

**Exhibit A Blackfoot USAC Appeal**

HERMAN & WHITEAKER, LLC

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Bethesda, MD 20817

VIA OVERNIGHT DELIVERY AND EMAIL

April 25, 2019

Universal Service Administrative Company  
High Cost Division  
Attn: Letter of Appeal  
700 12<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 900  
Washington, DC 20005

Email: [HCAppeals@usac.org](mailto:HCAppeals@usac.org)

**RE:** Appeal of Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (Service Provider Identification Number 143002531) and Fremont Telcom Co. (SPIN 143002515) Regarding Universal Service Administrative Company Reduction in Disbursement for Alternative Connect America Cost Model Funding Support for 2017

To whom it may concern:

Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. and Fremont Telcom Co. (collectively "Blackfoot") hereby appeal the reduction in Alternative Connect America Cost Model ("A-CAM") funding issued by the Universal Service Administrative Company ("USAC"), related to Blackfoot's 2018 certification of broadband locations deployed in 2017 and reported in the High Cost Universal Broadband ("HUBB") system.

On February 26, 2019, Blackfoot received a High Cost Remittance Statement from USAC for the month of January 2019 (Exhibit 1: February 26 Remittance Statement). Blackfoot discovered that the \$766,948.37 disbursement amount for A-CAM support for Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. was significantly lower than its regular disbursement amount of \$990,642, a difference of \$223,693.29, and that the \$95,630.97 disbursement amount for A-CAM support for Fremont Telcom Co. was significantly lower than its regular disbursement amount of \$123,523.33, a difference of \$27,892.36, totaling a reduction of \$251,585.65 ("A-

CAM Reduction”). On March 11, 2019, Michelle Owens, Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal for Blackfoot, contacted USAC, to inquire why the A-CAM disbursement amount for the month of January 2019 was smaller than expected (Exhibit 2: March 11-13 Email Correspondence with USAC Strings 1-4). On March 13, 2019, a USAC representative for the High Cost Support Team (Tanya) responded, stating that the reduction in support was related to a filing that was due on March 1, 2018, and which USAC maintained had not been certified until March 8, 2018, resulting in Blackfoot having lost seven days of support (Exhibit 2: March 11-13, 2019 Email Correspondence with USAC Strings 1-4). This email response from USAC led to a series of emails between Ms. Owens and various USAC High Cost Support Team members about how Blackfoot could dispute the A-CAM Reduction.

Blackfoot disagrees with the basis on which USAC has reduced the disbursement of A-CAM support by seven days based on the 2018 reporting and certification of broadband locations deployed in 2017. Blackfoot’s 2018 certification of broadband locations deployed in 2017 was not late, but rather Blackfoot was forced to re-submit what was a timely certification of those broadband locations as a result of malfunctions in USAC’s HUBB system, as well as USAC’s e-file system. As a result of these USAC system errors, Blackfoot’s certification of the deployment of broadband locations in 2017 was not accepted and recognized by USAC until March 8, 2018. This was four days after the grace period by which carriers had to submit and certify such data in order to receive the full amount of A-CAM support. Blackfoot will explain further below the relief sought by this appeal, as well as the justification for the relief.

Blackfoot is submitting this appeal to USAC because Blackfoot believes there has been a mistake of fact that necessitates that USAC address this appeal. Out of an abundance of caution, however, Blackfoot also is submitting a request for waiver with the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) because USAC has instructed Blackfoot that any dispute it has regarding the A-CAM Reduction must be submitted to the FCC.

USAC may contact counsel for Blackfoot to discuss this appeal or with regard to any questions about the appeal. Contact information for Blackfoot’s counsel is:

Herman & Whiteaker, LLC  
6720-B Rockledge Drive, Suite 150  
Bethesda, MD 20817

Gregory W. Whiteaker, [greg@hermanwhiteaker.com](mailto:greg@hermanwhiteaker.com), 202-600-7274  
Robin E. Tuttle, [rtuttle@hermanwhiteaker.com](mailto:rtuttle@hermanwhiteaker.com), 202-827-0667

Blackfoot did not receive any notice or decision from USAC that A-CAM support for 2019 would be reduced based on the 2018 filing of 2017 deployed locations. Blackfoot learned about the reduction of A-CAM support when Blackfoot received the High Cost Program Remittance Statement, dated February 26, 2019. (Exhibit 1: February 26 High Cost Remittance Statement). USAC has indicated that it reduced A-CAM support on the basis that Blackfoot had certified the broadband location data in the HUBB on March 8, 2018. As explained below, however, USAC’s reduction of A-CAM support is premised on a mistake in fact caused by apparent errors in USAC’s HUBB system, as well as problems that Blackfoot experienced with

entitlements to certify in USAC's e-file system, which problems were not caused by Blackfoot.

Blackfoot requests that USAC reverse the A-CAM Reduction, and Blackfoot requests that USAC issue the full amount of A-CAM support that should have been issued for January 2019 based on a timely filing and certification of broadband locations deployed in 2017. The automatic reduction of A-CAM support based on the FCC rules, specifically 47 C.F.R. §§ 54.316(c)(1) and 54.216(c)(1)(i), is not supported by the facts. In support of this appeal, Blackfoot attaches all correspondence with USAC referenced herein regarding the filing and certification of broadband location data in the HUBB for the March 1, 2018 deadline, which are attached to this appeal.

#### Background for Appeal of the A-CAM Reduction

In January 2018, pursuant to the direction of Jason Williams, CEO of Blackfoot, Ms. Owens provided Mr. Williams with detailed instructions on how to establish Aaron Neilson as a certifying officer for various USAC systems. Prior to February 16, 2018, Mr. Williams had completed the USAC procedures to establish Mr. Neilson as a certifying officer for a number of USAC systems, including the HUBB system. (Exhibit 3: January 26, 2018 Email from Michelle Owens to Jason Williams). Also prior to February 16, 2018, Mr. Neilson had accessed the USAC e-file system, making sure he was able to access the Lifeline, Form 481, and HUBB systems.

Between February 5, 2018 and February 13, 2018, Ms. Owens uploaded all broadband location files into the HUBB system in preparation for the March 1, 2018 filing deadline. (Exhibit 4: HUBB Screenshot of A-CAM Broadband Locations). The total number of locations uploaded was 475. On February 15, 2018, Ms. Owens emailed Mr. Neilson to advise him that the broadband locations uploaded in the HUBB system were ready for certification. (Exhibit 5: February 15, 2018 Email from Michelle Owens to Aaron Neilson). Following that email to Mr. Neilson, Ms. Owens scheduled a meeting with Mr. Neilson for February 16, 2018, during which Mr. Neilson would log in to the USAC e-file system and the HUBB system with guidance from Ms. Owens in order to certify the broadband locations already uploaded into the HUBB. (Exhibit 6: Email invitation from Ms. Owens to Mr. Neilson for February 16, 2018 regarding the HUBB filing certification).

