
**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE FILING OF
TRUCONNECT COMMUNICATIONS,
INC.'S PETITION FOR DESIGNATION
AS AN ELIGIBLE
TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER
IN THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
FOR THE LIMITED PURPOSE OF
PROVIDING LIFELINE SERVICE TO
QUALIFYING CUSTOMERS**

Docket No. TC24-004

**TRUCONNECT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.'S
RESPONSE TO FIRST DISCOVERY REQUESTS OF
SOUTH DAKOTA TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION**

TruConnect Communications, Inc. (TruConnect) provides the following response to the first discovery requests of South Dakota Telecommunications Association (SDTA) issued on February 29, 2024 (SDTA Discovery Request). In accordance with the Instructions set forth in the SDTA Discovery Request, TruConnect is responding to SDTA Request Nos. 1-6, 1-16 and 1-17 subject a Stipulation and Confidentiality Agreement (Confidentiality Agreement) filed with the Public Utilities Commission of South Dakota (Commission) on March 8, 2024. In accordance with the Confidentiality Agreement, TruConnect has designated those responses as CONFIDENTIAL. TruConnect is providing a confidential version of its response that includes all responses and a non-confidential version of its response that redacts those portions of the responses that are confidential.

RESPONSE TO DISCOVERY REQUEST

REQUEST 1-1: For each Request, identify each person who assisted in the preparation of these responses or who provided information for the purpose of preparing these responses.

Response

See Responses below which indicate the Responsible Person.

REQUEST 1-2: If available, please provide a diagram or other visual representation to show the relationships between:

- (i) TSC Acquisition Corp,
- (ii) TruConnect Mobile, LLC,
- (iii) TruConnect Communications, Inc. (fka Telscape),
- (iv) Sage Telecom Telecom Communications LLC (dba TruConnect) and
- (v) TruConnect Technologies LLC.

Responsible Person: Alex Rasor, Vice President, Compliance

Response

See Exhibit 1-2 for a diagram of the relationship between TSC Acquisition Corporation, TruConnect Communications, Inc., and Sage Telecom Communications, LLC. Nathan Johnson and Matthew Johnson each own approximately 40 percent of TSC Acquisition Corporation and also together own 100 percent of Gemini Partners. Gemini Partners owns 100 percent of TruConnect Mobile LLC and Wefi, LLC (formerly known as TruConnect Technologies, LLC).

REQUEST 1-3: How many customers does TruConnect have? Provide the data on a per state basis.

- a. Of the total customers per state specify how many receive ACP benefits and how many receive Lifeline benefits.
- b. How many SD customers currently receive the tribal ACP benefit?

Responsible Person: Alex Rasor, Vice President, Compliance

REDACTED

Response

- a. As of the February 2023 data month, TruConnect received benefits for the total number of customers as follows:

State	Lifeline	ACP
CA	355,685	240,172
AL	3,528	-
MA	7,582	5,539
NJ	25,047	17,831
OR	-	3,356
RI	1,375	1,092
TN	7,294	6,357
VA	13,076	10,898
VI	925	824
VT	448	362
Total	414,960	286,431

- b. None.

REQUEST 1-4: Why isn't TruConnect eligible to participate in the Link-up program?

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

Under 47 C.F.R. § 54.413, Link Up for Tribal lands is only available to eligible telecommunications carriers that participate in the high-cost program. TruConnect does not participate in the high-cost program.

REQUEST 1-5: On page 4 of its application, TruConnect indicates that it provides, "high-quality customer service." Please provide more information regarding how TruConnect provides a high-quality customer service. Specifically,

- a. Where are customer service calling centers located?
- b. Will customer service representatives be employees of TruConnect?
- c. What are the call center hours?
- d. Will TruConnect have any employees located in SD?

REDACTED

- e. Explain how TruConnect handles consumer complaints and the process used by the company.
- f. Provide any other information that supports the statement that TruConnect provides high-quality customer service.

