



# PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

News Media Information 202 / 418-0500  
Internet: <http://www.fcc.gov>  
TTY: 1-888-835-5322

DA 12-236  
February 16, 2012

## MOBILITY FUND PHASE I AUCTION LIMITED EXTENSION OF DEADLINES FOR COMMENTS AND REPLY COMMENTS ON CENSUS BLOCK ELIGIBILITY CHALLENGES

AU Docket No. 12-25

**Comment Deadline: February 24, 2012**  
**Reply Comment Deadline: March 9, 2012**

**Extended Comment Deadline for Census Block Eligibility Challenges: March 16, 2012**  
**Extended Reply Comment Deadline for Census Block Eligibility Challenges: March 26, 2012**

1. By this Public Notice, the Wireless Telecommunications and Wireline Competition Bureaus (the Bureaus) extend the deadline for filing comments and reply comments on census block eligibility challenges in the above-captioned proceeding. Interested parties should file comments challenging the Bureaus' determinations with respect to the potential eligibility of specific census blocks for Mobility Fund Phase I support by March 16, 2012. Reply comments on such challenges should be filed no later than March 26, 2012. With respect to all other issues in this proceeding, the comment and reply comment deadlines are unchanged and respectively remain February 24, 2012, and March 9, 2012.

2. On February 2, 2012, the Bureaus released the *Auction 901 Comment Public Notice*, which seeks comment on auction procedures and certain related program requirements for Auction 901, a reverse auction to award \$300 million in one-time Mobility Fund Phase I support, scheduled for September 27, 2012.<sup>1</sup> Auction 901 will award Mobility Fund Phase I support to carriers that commit to

---

<sup>1</sup> "Mobility Fund Phase I Auction Scheduled for September 27, 2012; Comment Sought on Competitive Bidding Procedures for Auction 901 and Certain Program Requirements," *Public Notice*, AU Docket No. 12-25, DA 12-121, paras. 15-17, 19, rel. Feb. 2, 2012 (*Auction 901 Comment Public Notice*). A summary of the *Auction 901 Comment Public Notice* was published in the Federal Register at 77 Fed. Reg. 7152 (Feb. 10, 2012). See also *Connect America Fund, A National Broadband Plan for Our Future, Establishing Just and Reasonable Rates for Local Exchange Carriers, High-Cost Universal Service Support, Developing an Unified Intercarrier Compensation Regime, Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, Lifeline and Link-Up, Universal Service Reform – Mobility Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90, GN Docket No. 09-51, WC Docket No. 07-135, WC Docket No. 05-337, CC Docket No. 01-92, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket No. 03-109, WT Docket No. 10-208, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 11-161, rel. Nov. 18, 2011 (*USF/ICC Transformation Order*), *pets. for review pending*.

provide 3G or better mobile voice and broadband services in census blocks where such services are unavailable.<sup>2</sup>

3. As required by the Commission in the *USF/ICC Transformation Order*, we announced in the *Auction 901 Comment Public Notice* that we would use the most recent available American Roamer data, from January 2012, to determine the availability of 3G or better service at the centroid of individual census blocks.<sup>3</sup> We also described the methodology for identifying potentially eligible blocks.<sup>4</sup> Because we had not concluded our analysis of the January 2012 American Roamer data, we provided a preliminary list of such blocks based on our analysis of October 2011 American Roamer data, in electronic format as Attachment A files, as well as certain summary information (based on the same data) in Attachments A and B released with the *Auction 901 Comment Public Notice*.<sup>5</sup> On February 10, 2012, the Bureaus released the updated list of census blocks potentially eligible for Mobility Fund Phase I support, based on January 2012 American Roamer data.<sup>6</sup> The *Auction 901 Comment Public Notice* asked commenters to identify any census blocks that should be added or subtracted from the updated list of potentially eligible census blocks and provide supporting evidence for their assertions.<sup>7</sup> The *Auction 901 Comment Public Notice* stated that the Bureaus would consider such challenges only in the form of comments to that Public Notice.<sup>8</sup>

4. On February 13, 2012, the Rural Telecommunications Group (“RTG”) filed a Motion for Extension of Time,<sup>9</sup> and the Blooston Rural Carriers (“Blooston”) filed a separate Motion for Extension of Time and Separate Comment Cycle.<sup>10</sup> RTG and Blooston both assert that additional time is necessary for consideration of and comment upon the use of American Roamer data to identify eligible unserved census blocks in Auction 901. Specifically, RTG requests an extension of 21 days for the deadline for comments in this proceeding because it “questions the accuracy and reliability of the American Roamer data used” in the Bureaus’ preparation of the list of potentially eligible census blocks and contends that it

---

<sup>2</sup> We refer to “awarding” or “selecting awardees” by auction for simplicity of expression. As provided by the Commission’s rules, *see* 47 C.F.R. §§ 54.1005(b) and 54.1008(a), each party that becomes a winning bidder in the auction must file an application for support. Only after review of the application to confirm compliance with all the applicable requirements will a winning bidder become authorized to receive support. *Auction 901 Comment Public Notice* at n.2.

