



**Summary of WTA – Advocates for Rural Broadband’s  
response to the USF Working Group’s Inquiry on Universal Service**

***Access to quality telecommunications and information services at affordable rates  
available to all Americans regardless of where they live with predictable and sufficient  
mechanisms to advance this goal.***

- The Universal Service principles above, as codified in the Telecom Act of 1996, are just as valid today as they were 30 years ago. Meeting these objectives is an ongoing process that is not merely achieved by a one-time investment in building networks.
- The USF High Cost Program ensures that rural networks not only are built, but that they can continue to operate, be repaired, and upgraded to meet future needs without rural residents bearing the full cost, which would put the cost of service out of reach for most.
- USF contributions modernization is needed to shift from telephone customers the burden of solely supporting the Fund to users of the broadband network bearing that weight, including Internet Service Providers and large edge providers. General tax revenue should not be used to fund USF.
- High Cost Program distributions need to be updated with higher speed standards and a review of reimbursable expenses.
- A reformed Lifeline Program should provide a sufficient subsidy so that low-income Americans can afford broadband service.
- Each of the four programs within USF has worthy purposes and goals. Though complementary and related, Congress should ensure they do not duplicate efforts.

WTA’s full response can be found on its website:

<https://w-t-a.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/WTA-Advocates-for-Rural-Broadband-USF-WG-Response-9.11.25.pdf>