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

- a. TruConnect’s call centers are located in Los Angeles, California; India; Guatemala; and Honduras.
- b. TruConnect’s customer service representatives include employees and third party vendors.
- c. Monday through Saturday 5am-9pm Pacific time.
- d. No.
- e. Additionally, streamlined communication and resolution processes are ensured through a dedicated email address for complaints.
- f. TruConnect’s dedication to high-quality customer service is exemplified by its receipt of the prestigious Titan Gold Award for customer service in 2023. This recognition is supported by our TruConnect’s strong Trustpilot score of 4.1, based on over 25,000 reviews. TruConnect prioritizes customer satisfaction by offering responsive and knowledgeable support staff who are readily available to address any inquiries or concerns. These efforts ensure that TruConnect consistently deliver exceptional service experiences to its customers.

REQUEST 1-6: What percentage of TruConnect revenue, for the years 2022 and 2023 was generated by customers utilizing the low-cost programs (ACP and Lifeline).

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

CONFIDENTIAL Response

During 2022, [REDACTED] of TruConnect’s revenue was generated by customers utilizing low-cost programs. During 2023, that percentage was [REDACTED].

REQUEST 1-7: Were any TruConnect employees or agents investigated or suspended by USAC at any time related to ACP benefits?

REDACTED

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

Each agent has a unique RAD ID used for enrolling subscribers into Lifeline and ACP. This ID is tied to the agent regardless of the company for which the agent is enrolling subscribers. USAC has deactivated certain RAD IDs associated with agents that enrolled subscribers in ACP. However, TruConnect is not aware of any behavior directly tied to enrollments made on its behalf being the reason USAC suspended or investigated any particular agent related to ACP benefits.

REQUEST 1-8: Has TruConnect, or any other names TruConnect has operated under, or a company that owns TruConnect, been investigated or penalized for any sort of waste, fraud, or abuse of the Lifeline program?

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

No.

REQUEST 1-9: Is there a fee or penalty assessed by TruConnect for a customer to cancel or de-enroll from TruConnect service for any reason at any time? If the answer is yes – please provide the fee/penalty and specify whether the fee/penalty applies to Lifeline customers.

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

No.

REQUEST 1-10: Does TruConnect anticipate geographic areas in the requested service area wherein customers may experience service issues due to inadequate coverage by the underlying wireless companies that TruConnect contracts with or intend to contract with? If so, what is the process and procedure for handling customer service issues after signing the individual up for services?

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

REDACTED

Response

No.

REQUEST 1-11: If coverage issues are expected, does TruConnect intend to make potential customers aware of possible coverage issues prior to enrolling customers?

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

Not applicable.

REQUEST 1-12: Does TruConnect plan to do targeted advertising to the current ACP customers of TruConnect? If so, describe the type of planned advertising and provide a copy of the planned advertising if available.

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

TruConnect is not an ACP provider in South Dakota.

REQUEST 1-13: What mobile broadband speed will TruConnect Lifeline plans provide?

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

TruConnect's Lifeline plans will provide mobile broadband at a speed of at least 3G. This meets the minimum service standard for mobile broadband speed in the Federal Communications Commission's Lifeline program rules. See 47 C.F.R. § 54.408(b)(2)(i).

REQUEST 1-14: If a customer uses their data allotment, are they cut off from using more before purchasing more data? Or do they continue to use data and then receive a bill at the end of the period?

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

REDACTED

Response

When a customer uses their monthly data allotment under TruConnect's Lifeline plan, they are not able to use more data. However, they may obtain additional data by purchasing one of TruConnect's top-up options.

REQUEST 1-15: Do any unused minutes and data month roll over to the following months?

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

No.

REQUEST 1-16: What percent of TruConnect's current subscribers purchase additional voice or data?

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

CONFIDENTIAL Response

[REDACTED]

REQUEST 1-17: Provide a description of the non-lifeline plans, including details and pricing, that TruConnect plans to offer in South Dakota.

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

TruConnect offers the following prepaid plans to non-Lifeline subscribers in South Dakota:

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- For \$15, 1 GB data, unlimited talk and text, and unlimited international calling to Mexico, Canada, China, South Korea and Vietnam.
- For \$25, 5 GB data, unlimited talk and text, and unlimited international calling to Mexico, Canada, China, South Korea and Vietnam.
- For \$35, 10 GB data, unlimited talk and text, and unlimited international calling to Mexico, Canada, China, South Korea and Vietnam.