On February 16, 2018, Ms. Owens met with Mr. Neilson in his office at 2:00 pm, Mountain Time, during which Mr. Neilson logged into USAC's e-file and HUBB systems. Mr. Neilson checked the box that was required to certify all locations at one time. The certification was submitted and both Mr. Neilson and Ms. Owens observed that a confirmation screen popped up. Mr. Neilson did not print the HUBB confirmation screen, and neither Mr. Neilson nor Ms. Owens wrote down the confirmation number that was included in the confirmation screen.<sup>1</sup> Neither Mr. Neilson nor Ms. Owens received a confirmation email from USAC regarding the certification made in the HUBB on that day, but Blackfoot is not aware of receiving any such

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<sup>1</sup> There is no mention in the HUBB User Guide that certifying officers must print or otherwise preserve a copy of a HUBB certification.

confirmations in connection with other similar USAC certifications.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Neilson and Ms. Owens have prepared affidavits affirming what transpired on February 16, 2018, as explained herein, with regard to the HUBB certification for 2017 broadband locations. (Exhibit 7: Affidavits of Aaron Neilson and Michelle Owens).

On March 1, 2018, Ms. Owens cancelled the calendar reminder about the March 1, 2018 HUBB filing because the filing had been submitted and certified on February 16, 2018. (Exhibit 8: March 1, 2018 Email cancellation of March 1, 2018 HUBB filing reminder). Also, in a March 1, 2018 email to Mr. Neilson regarding the status of a number of regulatory matters, Ms. Owens reported that the HUBB filing had been completed within the past two weeks, consistent with the February 16, 2018 filing. (Exhibit 9: March 1, 2018 Email from Michelle Owens to Aaron Neilson).

On March 5, 2018, Sharon from USAC called Ms. Owens and left a message that Blackfoot had missed the HUBB certification deadline. Ms. Owens was out of the office on March 5, 2018 and March 6, 2018. When Ms. Owens returned to the office on March 7, 2018, she discovered that Mr. Neilson no longer had access to the HUBB system. (Exhibit 10: Email from Aaron Neilson to Michelle Owens with attachment of screen shot of the USAC e-file access for Aaron Neilson showing that HUBB system access was missing). Ms. Owens emailed USAC on March 7, 2018, and explained that while Mr. Neilson had been able to successfully get in to the HUBB system on February 16, 2018, he was no longer able to do so. She noted that Mr. Neilson had been having some issues with his log in permissions in the USAC e-file systems, and that she had spoken with Sam Clark at USAC on February 16, 2018, related to other e-file access issues specific to NLAD and the claims system. Ms. Owens noted further that she did not receive a return call from USAC about this, commenting that she did not know if these other e-file issues were related to this HUBB issue, but she questioned whether these other e-file access issues could be related to the HUBB access issue. Importantly, Ms. Owens emphasized that Blackfoot thought the HUBB certifications were completed on February 16, 2018, but noted that the HUBB system was showing the locations that had been uploaded as no longer certified. Ms. Owens requested that USAC make sure that Mr. Neilson had access to certify as an officer in the HUBB and 481 systems, and specifically that USAC advise what Blackfoot needed to do to make sure the filing that had been made on February 16, 2018 was recognized as timely certified. (Exhibit 11: March 7, 2018 Email from Michelle Owens to USAC/HC Questions).

On March 8, 2018, Elizabeth from USAC emailed Ms. Owens, stating that it appeared that Mr. Neilson did not have the correct entitlement, but that USAC would get him added and follow up with Blackfoot promptly. (Exhibit 12: March 8, 2018 8:01 am Email from USAC

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<sup>2</sup> Blackfoot's Information Technology ("IT") department has been unable to locate any emails from USAC on February 16, 2018, or indicating confirmation from the HUBB system for the submitted broadband locations. Similarly, Blackfoot's IT department has not found any emails to Mr. Neilson following when the broadband locations were re-certified on March 8, 2018, or to Dave Martin, the current Blackfoot certifying officer for broadband location filings in the HUBB system, following when Mr. Martin made a no locations certification on March 6, 2019.

(Elizabeth) to Michelle Owens). Later that day Elizabeth from USAC emailed Ms. Owens and advised that USAC had updated Mr. Neilson's entitlements so that he should be able to certify then. (Exhibit 13: March 8, 2018 1:05 pm Email from USAC (Elizabeth) to Michelle Owens). There was no response to or acknowledgment from USAC regarding Ms. Owens' request for guidance on what action was needed to ensure that the certification filing that had been made on February 16, 2018 was recognized as timely.

Ms. Owens notified Mr. Neilson on March 8, 2018, following the update from USAC, that his entitlements had been corrected and that he could access the HUBB system. (Exhibit 14: March 8, 2018 Email from Michelle Owens to Aaron Neilson). That afternoon, Mr. Neilson accessed the HUBB and re-submitted certification of all broadband locations. This time Mr. Neilson missed the button to certify all locations at one time and he had to certify all broadband locations in groups of 10. (Exhibit 15: March 8, 2018 Screen Shots of HUBB Certifications).

It was not until the March 11, 2019 and March 13, 2019 correspondence between Ms. Owens and USAC, following Blackfoot's receipt of the February 26, 2019 High Cost Remittance Statement from USAC for the month of January 2019, that Blackfoot became aware that HUBB certification and entitlement issues that it addressed in March of 2018 had triggered a reduction in A-CAM support. (Exhibit 2: March 11-13, 2019 Email Correspondence with USAC Strings 1-4). In the further correspondence with USAC on March 13, 2019, Ms. Owens explained that there had been a filing issue due to a problem with the HUBB system and permissions for the certifying officer, and noted that Blackfoot had been working with USAC to resolve the permissions issues. Ms. Owens asked what steps Blackfoot needed to take to dispute the reduction. The USAC representative (Tanya) responding to this question maintained that Blackfoot had to file a request for a waiver of FCC rules, explaining that parties that are seeking a waiver of FCC rules or that have filed an appeal with USAC and have received a decision may appeal USAC's decision to the FCC, and that an appeal to the FCC must be submitted within 60 days of the date when USAC issued the decision. Ms. Owens also asked how Blackfoot would have known when USAC issued a decision because the first notice of there being a problem was with the reduced payment. USAC responded that there was no notice to carriers on the basis that carriers were aware if they were late and that there were penalties associated with late filings, and that the date of disbursement triggered the 60-day time period for the filing of a waiver or appeal with the FCC.

Ms. Owens emphasized that Blackfoot was not aware that its HUBB certification was late, as indicated in Ms. Owens' March 7, 2018 email with USAC, but rather that Blackfoot believed the broadband location filing had been certified and was completed on February 16, 2018. She also reminded USAC that Blackfoot was not aware until March 7, 2018 that there had been an entitlements issue or a HUBB issue that apparently resulted in the certification failing, and further that USAC did not resolve the entitlements issue until March 8, 2018, which is when Blackfoot was able to re-submit the certification. Ms. Owens also expressed confusion based on USAC's responses, believing that Blackfoot must appeal first with USAC, but being unclear on about how to appeal with USAC to obtain a decision. The USAC representative (now Eric O.) stated that USAC has no ability to waive penalties for late filings required by FCC rules, and therefore Blackfoot must appeal directly to the FCC. (Exhibit 2: March 11-13, 2019 Email Correspondence with USAC Strings 1-2).

