L. 102-551, see note set out under section 950aaa of this title.

§ 950aaa. Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to encourage and improve telemedicine services and distance