REQUEST 1-18: Will TruConnect have any physical offices or other type of physical property presence located in South Dakota? If so, provide the locations and the type of activity that will take place at the physical location.

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

No.

REQUEST 1-19: Has TruConnect engaged in any Tribal consultation with any SD Tribal Nation. If so, specify the Tribe and the type and date of said consultation. If not, does TruConnect intend to do so? Why or why not.

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

TruConnect has not engaged in consultation with any Tribal Nations in located in South Dakota. TruConnect sent copies of its ETC Petition to representatives of all federally-recognized Tribal Nations located in South Dakota and will consult with those representatives as needed.

REQUEST 1-20: Confirm TruConnect will agree to South Dakota Public Utilities Commission jurisdiction over any SD customer complaint.

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

REDACTED

TruConnect confirms that it will agree to South Dakota Public Utilities Commission jurisdiction over a complaint by a customer residing in South Dakota.

REQUEST 1-21: Explain how TruConnect complies with ARSD 20:10:32:43.05 in offering a local usage plan comparable to the one offered by the incumbent local exchange carrier in the service area in which TruConnect seeks designation. Provide the analysis done to compare the plans.

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

TruConnect’s Lifeline plan includes unlimited voice minutes for no charge. TruConnect’s service is not offered on a distance-sensitive basis and a customer’s unlimited minutes can be used for local usage, domestic long-distance usage or both. TruConnect is not aware of any plan with unlimited local usage that is offered by an ILEC for no charge. As such, TruConnect offers a plan that is comparable to any ILEC offering service within TruConnect’s requested Lifeline service area.

REQUEST 1-22: Does TruConnect require a service deposit on any of its Lifeline plans?

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

No.

REQUEST 2-23: Referencing page 4 of the application:

- a. Does TruConnect have any conditions or parameters around when a customer may bring his/her own device? If so, provide a copy.
- b. TruConnect indicates it “may” provide user friendly handsets or hotspots? Explain further. When/why “may” TruConnect provide the handsets?
- c. If TruConnect provides a handset or hotspot, will it do so through one of its affiliates? Or will TruConnect, (the applicant in this docket) be the entity that provides the device?

Responsible Person: Alex Rasor, Vice President, Compliance

Response

- a. A consumer's own device must be compatible with the TruConnect network. During the TruConnect Lifeline enrollment process, a consumer performs a real time check to see if their phone is compatible with the TruConnect network.
- b. TruConnect will not be providing free handsets or hotspots to its Lifeline customers at this time.
- c. Not applicable.

REQUEST 2-24: If/when TruConnect provides customers with a handset or hotspot:

- a. Is the device new or refurbished?
- b. What types of devices are provided?
- c. What is the cost to the consumer?
- d. How frequently are customers eligible for a device?
- e. Is there an option to get an upgraded handset? If so, what are the fees for an upgraded handset and what are the options?

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

TruConnect will not be providing free handsets or hotspots to its Lifeline customers at this time. If TruConnect's plans change while this proceeding is pending, it will supplement this Response.

REQUEST 2-25: Is there any particular reason why TruConnect didn't offer Lifeline services in SD until after it established a customer base through the ACP program?

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

TruConnect is not an ACP provider in South Dakota.

REQUEST 2-26: Provide documentation that shows the FCC approves:

REDACTED

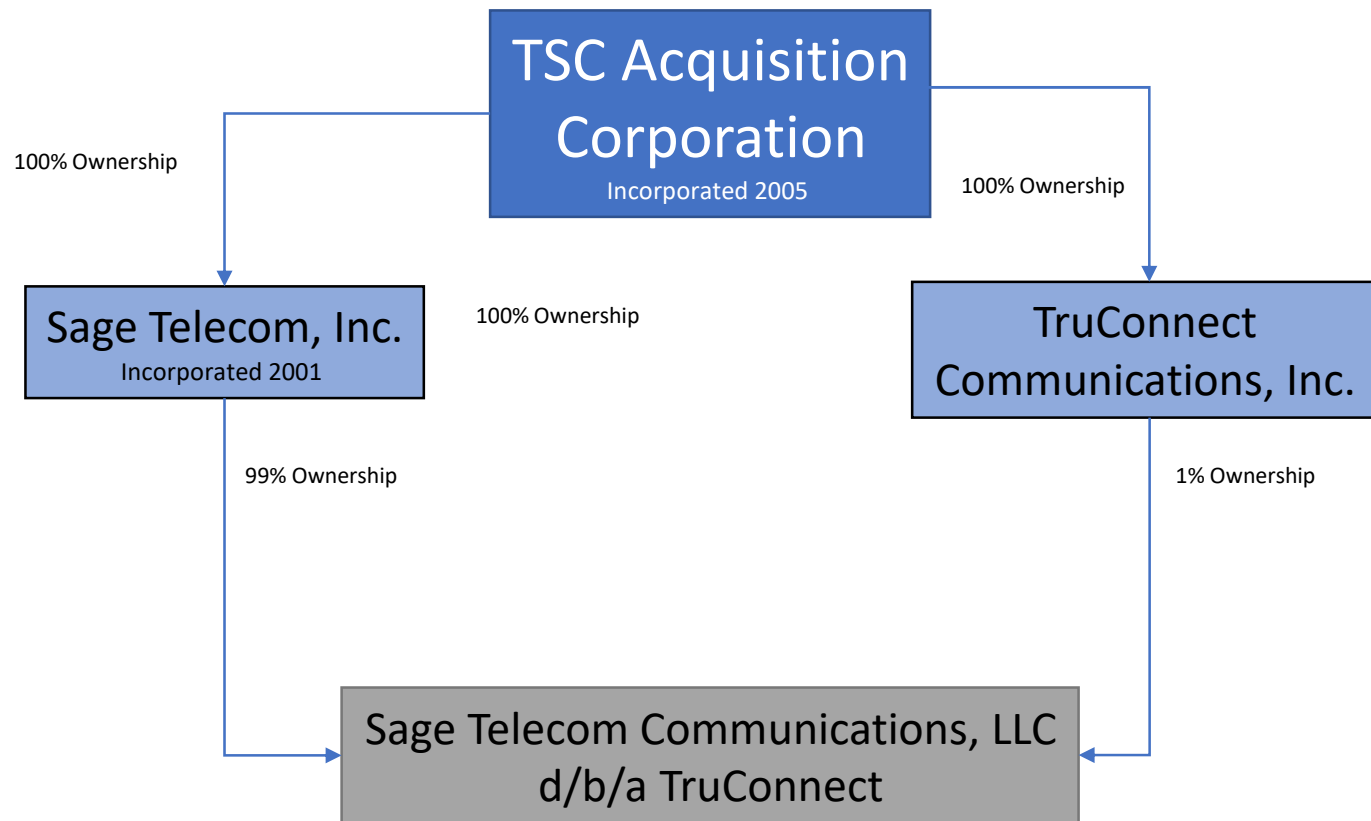
- a. TruConnect’s adoption of Telscape Communication’s Compliance plan AND**
- b. The revisions that TruConnect made to the Telscape Communication’s Compliance plan.**
- c. OR explain why FCC approval of the above is unnecessary.**

Responsible Person: Danielle Perry, Chief Compliance Officer

Response

TruConnect submitted the April 10, 2023 letter to the FCC via the Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS). ECFS indicates that the letter was received. *See* <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/10411246055916/1>. The FCC does not issue responses to notifications of immaterial changes to an approved Lifeline compliance plan. FCC approval is only required for material changes in ownership or control of the entity as described in the compliance plan approved by the FCC’s Wireline Competition Bureau. *See Wireline Competition Bureau Reminds Carriers of Eligible Telecommunications Designation and Compliance Plan Approval Requirements for Receipt of Federal Lifeline Universal Service Support*, WC Docket Nos. 09-197, 11-42, Public Notice, DA 14-1052 (July 24, 2014), available at <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-14-1052A1.pdf>. Neither the ownership nor control of the entity as described in the approved compliance plan changed when the name of the entity changed from Telscape Communications, Inc. to TruConnect Communications, Inc. Thus, TruConnect’s letter to the FCC was sufficient to notify the FCC of the change to the company name.