Blackfoot Appeal of the Reduction in A-CAM Support Related to the 2018 Reporting and Certification of Broadband Locations Deployed in 2017

Blackfoot requests that USAC reverse the A-CAM Reduction and promptly issue to Blackfoot the full amount of A-CAM support on the basis that Blackfoot timely reported and certified its broadband location data prior to the March 1, 2018 deadline. The correspondence between Blackfoot and USAC summarized herein, along with the supporting affidavits of Mr. Neilson and Ms. Owens with regard to the HUBB certification on February 16, 2018, demonstrate there has been a mistake of fact on USAC's part with regard to the timely reporting and certification of broadband locations deployed in 2017 prior to the March 1, 2018 certification deadline. Although Blackfoot is not privy to the inner workings of the e-file and HUBB systems to know exactly what went wrong after Blackfoot certified the broadband locations on February 16, 2018, it is clear to Blackfoot that errors must have occurred in USAC's systems. Blackfoot suspects that the issues it was having in getting access to various USAC systems other than the HUBB system for Mr. Neilson and others within the company, as well as getting proper entitlements on those systems, might be related to the HUBB certification made on February 16, 2018 not registering on USAC's end, or possibly even having been undone on USAC's end after the certification was completed that day. In sum, as documented herein, Blackfoot timely certified the broadband locations deployed in 2017 by the March 1, 2018 deadline. The imposition of a reduction in support based on what USAC has perceived as a late certification is nothing more than a mistake of fact related to problems with USAC's HUBB and e-file systems, not failures on Blackfoot's part. While Blackfoot is submitting a waiver request to the FCC simultaneously out of an abundance of caution, Blackfoot believes the resolution of this matter is appropriately one to be handled by USAC in light of the facts.

Respectfully submitted,



Gregory W. Whiteaker

Robin E. Tuttle

*Counsel for Blackfoot Telephone*

*Cooperative, Inc. and Fremont Telcom Co.*

Enclosures

## Exhibit A1 February 26 Remittance Statement

**From:** [CustomerSupport@usac.org](mailto:CustomerSupport@usac.org) <[CustomerSupport@usac.org](mailto:CustomerSupport@usac.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 26, 2019 5:41 AM  
**To:** Marlys Gillen <[mgillen@blackfoot.com](mailto:mgillen@blackfoot.com)>  
**Subject:** HIGH COST PROGRAM REMITTANCE STATEMENT: 143002515



### HIGH COST PROGRAM REMITTANCE STATEMENT AS OF FEBRUARY 26, 2019

**Attn:** Marlys Gillen  
Fremont Telcom, Co.

RE: FCC Form 498 ID 143002515

This notice provides an explanation of your company's High Cost Support for the following period.

SAC	ST	IAS	HCL	SNA	ICLS	FHCS	HCM	LSS	SVS	IS	CAF ICC	CACM	RBE	ACAM	CAF BLS	AK PLAN	CAFII Auction	PR Fund	VI Fund
<b>Disbursements for January, 2019</b>																			
473333	ID	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$31,924.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$95,630.97	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$31,924.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$95,630.97	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Authorized Disbursement</b>																		<b><u>\$127,554.97</u></b>	

#### ADJUSTMENT

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**Total Adjustments**

**\$0.00**

**Total Actual Disbursement:**

**\$127,554.97**

If you have any questions, please contact USAC Customer Operations at (888) 641-8722 or [CustomerSupport@usac.org](mailto:CustomerSupport@usac.org). You may also visit us at [www.usac.org](http://www.usac.org).

From: [CustomerSupport@usac.org](mailto:CustomerSupport@usac.org) <[CustomerSupport@usac.org](mailto:CustomerSupport@usac.org)>  
 Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2019 5:41 AM  
 To: Marlys Gillen <[mgillen@blackfoot.com](mailto:mgillen@blackfoot.com)>  
 Subject: HIGH COST PROGRAM REMITTANCE STATEMENT: 143002531



**HIGH COST PROGRAM REMITTANCE STATEMENT  
AS OF FEBRUARY 26, 2019**

Attn: Marlys Gillen  
 Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

RE: FCC Form 498 ID 143002531

This notice provides an explanation of your company's High Cost Support for the following period.

SAC	ST	IAS	HCL	SNA	ICLS	FHCS	HCM	LSS	SVS	IS	CAF ICC	CACM	RBE	ACAM	CAF BLS	AK PLAN	CAFII Auction	PR Fund	VI Fund
<b>Disbursements for January, 2019</b>																			
482235	MT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$15,757.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$766,948.37	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
483308	MT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$13,260.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$29,017.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$766,948.37	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Authorized Disbursement</b>																		<b><u>\$795,965.37</u></b>	

**ADJUSTMENT**

**AMOUNT**

**Total Adjustments**

**\$0.00**


**Total Actual Disbursement:**

**\$795,965.37**

If you have any questions, please contact USAC Customer Operations at (888) 641-8722 or [CustomerSupport@usac.org](mailto:CustomerSupport@usac.org). You may also visit us at [www.usac.org](http://www.usac.org).



**Exhibit A2 March 11-13, 2019 Email Correspondence with USAC**

**From:** hcquestions@usac.org   
**Subject:** Re: Disbursement Question  
**Date:** March 13, 2019 at 11:55 AM  
**To:** Michelle Owens mowens@blackfoot.com

**String 1**

H

In this case, the 60 days began on the date of disbursement.

Warm Regards,

Eric O.  
HC Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
HCQuestions@usac.org

On 3/13/2019 10:57 AM, Michelle Owens wrote:

So what date triggers the 60 day notice then?

**Michelle Owens**

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*  
V: 406-541-5131

Stay connected with Blackfoot:



**LEGAL NOTICE:** This e-mail and any attachments may be confidential, subject to attorney-client privilege, and/or protected by the work-product doctrine. The unauthorized use or disclosure of this e-mail or any attachment is prohibited. If you received this e-mail in error, please notify me and delete the e-mail immediately.

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**From:** hcquestions@usac.org <hcquestions@usac.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2019 8:56 AM  
**To:** Michelle Owens <mowens@blackfoot.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Disbursement Question

Hello Michelle,

Thanks for your inquiry. We did not notify carriers as there was an awareness that late filings have penalties. The details are on our website and you were aware that you were late.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org).

Warm Regards,  
Tanya

High Cost Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)

On 3/13/2019 10:08 AM, Michelle Owens wrote:

How do we know when USAC issued a decision? Our first notice was the reduced payment.

**Michelle Owens**

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*  
V: 406-541-5131

Stay connected with Blackfoot:



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**From:** [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org) <[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2019 8:02 AM

**To:** Michelle Owens <[mowens@blackfoot.com](mailto:mowens@blackfoot.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Disbursement Question

Hello Michelle,

Thanks for reaching back out to us. To dispute you would need to file a request for waiver with the FCC. Parties that are seeking a waiver of FCC rules or that have filed an appeal with USAC and received a decision may, if they choose, appeal USAC's decision to the FCC. You must submit your appeal to the FCC within 60 days of the date when USAC issued the decision.

On all communications with the FCC, be sure to reference the Docket No. 10-90.

