

## **Public Notice Submission**

**Provider Name:** CenturyTel, Inc. dba CenturyLink

### **Summary:**

The proposed service areas are not wholly underserved or unserved. CenturyLink is submitting data that shows that many of the BTOP applicants' proposed service areas as represented by the list of Census Tracts are not underserved or unserved. One or more existing service providers in these service areas -- including, for example, cable, CLEC wireline, and fixed wireless -- currently advertise broadband services with a range of speeds and at competitive prices. Accordingly, the applications should be denied. With limited funding and a large pool of applications, program grants and loans must be directed only to those areas prioritized as underserved or unserved. CenturyLink has provided data showing broadband availability, price tiers and the highest advertised speeds in our local telephone exchanges within the proposed Census tracts. We will provide additional information on request if that will further assist the agency's review. This data is not exhaustive; the proposed Census Tracts or Block Groups may also include other service providers that currently serve these areas and are also committed to offer new or upgraded broadband service to its existing customers and to community anchor institutions that provide for the safety, education and economic empowerment of residents. This should be considered in the assessment of the applications. Our data combined with that of other broadband providers would likely show further duplication and overlap of broadband services in the proposed service areas, which raises concerns both about eligibility and about the viability, benefit, and suitability of the applicant's project. CenturyLink has committed to upgrade and extend broadband. CenturyLink has an extensive broadband footprint today, and has committed to extend that service even further. As part of its commitments to the Federal Communications Commission in the CenturyTel/Embarq merger, CenturyLink made numerous, significant broadband commitments throughout its entire national footprint. Nationwide, our average tele-density is 23 customers per square mile. This commitment ensures availability of broadband even to very rural consumers. CenturyLink has proven, industry-leading experience in deploying broadband networks and services using both wireline and wireless technology, and a strong commitment and focus on rural areas. Today, the company serves over 7 million access lines, including more than 5 million broadband capable lines, while meeting the needs of 2.1 million broadband customers in 33 states.