EXHIBIT 1-2



DECLARATION

I, Danielle Perry, state that I am the Chief Compliance Officer of TruConnect Communications, Inc. (“TruConnect”); that I am authorized to make this Declaration on behalf of TruConnect; that I have read the foregoing document; and that the statements in the foregoing document with respect to TruConnect are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Date: 3/28/2024

DocuSigned by:


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Danielle Perry
Chief Compliance Officer
TruConnect Communications, Inc.

DECLARATION

I, Alex Rasor, state that I am Vice President, Compliance of TruConnect Communications, Inc. ("TruConnect"); that I am authorized to make this Declaration on behalf of TruConnect; that I have read the foregoing document; and that the statements in the foregoing document with respect to TruConnect are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Date: 03/28/2024

Alex Rasor

Alex Rasor
Vice President, Compliance
TruConnect Communications, Inc.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of TruConnect's Response to First Set of Discovery Requests of South Dakota Telecommunications Association dated March 29, 2024, was electronically served upon the following parties to PUC Docket No. TC24-004:

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/s/ Olivia Fergerstrom
Olivia Fergerstrom

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE FILING OF
TRUCONNECT COMMUNICATIONS,
INC.'S PETITION FOR DESIGNATION
AS AN ELIGIBLE
TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIER
IN THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
FOR THE LIMITED PURPOSE OF
PROVIDING LIFELINE SERVICE TO
QUALIFYING CUSTOMERS**

Docket No. TC24-004

**TRUCONNECT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.'S RESPONSE TO
SECOND DISCOVERY REQUESTS OF SOUTH DAKOTA
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION**

TruConnect Communications, Inc. (TruConnect or Company) provides the following response to the second discovery requests of the South Dakota Telecommunications Association issued on April 23, 2024.

Dated: May 23, 2024

RESPONSE TO SECOND DISCOVERY REQUEST

REQUEST 2-1: For each Request, identify each person who assisted in the preparation of these responses or who provided information for the purpose of preparing these responses.

Response

See Responses.

REQUEST 2-2: Looking on page 13 of the TruConnect Petition for Designation:

- a. Has TruConnect established a network of “retail partners” in South Dakota?
- b. If so, name the partners.
- c. If not, please list retail partners utilized in other states that may serve as an example of the partnerships expected in South Dakota.
- d. What services does the retail partner provide? For example, does the retail partner enroll the customer, or simply sell a phone and provide contact information for TruConnect program enrollment?

Respondent: Danielle Perry

Response

TruConnect is in the process of establishing retail partners in South Dakota. In other states, TruConnect has established relationships with retail partners, including grocery stores located in areas where Lifeline-eligible consumers reside. The retail partners provide TruConnect with dedicated spaces that are staffed by enrollment representatives who can guide applicants through the enrollment process, sell phones, and provide information about TruConnect’s services.

REQUEST 2-3: Looking at page 12 and 13 of the TruConnect Petition for Designation:

- a. Has TruConnect established a relationship with or contacted any South Dakota “state and local service agencies?” If so, provide the agency name and contact information.
- b. Has TruConnect contacted or partnered with any nonprofit assistance organizations located in South Dakota? If so, provide the organization name and contact information.

Respondent: Danielle Perry

Response

TruConnect has not established a relationship with any South Dakota state and local service agencies or nonprofit assistance organizations located in South Dakota.

REQUEST 2-4: Is 4.5 GB of data sufficient and adequate to “close the homework gap” (See page 22 of Petition for Designation) or does TruConnect assume additional data will be purchased for this purpose?

Respondent: Alex Rasor

Response

Provision of 4.5 G.B is data, sanding alone is not sufficient to close the homework gap. However, when the Lifeline benefit is coupled with the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) benefit, TruConnect’s subscribers who are eligible for Lifeline and ACP receive unlimited data. Unfortunately, funding for the ACP has been depleted and the program will end May 31, 2024, unless Congress appropriates funding. As noted in TruConnect’s petition, mobile broadband service can serve as a “key bridge in closing the homework gap” but may not necessarily be the exclusive solution for closing the homework gap. To the extent a Lifeline subscriber determines that they need additional data in a given month, they have the option of purchasing data.

REQUEST 2-5: Does TruConnect provide any education to consumers to quantify what 4.5 GB of data means in usage terms?