1. Go to <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs>. Alternatively, from <https://www.fcc.gov>, click "ECFS" in the center of the page under "Access Now".
2. A page containing a filing search will open. At the top of the page, click "Submit a Filing".
3. In the "Proceedings" field, make sure to enter 10-90.
4. When filing a waiver request, be sure to choose WAIVER from the "Type of Filing" field. If you are filing an appeal, you may choose APPEAL.
5. Complete the rest of the fields as they are relevant. There are certain fields that are not applicable, such as the "Report Number" or "Bureau ID Number."
6. Upload your written letter of appeal or request for waiver, and any other applicable documentation.

In general, your appeal or waiver request should include:

1. Your contact information and the entity name and entity number, or service provider name and SPIN of the organization you represent;
2. A label of appeal or waiver request;
3. Information regarding the USAC decision being appealed and a copy of USAC's decision, if applicable;
4. A statement setting forth the party's interest in the matter presented for review;
5. A full statement of relevant, material facts with supporting affidavits and documentation;
6. The question presented for review, with reference, where appropriate, to the relevant Commission rule, order or statutory provision; and
7. A statement of the relief sought and the relevant statutory or regulatory provision pursuant to which such relief is sought.

Electronic appeals will be considered filed on a business day if they are received at any time before 12:00 AM ET. If you have questions or comments about using the ECFS, please contact the FCC directly at (202) 418-0193 or via email at [ecfshelp@fcc.gov](mailto:ecfshelp@fcc.gov).

For the FCC's rules on appeals, you may also see Sections [54.719-54.72](#): [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=8f7ceac17a80d1abd798eb37023b5b75&node=pt47.3.54&rgn=div5#se47.3.54\\_1719](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=8f7ceac17a80d1abd798eb37023b5b75&node=pt47.3.54&rgn=div5#se47.3.54_1719)

Additional information on filing appeals to USAC and the FCC is found on the Appeals page of the USAC website: <http://usac.org/about/about/program-integrity/appeals.aspx>

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org).

Warm Regards,  
Tanya

High Cost Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)

On 3/13/2019 9:38 AM, Michelle Owens wrote:

Hi Tanya,

That filing issue was due to a problem with the HUBB system and permissions for the certifying officer involved. It was our first HUBB filing ever and we had been actively working with USAC to resolve the permissions issues. What steps do we need to take to dispute this reduction?

Thank you,

## Michelle Owens

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*

V: 406-541-5131

Stay connected with Blackfoot:



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**From:** [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org) <[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2019 7:34 AM

**To:** Michelle Owens <[mowens@blackfoot.com](mailto:mowens@blackfoot.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Disbursement Question

Hello Michelle,

Thanks for reaching out to us. The reduction in support was related to the filing last year, due 3/1/18, not the 3/1/19 data as you had included below. Both of the carriers indicated certified on 3/8/18 so they lost seven days support.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org).

Warm Regards,  
Tanya

High Cost Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)

On 3/11/2019 2:03 PM, Michelle Owens wrote:

Good morning,

Our disbursements in the attached are smaller than expected. Can you please tell us why?

SPIN 143002531 for Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. ACAM disbursement is \$766,948 when it generally runs at 990,642.

SPIN 143002515 for Fremont Telcom Co. ACAM disbursement is \$95,631 when it is generally 123,523.

We are not aware of any reason that the disbursement would have decreased and appreciate your help in understanding. Neither of the companies are in a red light

status and these disbursements were before the HUBB filings. Even with that said, Blackfoot filed locations in the HUBB as follows.

- SPIN 143002531 for Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. filed pre-2017 location data before the 3/1/19 deadline in HUBB. It was unaware that it needed to file a no location certification for 2018, USAC called on 3/6/19 and advised that was required so Blackfoot addressed that omission and send a grace period request as directed by the USAC representative.
- SPIN 143002515 for Fremont Telcom Co. field pre-2017 and 2018 location data before the 3/1/19 deadline in HUBB.

BTC HUBB Pre 2017.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:29 PM	Complete	9,877	0   0	<a href="#">Review</a>
FMT HUBB 2018.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:16 PM	Complete	173	0   0	<a href="#">Review</a>
FMT HUBB Pre 2017.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:06 PM	Complete	1,169	0   0	<a href="#">Review</a>



**Universal Service  
Administrative Co.**

[Home](#)

[Manage Uploads](#)

[Location Details](#)

## Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2016

Locations: 1159

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007892

Certified on : February, 27 2019 at 10:59:28 AM

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### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2018

Locations: 163

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007893

Certified on : February, 27 2019 at 11:03:38 AM

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### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2016

Locations: 9867

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007894

Certified on : February, 27 2019 at 11:07:48 AM

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### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2018

Locations: 10

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007760

Certified on : February, 26 2019 at 04:09:27 PM

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### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2016

Locations: 10

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007762

Certified on : February, 26 2019 at 04:10:59 PM

The above referenced locations have been successfully certified. Please save the confirmation number above. If you have questions or concerns about this certification, referencing this number will help when you contact us .

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**No Locations to Upload Confirmation**

Deployment Year: 2018

Carrier(s): BLACKFOOT TEL - BTC

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc

Confirmation No.: **NL000000000008297**

Certified on : March, 06 2019 at 01:03:51 PM

The above referenced carrier has no locations to upload. Please save the confirmation number above. If you have questions or concerns, refer you [contact us](#) .

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Thank you for your assistance in determining the reason for the difference.

**Michelle Owens**

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*




Blackfoot  
1221 North Russell Street  
Missoula, MT 59808  
V: 406-541-5131  
F: 406-541-5144  
[www.blackfoot.com](http://www.blackfoot.com)

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**From:** Michelle Owens mowens@blackfoot.com   
**Subject:** RE: Disbursement Question  
**Date:** March 13, 2019 at 12:13 PM  
**To:** hcquestions@usac.org

String 2

MO

Thank you for the clarification.

**Michelle Owens**

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*

V: 406-541-5131

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---

**From:** hcquestions@usac.org <hcquestions@usac.org>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2019 10:09 AM

**To:** Michelle Owens <mowens@blackfoot.com>

**Subject:** Re: Disbursement Question

Michelle,

The penalties for late filings are required by FCC rules, and, as such, USAC has no ability to waive those regulations. You must submit your appeal to the FCC directly. Please refer to the step-by-step instructions Tanya provided in her previous email;

Warm Regards,

Eric O.  
HC Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
[HCQuestions@usac.org](mailto:HCQuestions@usac.org)

On 3/13/2019 12:02 PM, Michelle Owens wrote:

Hi Tanya,

We were not aware we were late as indicated in our March 7<sup>th</sup> e-mail we believe the filing was complete and certified on February 16, 2018. Until March 7, 2018 we were not aware that there was an entitlements issue or HUBB issue that resulted in the certification failing. USAC Staff had to intervene to resolve the issue so we could certify on March 8, 2018.

If I am reading the following correctly I must first appeal with USAC. How do I appeal with USAC to obtain a decision?

**Michelle Owens**

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*

V: 406-541-5131

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**From:** [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org) <[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2019 8:56 AM

**To:** Michelle Owens <[mowens@blackfoot.com](mailto:mowens@blackfoot.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Disbursement Question

Hello Michelle,

Thanks for your inquiry. We did not notify carriers as there was an awareness that late filings have penalties. The details are on our website and you were aware that you were late.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org).