<sup>3</sup> *USF/ICC Transformation Order* at paras. 332, 334; *Auction 901 Comment Public Notice* at para. 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Auction 901 Comment Public Notice* at para. 16 and n.20. The term “centroid” refers to the internal point of each census block as defined and provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. Files containing internal points are available from <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/tiger/tgrshp2010/tgrshp2010.html>, and the format of these files is described in [Appendix A - Complete Record Layout](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/tiger/tgrshp2010/documentation.html) at <http://www.census.gov/geo/www/tiger/tgrshp2010/documentation.html>. For additional information about internal points, see *Putting It Together: Data, Geography, and Application*, [http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/library/doc/PuttingItTogether\\_20100817.pdf](http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/library/doc/PuttingItTogether_20100817.pdf), and [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/2010census/gtc/gtc\\_area\\_attr.html](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/2010census/gtc/gtc_area_attr.html). All sites were visited February 16, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at para. 18.

<sup>6</sup> “Mobility Fund Phase I Auction Updated List of Potentially Eligible Census Blocks,” *Public Notice*, AU Docket No. 12-25, DA 12-187, rel. Feb. 10, 2012 (*Updated Potentially Eligible Census Blocks Public Notice*). The *Updated Potentially Eligible Census Blocks Public Notice* also contains updated attachments consistent with the revised list of potentially eligible census blocks.

<sup>7</sup> *Auction 901 Comment Public Notice* at para. 19.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* See also *USF/ICC Transformation Order* at para. 342.

<sup>9</sup> Rural Telecommunications Group, Inc., Motion for Extension of Time, filed February 13, 2012 (“RTG Motion”).

<sup>10</sup> Blooston Rural Carriers, Motion for Extension of Time and Separate Comment Cycle, filed February 13, 2012 (“Blooston Motion”).

needs additional time “to fully investigate the data and tools released by the Commission.”<sup>11</sup> Blooston requests that the Commission establish a separate comment cycle for comments challenging the American Roamer data used by the Bureaus to identify census blocks as potentially eligible for Mobility Fund Phase I, with initial comments due at least 30 days later than the current deadline.<sup>12</sup>

5. The Commission’s general policy is that extensions of time are not routinely granted.<sup>13</sup> However, the Commission will consider and, in certain limited circumstances, grant requests for extensions of time where we find that the public interest would best be served by a more complete discussion of the pending matters. Given the issues involved in identifying potentially eligible census blocks, from among the more than 11 million census blocks covering the United States and the Territories, based on the availability of 3G or better mobile services, and in light of our recent release of an updated list of potentially eligible blocks based on January 2012 American Roamer data, we believe it serves the public interest for the Commission to allow additional time to develop a comprehensive public record on these issues. Moreover, we do not believe that the grant of limited additional time for the consideration of census block eligibility challenges will prejudice any interested party. We therefore grant RTG’s and Blooston’s requests in part and deny them in part. In particular, the Bureaus extend to March 16, 2012, the deadline for filing comments challenging the Bureaus’ determinations regarding the potential eligibility of particular census blocks for Mobility Fund Phase I funding. Reply comments on census block eligibility challenges are due no later than March 26, 2012.

6. The deadlines for the submission of comments on all issues raised in the *Auction 901 Comment Public Notice* except census block eligibility matters remain unchanged, with comments due on February 24, 2012, and reply comments due on March 9, 2012.

7. For additional information about Auction 901, including an overview of requirements to participate in the auction and proposals for auction procedures, you should consult the *Auction 901 Comment Public Notice*. That public notice and additional information about Auction 901 may be found at <http://wireless.fcc.gov/auctions/901/>.

8. For further information regarding this proceeding and auction process questions, contact Lisa Stover, Auctions and Spectrum Access Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, at (717) 338-2868. For further information on Mobility Fund Phase I questions, contact Sayuri Rajapakse, Auctions and Spectrum Access Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, at (202) 418-0660.

- FCC -

---

<sup>11</sup> RTG Motion at 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> Blooston Motion at 1.

<sup>13</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 1.46(a).