Respondent: Alex Rasor

Response

TruConnect has materials specifically describing usage associated with 4.5 GB of data. TruConnect’s customers are provided this information when viewing plan offerings on the Company’s website at <https://www.truconnect.com/plans>.

REQUEST 2-6: See page 22 of TruConnect Petition for Designation:

- a. What about TruConnect makes it “unique?” And/or what is the basis for the use of “unique” in the Petition?**
- b. What is the basis for describing the TruConnect outreach as “innovative?”**
- c. What about the TruConnect enrollment process gives it “high integrity?”**

Respondent: Alex Rasor

Response

- a. There are several factors that make TruConnect unique to its subscribers. The Company provides a Lifeline service that exceeds the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) minimum service standards by providing a standard plan that includes unlimited voice and text messaging with 4.5 GB of mobile broadband data along with international calling, all at no cost to the customer. TruConnect also provides its customers with automatic alerts during the month when their data is getting low. Subscribers are able to download a free MyTC App so they can monitor their monthly usage and manage their account. Subscribers are able to easily purchase additional data and have access to an application that will offload their data usage to any available public Wi-Fi networks to improve their user experience. In addition, TruConnect operates its own call center staffed with trained employees to quickly respond to and address customer inquiries.

TruConnect addressed the “unique” advantages of its service because that is a factor the FCC assesses when determining whether grant of an ETC petition is in the public interest. *See, e.g., Virgin Mobile ETC Designation Order in the States of Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, New Hampshire and the District of Columbia*, WC Docket 09-197, Order, 25 FCC Rcd 17797, 17799, para. 6 (WCB 2010) (“When making a public interest determination, the Commission

historically has considered the benefits of increased consumer choice and the unique advantages and disadvantages of the applicant's service offering.”).

- b. TruConnect's outreach is innovative due to the multiple methods used to reach Lifeline consumers. With over 15 years in the industry the Company has built custom messaging that reaches its consumers on multiple different online platforms. In addition, TruConnect can utilize in-person enrollment representatives to provide printed marketing material to potential Lifeline subscribers and uses lead generation affiliates to identify potential consumers who are eligible for Lifeline service.
- c. The TruConnect enrollment platform is a custom built, proprietary system that uses state of the art technology to connect with state and federal databases for ease of enrollment. In addition, to relying on the USAC managed systems, the National Verifier and the National Lifeline Accountability Database (NLAD), TruConnect has developed custom algorithms that verify each applicant's identity and check for intracompany duplicates in an attempt to further prevent waste, fraud and abuse.

REQUEST 2-7: Follow-up to SDTA Discovery Request 1-7. Was any agent that facilitated TruConnect enrollments suspended or investigated due to improper actions related to a different company?

Respondent: Alex Rasor

Response

TruConnect is not aware of any agent that facilitated TruConnect enrollments being suspended or investigated due to actions related to a different company.

TruConnect notes that it is not privy to any agent's improper actions related to different

companies. As required by FCC rules (47 C.F.R. § 54.406), TruConnect requires that enrollment representatives register with the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) before the enrollment representative can provide information directly or indirectly to the NLAD or the National Verifier. As part of the registration process, enrollment representatives must provide USAC with identifying information, which may include first and last name, date of birth, the last four digits of his or her social security number, email address, and residential address. Thus, USAC should be aware of whether it had suspended or investigated a particular enrollment representative while the representative was associated with a different company. TruConnect also monitors its enrollment representatives' daily activities and will investigate and terminate enrollment credentials due to improper actions.

REQUEST 2-8: Follow-up to SDTA Discovery Request 1-6. For the year 2020 (the year before ACP started) (i) what quantity of data was provided with TruConnect Lifeline plans in the states where it had ETC designation and (ii) what percentage of TruConnect customers in those states purchased additional data?

Respondent: Alex Rasor

Response

- (i) From January through November 2020, TruConnect's standard Lifeline offering included a plan with a 3 GB mobile broadband data. Commencing December 1, 2020, TruConnect's standard Lifeline offering included plans with 4.5 GB and 6 GB of mobile broadband data. Each plan offering met the FCC's minimum service standards for Lifeline in effect during the relevant time period.
- (ii) During 2020, TruConnect offered Lifeline service in California, New Jersey and Rhode Island. Less than 1 percent of subscribers in those three states purchased additional data during 2020.