Warm Regards,  
Tanya

High Cost Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)

On 3/13/2019 10:08 AM, Michelle Owens wrote:

How do we know when USAC issued a decision? Our first notice was the reduced payment.

**Michelle Owens**

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*

V: 406-541-5131

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**From:** [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org) <[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2019 8:02 AM

**To:** Michelle Owens <[mowens@blackfoot.com](mailto:mowens@blackfoot.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Disbursement Question

Hello Michelle,

Thanks for reaching back out to us. To dispute you would need to file a request for waiver with the FCC. Parties that are seeking a waiver of FCC rules or that have filed an appeal with USAC and received a decision may, if they choose, appeal USAC's decision to the FCC. You must submit your appeal to the FCC within 60 days of the date when USAC issued the decision.

On all communications with the FCC, be sure to reference the Docket No. 10-90.

1. Go to <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs>. Alternatively, from <https://www.fcc.gov>, click "ECFS" in the center of the page under "Access Now".
2. A page containing a filing search will open. At the top of the page, click "Submit a Filing".
3. In the "Proceedings" field, make sure to enter 10-90.
4. When filing a waiver request, be sure to choose WAIVER from the "Type of Filing" field. If you are filing an appeal, you may choose APPEAL.
5. Complete the rest of the fields as they are relevant. There are certain fields that are not applicable, such as the "Report Number" or "Bureau ID Number."
6. Upload your written letter of appeal or request for waiver, and any other applicable documentation.

In general, your appeal or waiver request should include:

1. Your contact information and the entity name and entity number, or service provider name and SPIN of the organization you represent;
2. A label of appeal or waiver request;
3. Information regarding the USAC decision being appealed and a copy of USAC's decision, if applicable;
4. A statement setting forth the party's interest in the matter presented for review;
5. A full statement of relevant, material facts with supporting affidavits and documentation;
6. The question presented for review, with reference, where appropriate, to the relevant Commission rule, order or statutory provision; and
7. A statement of the relief sought and the relevant statutory or regulatory provision pursuant to which such relief is sought.

Electronic appeals will be considered filed on a business day if they are received at any time before 12:00 AM ET. If you have questions or comments about using the ECFS, please contact the FCC directly at (202) 418-0193 or via email at [ecfshelp@fcc.gov](mailto:ecfshelp@fcc.gov).

For the FCC's rules on appeals, you may also see Sections [54.719-](#)

54.72: [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=8f7ceac17a80d1abd798eb37023b5b75&node=pt47.3.54&rgn=div5#se47.3.54\\_1719](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=8f7ceac17a80d1abd798eb37023b5b75&node=pt47.3.54&rgn=div5#se47.3.54_1719)

Additional information on filing appeals to USAC and the FCC is found on the Appeals page of the USAC website: <http://usac.org/about/about/program-integrity/appeals.aspx>

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org).

Warm Regards,  
Tanya

High Cost Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)

On 3/13/2019 9:38 AM, Michelle Owens wrote:

Hi Tanya,

That filing issue was due to a problem with the HUBB system and permissions for the certifying officer involved. It was our first HUBB filing ever and we had been actively working with USAC to resolve the permissions issues. What steps do we need to take to dispute this reduction?

Thank you,

**Michelle Owens**

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*  
V: 406-541-5131

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---

**From:** [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org) <[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2019 7:34 AM

**To:** Michelle Owens <[mowens@blackfoot.com](mailto:mowens@blackfoot.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Disbursement Question

Hello Michelle

Michelle Owens,

Thanks for reaching out to us. The reduction in support was related to the filing last year, due 3/1/18, not the 3/1/19 data as you had included below. Both of the carriers indicated certified on 3/8/18 so they lost seven days support.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org).

Warm Regards,  
Tanya

High Cost Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)

On 3/11/2019 2:03 PM, Michelle Owens wrote:

Good morning,

Our disbursements in the attached are smaller than expected. Can you please tell us why?

SPIN 143002531 for Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. ACAM disbursement is \$766,948 when it generally runs at 990,642.

SPIN 143002515 for Fremont Telcom Co. ACAM disbursement is \$95,631 when it is generally 123,523.

We are not aware of any reason that the disbursement would have decreased and appreciate your help in understanding. Neither of the companies are in a red light status and these disbursements were before the HUBB filings. Even with that said, Blackfoot filed locations in the HUBB as follows.

- SPIN 143002531 for Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. filed pre-2017 location data before the 3/1/19 deadline in HUBB. It was unaware that it needed to file a no location certification for 2018, USAC called on 3/6/19 and advised that was required so Blackfoot addressed that omission and send a grace period request as directed by the USAC representative.
- SPIN 143002515 for Fremont Telcom Co. filed pre-2017 and 2018 location data before the 3/1/19 deadline in HUBB.

BTC HUBB Pre 2017.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:29 PM	Complete	9,877	0   0	<a href="#">Review</a>
FMT HUBB 2018.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:16 PM	Complete	173	0   0	<a href="#">Review</a>

FMT HUBB Pre 2017.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:06 PM	Complete	1,169	0   0	<a href="#">Review</a>
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## Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2016

Locations: 1159

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007892

Certified on : February, 27 2019 at 10:59:28 AM

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## Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2018  
Locations: 163  
Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007893  
Certified on : February, 27 2019 at 11:03:38 AM

The above referenced locations have been successfully certified. Please save the confirmation number above. If you have questions or concerns about this certification, referencing this number will help when you [contact us](#).

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### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2016  
Locations: 9867  
Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007894  
Certified on : February, 27 2019 at 11:07:48 AM

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### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2018

Locations: 10

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT00000000007760

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### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2016

Locations: 10

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT00000000007762

Certified on : February, 26 2019 at 04:10:59 PM

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Deployment Year: 2018

Carrier(s): BLACKFOOT TEL - BTC

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc

Confirmation No.: **NL000000000008297**

Certified on : March, 06 2019 at 01:03:51 PM

The above referenced carrier has no locations to upload. Please save the confirmation number above. If you have questions or concerns, refer you [contact us](#).

PRINT CONFIRMATION

Thank you for your assistance in determining the reason for the difference.

Michelle Owens

**Michéne Owens**

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*



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Missoula, MT 59808  
V: 406-541-5131  
F: 406-541-5144  
[www.blackfoot.com](http://www.blackfoot.com)


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### String 3

**From:** Michelle Owens mowens@blackfoot.com   
**Subject:** RE: Disbursement Question  
**Date:** March 13, 2019 at 9:55 AM  
**To:** hcquestions@usac.org

MO

Attached is an e-mail proving that we were working with USAC at the time. There were multiple calls involved in trying to resolve the issues and we had been working with USAC for over a week in an effort to resolve them.

