

LB 994 (excerpts) <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/105/PDF/Final/LB994.pdf>

Section 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

(1) The availability, quality, and affordability of broadband telecommunications service is important to the residents of Nebraska; and

(2) Because availability, quality, and affordability of broadband telecommunications service is lacking in certain rural areas in Nebraska, combined with greater investment in urban areas, the state may be facing a digital divide.

It is the intent of the Legislature that broadband telecommunications service in rural areas of the state should be comparable in download and upload speed and price to urban areas in the state where possible and that state resources should be utilized to ensure that the rural residents of the state should not be penalized simply because of their rural residence.

It is further the intent of the Legislature that the residents of this state should have access to broadband telecommunications service at a minimum download speed of twenty-five (25) megabits per second and a minimum upload speed of three (3) megabits per second.

Sec. 2. (1) The Rural Broadband Task Force is hereby created. Task force members shall include:

1. the chairperson of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee of the Legislature,
2. a member of the Legislature selected by the Executive Board of the Legislative Council who shall both serve as nonvoting, ex officio members,
3. a member of the Public Service Commission who shall be selected by the chairperson of such commission,
4. the chairperson of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission or his or her designee, who shall act as chairperson of the task force,
5. the Director of Economic Development or his or her designee,
6. the Director of Agriculture or his or her designee,

The following members to be appointed by the Governor:

7. A representative of the agribusiness community,
8. a representative of the Nebraska business community,
9. a representative of the regulated wireline telecommunications industry,
10. a representative of the wireless telecommunications industry,
11. a representative of the public power industry,
12. a representative of health care providers,
13. a representative of Nebraska postsecondary educational institutions, and
14. **a representative of rural schools offering kindergarten through grade twelve.**

Sec. 2. (4) Task force members shall serve on the task force without compensation but shall be entitled to receive reimbursement for any actual expenses incurred for such service as provided in sections 81-1174 to 81-1177.

<**Application for Governor's Executive Appointment:** <https://governor.nebraska.gov/board-comm-req>>

Sec. 2. (2) The task force may appoint advisory groups to assist the task force in providing technical expertise and advice on any issue. The advisory groups may be composed of representatives of stakeholder groups which may include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- representatives from small and large wireline companies,
- wireless companies,
- public power districts,
- electric cooperative corporations,
- cable television companies,
- Internet service providers,
- low-income telecommunications and electric utility customers,
- health care providers,
- representatives of educational sectors.

No compensation or expense reimbursement shall be provided to any member of any advisory group appointed by the task force.

Sec. 2 (3) In particular, the task force shall:

- (a) Determine how Nebraska rural areas compare to neighboring states and the rest of the nation in average download and upload speeds and in subscription rates to higher speed tiers, when available;
- (b) Examine the role of the Nebraska Telecommunications Universal Service Fund in bringing comparable and affordable broadband services to rural residents and any effect of the fund in deterring or delaying capital formation, broadband competition, and broadband deployment;
- (c) Review the feasibility of alternative technologies and providers in accelerating access to faster and more reliable broadband service for rural residents;
- (d) Examine alternatives for deployment of broadband services to areas that remain unserved or underserved, such as reverse auction programs described in section 4 of this act, public-private partnerships, funding for competitive deployment, and other measures, and make recommendations to the Public Service Commission to encourage deployment in such areas;
- (e) Recommend state policies to effectively utilize state universal service fund dollars to leverage federal universal service fund support and other federal funding;
- (f) Make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature as to the most effective and efficient ways that federal broadband rural infrastructure funds received after the operative date of this section should be expended if such funds become available; and
- (g) Determine other issues that may be pertinent to the purpose of the task force.