REQUEST 2-9: Explain how South Dakota TruConnect Lifeline customer wireless traffic will be prioritized on the underlying carrier networks?

Respondent: Alex Rasor

Response

TruConnect's agreements with its underlying carriers provide TruConnect with access to their wireless network infrastructure. TruConnect is not aware of any underlying network prioritization policies.

REQUEST 2-10: Will TruConnect South Dakota Lifeline customers experience slower service at any time due to underlying network prioritization policies? If so, explain when and where this can be expected.

Respondent: Alex Rasor

Response

No, as stated in the above response, TruConnect is not aware of any underlying network prioritization policies.

REQUEST 2-11: List and explain what environmental, traffic congestion, geographic or other factors can impact the quality wireless signal experienced by TruConnect customers. Explain how customers will be impacted.

Respondent: Alex Rasor

Response

The Company's service is subject to network and transmission limitations, including cell site unavailability, particularly near cell site boundaries and in remote areas. Equipment, weather, topography and other environmental considerations also affect commercial mobile radio service (CMRS) and data service and the quality and signal strength of such CMRS and data service may vary significantly within buildings, or be dependent upon the location of equipment. In TruConnect's experience, the quality of service received by customers is rarely impacted by the foregoing factors.

REQUEST 2-12: As a follow-up to Staff Data Request 1-22:

- a. **Did Assurance create the map (found at the web address) with its own data? Or is this map created with data received from underlying carriers?**
- b. **Does the map shown at the web address reflect the underlying carrier wireless network propagation data? If not, what type of data was used to generate the map?**
- c. **Can TruConnect meet the requirements of ARSD 20:10:32:43.01 for all colored areas on the map found at the web address?**

Respondent: Alex Rasor

Response

TruConnect did not create the map found on its website. The map shown on the website reflects data received from TruConnect's underlying carriers. TruConnect is not aware of the type of data its underlying carriers use to develop their maps. ARSD 20:10:32:43.01 requires an applicant seeking designation as an ETC to commit to provide service throughout its proposed designated service area to customers making a reasonable request for service. As required by ARSD 20:10:32:43.01, TruConnect certifies that it will provide service on a timely basis to requesting customers within its proposed designated service area as depicted in the maps found on its website.

REQUEST 2-13: Does the map found at the web address included in TruConnect's Answer to Staff Data Request 1-22 show the same coverage area as Exhibit 3 to the Petition for Designation?

Respondent: Alex Rasor

Response

The map found at www.truconnect.com represents the combined coverage area of the T-Mobile and Verizon Wireless maps provided as Exhibit 3 to TruConnect's ETC Petition.

REQUEST 2-14: Is it TruConnect's position that cellular coverage area meets the requirements of ARSD 20:10:32:45?

Respondent: Alex Rasor

Response

TruConnect's cellular coverage is not required to meet the requirements of ARSD 20:10:32:45. ARSD 20:10:32:42 states, in part, "the commission may not find it to be in the public interest if the telecommunications company requesting such designation is not offering its services coextensive with the rural telephone company's service area." The Commission recently found the following regarding this rule: "However, the FCC has granted forbearance to this requirement for companies seeking Lifeline-only ETC designation in the area of a rural telephone company. Therefore, the Commission may find this designation to be in the public interest although the company will not offer its services coextensive with the rural telephone company's service area." *In the Matter of the Petition of Assurance Wireless USA, L.P. for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier for the Purpose of Offering Lifeline Service to Qualifying Customers*, Docket NO. TC24-002, Order Approving Joint Stipulation; Order Granting Petition for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (May 15, 2024), at 2 (citing *In the Matter of Telecommunications Carriers Eligible for Support, Lifeline and Link Up Reform*, Memorandum Opinion and Order, WC Docket No. 11-42, FCC 13-44, ¶ 1 (April 15, 2013)). TruConnect, like Assurance Wireless, is not required to offer its services coextensive with the rural telephone company's service area for its designation as an ETC to be in the public interest.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on May 23, 2024, a copy of TruConnect's Response to Second Discovery Request of the South Dakota Telecommunications Association was electronically served upon the following parties to PUC Docket No. TC24-004:

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