#### Michelle Owens

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*  
V: 406-541-5131

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---

**From:** Michelle Owens  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2019 7:38 AM  
**To:** 'hcquestions@usac.org' <hcquestions@usac.org>  
**Cc:** Michelle Owens <mowens@blackfoot.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Disbursement Question

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Thank you,

#### Michelle Owens

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*  
V: 406-541-5131

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**From:** [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org) <[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2019 7:34 AM  
**To:** Michelle Owens <[mowens@blackfoot.com](mailto:mowens@blackfoot.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Disbursement Question

Subject: HCS Disbursement Question

Hello Michelle,

Thanks for reaching out to us. The reduction in support was related to the filing last year, due 3/1/18, not the 3/1/19 data as you had included below. Both of the carriers indicated certified on 3/8/18 so they lost seven days support.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org).

Warm Regards,  
Tanya

High Cost Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)

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- SPIN 143002515 for Fremont Telcom Co. field pre-2017 and 2018 location data before the 3/1/19 deadline in HUBB.

BTC HUBB Pre 2017.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:29 PM	Complete	9,877	0   0	<a href="#">Review</a>
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FMT HUBB Pre 2017.csv

Feb 22, 2019 2:34:06 PM

Complete

1,169

0 | 0

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## Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2016

Locations: 1159

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007892

Certified on : February, 27 2019 at 10:59:28 AM

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## Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2018

Locations: 163

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007893

Certified on : February, 27 2019 at 11:03:38 AM

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## Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2016

Locations: 9867

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007894

Certified on : February, 27 2019 at 11:07:48 AM

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### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2018

Locations: 10

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT00000000007760

Certified on : February, 26 2019 at 04:09:27 PM

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### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2018

Locations: 10

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT00000000007762

Certified on : February, 26 2019 at 04:10:59 PM

The above referenced locations have been successfully certified. Please save the confirmation number above. If you have questions or concerns about this certification, referencing this number will help when you [contact us](#).

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Milestone Certification and

## No Locations to Upload Confirmation

Deployment Year: 2018

Carrier(s): BLACKFOOT TEL - BTC

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc

Confirmation No.: **NL000000000008297**

Certified on : March, 06 2019 at 01:03:51 PM

The above referenced carrier has no locations to upload. Please save the confirmation number above. If you have questions or concerns, refer to [contact us](#).

PRINT CONFIRMATION

Thank you for your assistance in determining the reason for the difference.



## Michelle Owens

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*



Blackfoot  
1221 North Russell Street  
Missoula, MT 59808  
V: 406-541-5131  
F: 406-541-5144  
[www.blackfoot.com](http://www.blackfoot.com)

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Proof of  
Certific....18.pdf



Mail Attachment



## String 4

**From:** Michelle Owens mowens@blackfoot.com   
**Subject:** RE: Disbursement Question  
**Date:** March 13, 2019 at 12:01 PM  
**To:** hcquestions@usac.org

MO

Hi Tanya,

We were not aware we were late as indicated in our March 7<sup>th</sup> e-mail we believe the filing was complete and certified on February 16, 2018. Until March 7, 2018 we were not aware that there was an entitlements issue or HUBB issue that resulted in the certification failing. USAC Staff had to intervene to resolve the issue so we could certify on March 8, 2018.

If I am reading the following correctly I must first appeal with USAC. How do I appeal with USAC to obtain a decision?

### Michelle Owens

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*  
V: 406-541-5131

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---

**From:** hcquestions@usac.org <hcquestions@usac.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2019 8:56 AM  
**To:** Michelle Owens <mowens@blackfoot.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Disbursement Question

Hello Michelle,

Thanks for your inquiry. We did not notify carriers as there was an awareness that late filings have penalties. The details are on our website and you were aware that you were late.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org).

Warm Regards,  
Tanya

High Cost Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)

On 3/13/2019 10:00 AM, Michelle Owens wrote:

On 3/13/2019 10:08 AM, Michelle Owens wrote:

How do we know when USAC issued a decision? Our first notice was the reduced payment.

**Michelle Owens**

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*

V: 406-541-5131

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---

**From:** [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org) <[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2019 8:02 AM

**To:** Michelle Owens <[mowens@blackfoot.com](mailto:mowens@blackfoot.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Disbursement Question

Hello Michelle,

Thanks for reaching back out to us. To dispute you would need to file a request for waiver with the FCC. Parties that are seeking a waiver of FCC rules or that have filed an appeal with USAC and received a decision may, if they choose, appeal USAC's decision to the FCC. You must submit your appeal to the FCC within 60 days of the date when USAC issued the decision.

On all communications with the FCC, be sure to reference the Docket No. 10-90.

1. Go to <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs>. Alternatively, from <https://www.fcc.gov>, click "ECFS" in the center of the page under "Access Now".
2. A page containing a filing search will open. At the top of the page, click "Submit a Filing".
3. In the "Proceedings" field, make sure to enter 10-90.
4. When filing a waiver request, be sure to choose WAIVER from the "Type of Filing" field. If you are filing an appeal, you may choose APPEAL.
5. Complete the rest of the fields as they are relevant. There are certain fields that are not applicable, such as the "Report Number" or "Bureau ID Number."
6. Upload your written letter of appeal or request for waiver, and any other applicable documentation.

In general, your appeal or waiver request should include:

1. Your contact information and the entity name and entity number, or service provider name and SPIN of the organization you represent;
2. A label of appeal or waiver request;
3. Information regarding the USAC decision being appealed and a copy of USAC's decision, if applicable.

decision, if applicable,

4. A statement setting forth the party's interest in the matter presented for review;
5. A full statement of relevant, material facts with supporting affidavits and documentation;
6. The question presented for review, with reference, where appropriate, to the relevant Commission rule, order or statutory provision; and
7. A statement of the relief sought and the relevant statutory or regulatory provision pursuant to which such relief is sought.

Electronic appeals will be considered filed on a business day if they are received at any time before 12:00 AM ET. If you have questions or comments about using the ECFS, please contact the FCC directly at (202) 418-0193 or via email at [ecfshelp@fcc.gov](mailto:ecfshelp@fcc.gov).

For the FCC's rules on appeals, you may also see Sections 54.719-54.72: [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=8f7ceac17a80d1abd798eb37023b5b75&node=pt47.3.54&rgn=div5#se47.3.54\\_1719](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=8f7ceac17a80d1abd798eb37023b5b75&node=pt47.3.54&rgn=div5#se47.3.54_1719)

Additional information on filing appeals to USAC and the FCC is found on the Appealspage of the USAC website: <http://usac.org/about/about/program-integrity/appeals.aspx>

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org).

Warm Regards,  
Tanya

High Cost Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)

On 3/13/2019 9:38 AM, Michelle Owens wrote:

Hi Tanya,

That filing issue was due to a problem with the HUBB system and permissions for the certifying officer involved. It was our first HUBB filing ever and we had been actively working with USAC to resolve the permissions issues. What steps do we need to take to dispute this reduction?

Thank you,

**Michelle Owens**

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*  
V: 406-541-5131

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---

**From:** [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org) <[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 13, 2019 7:34 AM

**To:** Michelle Owens <[mowens@blackfoot.com](mailto:mowens@blackfoot.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Disbursement Question

Hello Michelle,

Thanks for reaching out to us. The reduction in support was related to the filing last year, due 3/1/18, not the 3/1/19 data as you had included below. Both of the carriers indicated certified on 3/8/18 so they lost seven days support.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org).

