

(1) *Certifications filed on or before October 1.* Carriers subject to certifications filed on or before October 1 shall receive support in the first, second, third, and fourth quarters of the succeeding year.

(2) *Certifications filed on or before January 1.* Carriers subject to certifications filed on or before January 1 shall receive support in the second, third, and fourth quarters of that year. Such carriers shall not receive support in the first quarter of that year.

(3) *Certifications filed on or before April 1.* Carriers subject to certifications filed on or before April 1 shall receive support in the third and fourth quarters of that year. Such carriers shall not receive support in the first or second quarters of that year.

(4) *Certifications filed on or before July 1.* Carriers subject to certifications filed on or before July 1 shall receive support beginning in the fourth quarter of that year. Such carriers shall not receive support in the first, second, or third quarters of that year.

(5) *Certifications filed after July 1.* Carriers subject to certifications filed after July 1 shall not receive support in that year.

(6) *Newly designated eligible telecommunications carriers.* Notwithstanding the deadlines in paragraph (d) of this section, a carrier shall be eligible to receive support as of the effective date of its designation as an eligible telecommunications carrier under section 214(e)(2) or (e)(6) of the Act, provided that it files the certification described in paragraph (b) of this section or the state commission files the certification described in paragraph (a) of this section within 60 days of the effective date of the carrier's designation as an eligible telecommunications carrier. Thereafter, the certification required by paragraphs (a) or (b) of this section must be submitted pursuant to the schedule in paragraph (d) of this section.

[76 FR 73875, Nov. 29, 2011]

**§ 54.318 High-cost support; limitations on high-cost support.**

(a) Beginning July 1, 2012, each carrier receiving high-cost support in a study area under this subpart will receive the full amount of high-cost sup-

port it otherwise would be entitled to receive if its rates for residential local service plus state regulated fees as defined in paragraph (e) of this section exceed a local urban rate floor representing the national average of local urban rates plus state regulated fees under the schedule specified in paragraph (f) of this section.

(b) Carriers whose rates for residential local service plus state regulated fees offered for voice service are below the specified local urban rate floor under the schedule below plus state regulated fees shall have high-cost support reduced by an amount equal to the extent to which its rates for residential local service plus state regulated fees are below the local urban rate floor, multiplied by the number of lines for which it is receiving support.

(c) This rule will apply only to rate-of-return carriers as defined in § 54.5 and carriers subject to price cap regulation as that term is defined in § 61.3 of this chapter.

(d) For purposes of this section, high-cost support is defined as the support available pursuant to § 36.631 of this chapter and frozen high-cost support provided to price cap carriers to the extent it is based on support previously provided pursuant to § 36.631 or § 54.309 of this chapter.

(e) *State regulated fees.* (1) Beginning on July 1, 2012, for purposes of calculating limitations on high-cost support under this section, state regulated fees shall be limited to state subscriber line charges, state universal service fees and mandatory extended area service charges, which shall be determined as part of a local rate survey, the results of which shall be published annually.

(2) Federal subscriber line charges shall not be included in calculating limitations on high-cost support under this section.

(f) *Schedule.* High-cost support will be limited where the rate for residential local service plus state regulated fees are below the local urban rate floor representing the national average of local urban rates plus state regulated fees under the schedule specified in this paragraph. To the extent end user rates plus state regulated fees are below local urban rate floors plus state regulated fees, appropriate reductions

in high-cost support will be made by the Universal Service Administrative Company.

(g) Any reductions in high-cost support under this section will not be re-distributed to other carriers that receive support pursuant to §36.631 of this chapter.

(h) If, due to changes in local service rates, a local exchange carrier makes an updated rate filing pursuant to section 54.313(h)(2), the Universal Service Administrative Company will update the support reduction applied pursuant to paragraphs (b) and (f) of this section.

(i) For the purposes of this section and the reporting of rates pursuant to paragraph 313(h), rates for residential local service provided pursuant to measured or message rate plans or as part of a bundle of services should be calculated as follows:

(1) Rates for measured or message service shall be calculated by adding the basic rate for local service plus the additional charges incurred for measured service, using the mean number of minutes or message units for all customers subscribing to that rate plan multiplied by the applicable rate per minute or message unit. The local service rate includes additional charges for measured service only to the extent that the average number of units used by subscribers to that rate plan exceeds the number of units that are included in the plan. Where measured service plans have multiple rates for additional units, such as peak and off-peak rates, the calculation should reflect the average number of units that subscribers to the rate plan pay at each rate.

(2) For bundled service, the residential local service rate is the local service rate as tariffed, if applicable, or as itemized on end-user bills. If a carrier neither tariffs nor itemizes the local voice service rate on bills for bundled services, the local service rate is the rate of a similar stand-alone local voice service that it offers to consumers in that study area.

[76 FR 73876, Nov. 29, 2011, as amended at 77 FR 14302, Mar. 9, 2012; 77 FR 30914, May 24, 2012]

#### **§ 54.320 Compliance and record-keeping for the high-cost program.**

(a) Eligible telecommunications carriers authorized to receive universal service high-cost support are subject to random compliance audits and other investigations to ensure compliance with program rules and orders.

(b) All eligible telecommunications carriers shall retain all records required to demonstrate to auditors that the support received was consistent with the universal service high-cost program rules. This documentation must be maintained for at least ten years from the receipt of funding. All such documents shall be made available upon request to the Commission and any of its Bureaus or Offices, the Administrator, and their respective auditors.

(c) Eligible telecommunications carriers authorized to receive high-cost support that fail to comply with public interest obligations or any other terms and conditions may be subject to further action, including the Commission's existing enforcement procedures and penalties, reductions in support amounts, potential revocation of ETC designation, and suspension or debarment pursuant to §54.8.

[76 FR 73876, Nov. 29, 2011]

### **Subpart E—Universal Service Support for Low-Income Consumers**

#### **54.400 Terms and definitions.**

As used in this subpart, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

(a) *Qualifying low-income consumer.* A “qualifying low-income consumer” is a consumer who meets the qualifications for Lifeline, as specified in §54.409.

(b) *Toll blocking service.* “Toll blocking service” is a service provided by an eligible telecommunications carrier that lets subscribers elect not to allow the completion of outgoing toll calls from their telecommunications channel.

(c) *Toll control service.* “Toll control service” is a service provided by an eligible telecommunications carrier that allows subscribers to specify a certain