

Docket Number: TC21-070
Subject Matter: First Data Request
Request to: Midcontinent Communications
Request from: South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Staff
Date of Request: 7/7/2021
Responses Due: 7/21/2021

- 1-1. The USAC High Cost Disbursement Search tool lists \$37,944 in frozen high cost support. Exhibit A shows \$49,736. Explain the variance.

The \$37,944 amount is correct. Additional amounts were inadvertently included in the reported amount. A revised Exhibit A has been included.

- 1-2. Refer to Exhibit B, are all towers that were delayed scheduled to be finished in 2021?

All towers delayed in 2020 are scheduled to be built in 2021 however, COVID has caused supply chain problems that might further delay completion.

- 1-3. Refer to Exhibit B, provide the 2023 projected capital expenditures.

A revised Two-Year Service Quality Improvement Plan has been included.

- 1-4. Provide examples of specific projects that were completed in 2020.

Federal support received was used to improve switching equipment and increase network redundancy. In 2020, Midco purchased the equipment and software necessary to implement robocall blocking in compliance with federal regulations. Midco continued construction in areas funded by CAF II support that was preliminarily started in 2019. These areas are near Huron, Watertown and Mitchell, SD. In 2020, Midco had not yet begun construction in the CAF II areas near Flandreau, SD; however, this is slated to begin in 2021.

- 1-5. Explain how Midco determines if a fixed wireless tower will be installed rather than fiber to the home. How do the speeds offered compare between the two offerings?

A fixed wireless solution is installed in all of Midco's CAF II areas. Those specific CAF II census blocks were bid utilizing a FW solution and will remain with that method. Any other future builds will use a fiber to the home solution.

Fixed wireless speeds are up to 100 Mbps/20 Mbps and fiber delivery speeds are up to 5G/5G.

Midco continually monitors and evaluates its entire network, which includes fixed wireless areas. When and if network density reaches certain levels that make expansion reasonably feasible, Midco will consider upgrading those areas.

- 1-6. Confirm that new customers receive information related to Lifeline and Link-up within 30 days of starting services.

New customers subscribing to voice services receive a Quick Start Guide within 30 days. Included in the documentation, the Assistance Programs section outlines the Lifeline benefit availability. A copy of the Quick Start Guide was included in Exhibit D of the original filing.

- 1-7. Explain how Midco will spend the 2021 SD Connect Broadband Development funding.

Midco has been awarded multiple grants in the two Connect SD grant rounds in 2021. In March, for projects to be completed by December 31, 2021, Midco will deploy FTTP service to approximately 204 homes passed in rural areas near Tea and Harrisburg, along with approximately 205 homes passed in rural areas north and east of Vermillion.

In June, for projects to be completed by December 31, 2023, Midco will deploy FTTP services to approximately 551 homes passed in rural areas northwest of Yankton, the community of Mission Hill and surrounding rural areas; approximately 72 homes passed in the community of Ellis; approximately 524 homes passed in the community of Hermosa; and approximately 144 homes passed in rural Minnehaha County, southwest of Sioux Falls.

- 1-8. Did Midco complete its 2020 buildout with the SD Connect Broadband Development funding as projected in response to DR1-8 in TC20-036?

All 2020 buildouts that received funding were completed. Those include FTTP infrastructure to serve approximately 164 un/underserved homes and businesses in rural Minnehaha County, west of Sioux Falls; and HFC infrastructure build out to serve approximately 62 un/underserved homes in a development east of Belle Fourche.