Warm Regards,  
Tanya

High Cost Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)

On 3/11/2019 2:03 PM, Michelle Owens wrote:

Good morning,

Our disbursements in the attached are smaller than expected. Can you please tell us why?

SPIN 143002531 for Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. ACAM disbursement is \$766,948 when it generally runs at 990,642.

SPIN 143002515 for Fremont Telcom Co. ACAM disbursement is \$95,631 when it is generally 123,523.

We are not aware of any reason that the disbursement would have decreased and appreciate your help in understanding. Neither of the companies are in a red light status and these disbursements were before the HUBB filings. Even with that said, Blackfoot filed locations in the HUBB as follows.

- SPIN 143002531 for Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. filed pre-2017

location data before the 3/1/19 deadline in HUBB. It was unaware that it needed to file a no location certification for 2018, USAC called on 3/6/19 and advised that was required so Blackfoot addressed that omission and send a grace period request as directed by the USAC representative.

- SPIN 143002515 for Fremont Telcom Co. field pre-2017 and 2018 location data before the 3/1/19 deadline in HUBB.

BTC HUBB Pre 2017.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:29 PM	Complete	9,877	0   0	<a href="#">Review</a>
FMT HUBB 2018.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:16 PM	Complete	173	0   0	<a href="#">Review</a>
FMT HUBB Pre 2017.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:06 PM	Complete	1,169	0   0	<a href="#">Review</a>



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## Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2016

Locations: 1159

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007892

Certified on : February, 27 2019 at 10:59:28 AM

The above referenced locations have been successfully certified. Please save the confirmation number above. If you have questions or concerns about this certification, referencing this number will help when you [contact us](#).

[Print Confirmation](#)



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### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2018

Locations: 163

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007893

Certified on : February, 27 2019 at 11:03:38 AM

The above referenced locations have been successfully certified. Please save the confirmation number above. If you have questions or concerns about this certification, referencing this number will help when you [contact us](#).

[Print Confirmation](#)



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### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2016

Locations: 9867

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007894

Certified on : February, 27 2019 at 11:07:48 AM

The above referenced locations have been successfully certified. Please save the confirmation number above. If you have questions or concerns about this certification, referencing this number will help when you [contact us](#).

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#### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2018

Locations: 10

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT00000000007760

Certified on : February, 26 2019 at 04:09:27 PM

The above referenced locations have been successfully certified. Please save the confirmation number above. If you have questions or concerns about this certification, referencing this number will help when you [contact us](#).

[Print Confirmation](#)



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### Locations Certified

Deployment Year: 2016

Locations: 10

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Confirmation No.: CERT000000000007762

Certified on : February, 26 2019 at 04:10:59 PM

The above referenced locations have been successfully certified. Please save the confirmation number above. If you have questions or concerns about this certification, referencing this number will help when you contact us.

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**Universal Service  
Administrative Co.**

ID: Dave Martin [dmartin@blackfoot.com](mailto:dmartin@blackfoot.com)



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### No Locations to Upload Confirmation

Deployment Year: 2018

Carrier(s): BLACKFOOT TEL - BTC

Holding Company Name: Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc

Confirmation No.: NL000000000008297

Certified on : March 06 2019 at 01:03:51 PM

Confirmed on: March, 06 2019 at 01:00:01 PM

The above referenced carrier has no locations to upload. Please save the confirmation number above. If you have questions or concerns, refer to you [contact us](#).

PRINT CONFIRMATION

Thank you for your assistance in determining the reason for the difference.

**Michelle Owens**

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*



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## String 5

H

**From:** hcquestions@usac.org   
**Subject:** Re: FW: HUBB Filing for SACs 473333, 482235 and 483308  
**Date:** March 13, 2019 at 11:37 AM  
**To:** Michelle Owens mowens@blackfoot.com

---

Hello Michelle,

Thank you for reaching out to us again. You reached out to us on March 7. If you had contacted us prior to the deadline, we could have fixed the issues that you were having. In addition, March 7 was the day after the grace period ended and our staff had been contacting your carrier numerous times, both before and after the deadline to advise that your carrier was not certified.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact us at [hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org).

Warm Regards,  
Tanya

High Cost Support Team  
High Cost Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company  
[hcquestions@usac.org](mailto:hcquestions@usac.org)

On 3/13/2019 10:10 AM, Michelle Owens wrote:

Hi Tanya,

This is the file that you indicate was too large. I am forwarding the original e-mail. As you will see below we were actively working with USAC to resolve issues with the HUBB system and the certifying officer's ability to certify. The issue was resolved by USAC on 3/8/18.

### Michelle Owens

*Regulatory Specialist/Paralegal*  
V: 406-541-5131

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**From:** HCquestions <[HCquestions@usac.org](mailto:HCquestions@usac.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 08, 2018 1:05 PM  
**To:** Michelle Owens <[mowens@blackfoot.com](mailto:mowens@blackfoot.com)>  
**Cc:** Aaron Neilson <[ANeilson@blackfoot.com](mailto:ANeilson@blackfoot.com)>; Jason Williams <[JWilliams@blackfoot.com](mailto:JWilliams@blackfoot.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: HUBB Filing for SACs 473333, 482235 and 483308

We updated Aaron's entitlements so he should be able to certify now. Let me know if you still have problems. Thanks for your patience, Elizabeth

---

**From:** Michelle Owens [<mailto:mowens@blackfoot.com>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 08, 2018 9:50 AM  
**To:** HCquestions <[HCquestions@usac.org](mailto:HCquestions@usac.org)>  
**Cc:** Aaron Neilson <[ANeilson@blackfoot.com](mailto:ANeilson@blackfoot.com)>; Jason Williams <[JWilliams@blackfoot.com](mailto:JWilliams@blackfoot.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: HUBB Filing for SACs 473333, 482235 and 483308

Good morning,

This e-mail is a follow up to yesterday's e-mail. Is there a phone number I can call to speak with someone so we can get this issue resolved quickly?

Thank you,

**Michelle Owens**  
*Regulatory Specialist*  
V: 406-541-5131

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---

**From:** Michelle Owens  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 07, 2018 8:41 AM  
**To:** 'HCquestions' <[HCquestions@usac.org](mailto:HCquestions@usac.org)>  
**Cc:** Michelle Owens <[mowens@blackfoot.com](mailto:mowens@blackfoot.com)>; Aaron Neilson <[ANeilson@blackfoot.com](mailto:ANeilson@blackfoot.com)>; Jason Williams <[jwilliams@blackfoot.com](mailto:jwilliams@blackfoot.com)>  
**Subject:** HUBB Filing for SACs 473333, 482235 and 483308

Good morning,

We thought we completed our HUBB filing to include the certification on February 16, 2018. I received a message, while I was out of the office on Monday, that we missed our filing date. Today I logged in and confirmed that the filing shows locations ready for certification but no longer shows them as certified.

