

- 1-7. Provide a two-year service quality plan for years 2021 and 2022. In the plan, provide:
- a. How service quality, signal quality, coverage, or capacity will improve due to the receipt of high-cost support.

Response:

As an incumbent ILEC, CenturyLink continually strives to meet customer needs in a timely, economic, and efficient way. CenturyLink has developed a local network in South Dakota that meets and/or exceeds industry and state standards for signal and service quality. CenturyLink continually reviews the network for evolving service needs and opportunities for prudent, long-term enhancement of the infrastructure. CenturyLink provides South Dakota consumers in rural, insular, and high-cost areas access to telecommunication services that is reasonably comparable to the access and at rates that are reasonably comparable of those charged for similar services in urban areas.

The Connect America Fund (CAF II) support is provided to build and operate a network capable of providing both voice and broadband at certain required speeds. CenturyLink QC (South Dakota) is on track to achieve the FCC unit enablement targets by the end of 2021. The broadband unit enablement for CAF II was at approximately 78% enabled through 2Q2020. CenturyLink QC (South Dakota) will be working over the next year and a half (through 2021) to enable further locations with broadband in compliance with the CAF II program. This will entail capital expenditures for wireline and wireless facilities expanding broadband capabilities and ensuring high-quality voice service. The CAF II program will cease at the end of 2021. In 2022, the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) will be in place. RDOF funding will be determined by a reverse auction that will take place later this year. Currently, CenturyLink QC (South Dakota) does not know the amount of funding that will be received from RDOF, if any.

- b. The projected start date and completion date for each improvement and the estimated amount of investment for each project that is funded by high-cost support.

Response:

Specific jobs have not been engineered for 2021 and 2022 with coincident start and stop dates, nor will they be engineered or constructed until calendar years 2021 and 2022.

CenturyLink's planning horizon is six-to-eight months, so planning for 2021 projects will not begin until later in 2020. CenturyLink's planning and projected estimates are of a tentative nature and should not be interpreted to be approved, engineered and ordered for installation.

Plans are "snapshots" in time and may change due to variations in growth trends (+/-), competitive considerations, weather impacts, natural disasters, regulatory requirements, or changes in vendor equipment. For any high-cost wire center during the two-year planning period, resources may be shifted, reduced, increased, deferred, or taken off the "drawing board" altogether. Continual planning and engineering evaluation during the annual planning cycle are required to meet service needs throughout the high-cost wire centers in South Dakota.

Expenditures are spread across the high-cost wire centers as community needs dictated growth or preservation requirements.

- c. Specific geographic areas where the improvements will be made.

Response:

See Confidential Attachment 1-1 for the wire centers where CenturyLink currently estimates capital expenditures.

- d. The estimated population that will be served as a result of the improvements.

Response:

See Confidential Attachment 1-1 for the wire centers where CenturyLink currently estimates capital expenditures. CenturyLink doesn't estimate the population that would be served in 2021 and 2022 through capital expenditures that may occur in those years.

In 2020, CenturyLink plans to enable 2,442 locations for a cumulative total of 13,112. In 2021, CenturyLink plans to enable 1,959 locations for a cumulative total of 15,071, completing the company's CAF II obligations for the state.

- e. If the Company believes that improvements at a particular wire center are not needed, explain the basis for this determination and demonstrate how funding will otherwise be used to further the provision of supported services in that area.

Response:

CenturyLink currently plans to improve service in each of its wire centers during both 2021 and 2022. However, the company is always evaluating the most effective and efficient way to spend limited capital dollars. This evaluation includes a review of how to best serve the greatest number of customers and the technologies that should be utilized. This is an evolving process that can result in changes in plan and changes in where funding is directed.

Dated this 18th day of August, 2020.

QWEST CORPORATION DBA
CENTURYLINK QC



Jason D. Topp
200 South Fifth Street, Room 2200
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(651) 312-5364
Jason.topp@centurylink.com