MILESTONE CERTIFICATION & DEBOTTING

## MILESTONE CERTIFICATION & REPORTING

ACAM

MT

482235

Build-out requirement (unit): 14340

Deployment Year	Ready For Certification		Certified		% Certified Units	Milestone Obligation %	Milestone On Target?	Certified By	Certified On
	Locations	Units	Locations	Units					
2016	0	0	0	0	-		-	-	-
2017	<a href="#">199</a>	202	0	0	-		-	-	-

## MILESTONE CERTIFICATION & REPORTING

ACAM

ID

473333

Build-out requirement (unit): 2248

Deployment Year	Ready For Certification		Certified		% Certified Units	Milestone Obligation %	Milestone On Target?	Certified By	Certified On
	Locations	Units	Locations	Units					
2016	0	0	0	0	-		-	-	-
2017	<a href="#">276</a>	276	0	0	-		-	-	-

Aaron Neilson is our Vice President – General Counsel and is responsible for the HUBB certification. We have been running into some issues with his log in permissions on the USAC e-file systems. He was able to successfully get into the HUBB on February 16, 2018, and we thought the certifications were completed at that time. After speaking with Jane at USAC this morning, I had him attempt to get into HUBB and HUBB is no longer showing as an option, see the attached screenshot.

As a side note I did reach out and spoke with Sam Clark on February 16 about some other e-file issues specific to NLAD and the claims system. I believe he said Christian was the person to assist with those issues. I left a message for him but did not get a call back. I do not know if this HUBB issue is related or not, but wanted to mention that there was other work needed that could be related.

Can you please check his permissions to make sure he has access to both HUBB and 481 to certify as an officer? Please let me know what we need to do to make sure those filings are recognized as timely certified.

Thank you,

**Michelle Owens**  
Regulatory Specialist





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---

**From:** Michelle Owens  
**Sent:** Friday, January 26, 2018 11:03 AM  
**To:** Jason Williams  
**Cc:** Aaron Neilson  
**Subject:** USAC - Add Aaron as Company Officer

**Importance:** High

Hi Jason,

I have two (BTC and FMT) 498 forms pending your approval in the USAC system. The updates to those forms replace **Marlys with Aaron for Lifeline**. I will be taking over the monthly and annual filings from Carol A. and Aaron will begin handling the officer certifications.

In addition to that change I need you to add Aaron to the system as an officer. (That is something that only you can do.) Here is a how to video: <http://www.usac.org/cont/about/outreach/videos/how-to-add-remove-498-user-as-company-officer.aspx> but for ease I have also typed out a "how to" for you below, to include entries so you can copy/paste:

- Log into USAC e-file: <http://www.usac.org/about/tools/e-file.aspx>
  - Once you have logged in look at the left-hand column for "Authorize Users".
    - Click on "Add or Remove 498 Users".
  - Click on the blue "Add User Account" button located in the top middle of the screen.
  - Enter Aaron's e-mail address: [aneilson@blackfoot.com](mailto:aneilson@blackfoot.com)
    - Press submit.
    - A window will come up indicating that his e-mail address was not found, click continue.
  - In the new screen enter the following:
    - First Name: Aaron
    - MI: M
    - Last name: Neilson
    - Position: VP – GC (For some reason USAC really limits the number of characters in some of their fields. That is the most I was able to enter into the 498.)
    - Phone: 406-541-5556
    - Click the box to confirm.
    - Click on each of the 498 IDs located under "All Form 498 IDs" and then click the right arrow to move them to the "Selected Form 498 IDs". (There should be three of them.)
    - Click Submit.



- A confirmation page will come up. At this point e-mails will be generated to Aaron to finish his account set up and your portion is done. 😊

This should enable him to address Lifeline and 481 certifications. I don't know if you want him in the system as a backup for 499 certifications in case Stacey is not available. If you do, you will want to go to the Add or Remove 499 Users link to add Aaron there as well.

Thank you!

**Michelle Owens**  
*Regulatory Specialist*



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## Exhibit A4 HUBB Screenshot of A-CAM Broadband Locations

File Name	Uploaded	Progress	Records Uploaded	Data Errors & Warnings	Review Data
BTC HUBB Pre 2017.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:29 PM	Complete	9,877	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
FMT HUBB 2018.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:16 PM	Complete	173	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
FMT HUBB Pre 2017.csv	Feb 22, 2019 2:34:06 PM	Complete	1,169	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
Bond sht 1 of 1.csv	Feb 13, 2018 4:13:41 PM	Complete	13	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
HUBB ACAM Centennial sht 6.csv	Feb 9, 2018 9:39:17 AM	Complete	29	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
HUBB ACAM Centennial sht 5.csv	Feb 7, 2018 5:42:34 PM	Complete	24	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
HUBB ACAM Centennial sht 4.csv	Feb 6, 2018 3:55:35 PM	Complete	10	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
HUBB ACAM Centennial sht 1.csv	Feb 6, 2018 3:55:24 PM	Complete	34	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
HUBB ACAM Centennial sht 3.csv	Feb 6, 2018 3:11:37 PM	Complete	35	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
HUBB ACAM Centennial sht 2.csv	Feb 6, 2018 3:11:22 PM	Complete	35	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
HUBB ACAM Goose Bay sheet 2.csv	Feb 6, 2018 10:11:31 AM	Complete	36	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
HUBB ACAM Goose Bay sheet 3.csv	Feb 6, 2018 9:58:00 AM	Complete	24	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
HUBB ACAM Goose Bay sheet 1.csv	Feb 6, 2018 9:57:35 AM	Complete	36	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>
HC-BroadbandLocation_Final.csv	Feb 5, 2018 1:56:16 PM	Complete	199	0   0	<a href="#">Review Data</a>

**From:** Michelle Owens  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 15, 2018 3:25 PM  
**To:** Aaron Neilson  
**Cc:** Michelle Owens  
**Subject:** Check In Materials - 2/16/18

Hi Aaron,

The following items are my focus for the next two weeks:

- Compliance
  - Red Flag Report – Due 3/1/18
  - FCC Form 477 – Due 3/1/18 – In progress
  - HUBB Filing – Due 3/1/18 – Ready for certification
  - Section 64.2009 CPNI Compliance Certification – Due 3/1/18 – In progress
  - CALEA Manual – If needed annual review – Due 3/12/18
  - Section 255 Disability Accessibility Recordkeeping Certification – Due 3/15/18
  - FCC Form 499A – Due 4/1/18 – Pending Audited Financials
- Lifeline
  - Transition in progress from RA.
  - Address E-file issues.
  - Speak with USAC regarding officer and user roles and 498 filing.
  - Pull together back office query to work on the next 497 filing.
- Tariff 4 Access
- Idaho Contacts Updated
- 2018 Filing set up
- MPSC ETC NOI Hearing – FCC Deployment Report
- FUSC GCID Audit
- Lifeline Memo review – In progress
- Certification Project – In progress
- Transparency Requirements – In progress

Internship – I am going to start designating Saturdays to work on this. During our Friday check-ins you I will bring rules with me so we can talk about the memo approach you would like to see used. We will start with ACAM on Friday 2/23/18. Once one is done I will move on to the next if that works for you.

- ACAM
- CPNI (I don't think this counts since you wrote the memo! 😊)
- Red Flag
- Schools & Libraries – Self-build focus
- Rural Health
- Lifeline
- TSP
- Disability Access
- Robocall
- Do Not Call

**Michelle Owens**

*Regulatory Specialist*



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