

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Office of the Governor Division of Administration Office of Broadband Development and Connectivity

Granting Unserved Municipalities Broadband Opportunities (GUMBO) (LAC 4:XXI.Chapters 1-7)

In accordance with the emergency provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, R.S. 49:962 et seq., and pursuant to the authority set forth in R.S. 51:2370-2370.16, the executive director of the Office of Broadband Connectivity (ConnectLA) declares an emergency to exist and adopts by emergency process the amendment outlined below relative to the administration of the Granting Unserved Municipalities Broadband Opportunities (GUMBO) grant program.

ConnectLA has made considerable progress toward the GUMBO program objective of funding eligible broadband infrastructure projects. These projects will deploy broadband internet service to unserved and underserved areas, improving Louisiana residents' health, educational opportunities and economic competitiveness in the digital world.

Currently, the final disbursement of funds to some broadband services providers is being delayed or denied until ConnectLA identifies locations within approved project areas that are ineligible to receive funding, because they were not or could not have been reasonably identified when applications for the GUMBO program were accepted.

The Emergency Rule authorizes ConnectLA to grant or deny the removal of locations from the approved project area included in a grant recipient's application if those locations are later determined to be ineligible for the GUMBO grant program and determine whether the amount of the grant is to be modified.

Failure to address this issue could result in significant undue financial strain on broadband services providers which could jeopardize their ability to provide broadband services to residents. Failure to connect the unconnected would prolong the substantial risk of hardship currently faced by hundreds of thousands of residents throughout the state. As demonstrated, this situation constitutes and creates an imminent peril to the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Louisiana, thereby making this Emergency Rule necessary. As such, the department promulgated an Emergency Rule which increased our Office's ability to reimburse subgrantees faster (*Louisiana Register*, Volume 51, Number 3).

Effective August 11, 2025, this Emergency Rule is being promulgated to continue the provisions of the February 12, 2025, Emergency Rule and shall be in effect for the maximum period allowed under by the Administrative Procedure Act, unless renewed by the executive director of ConnectLA or until permanent rules are promulgated in accordance with law.

Title 4

ADMINISTRATION

Part XXI. Granting Unserved Municipalities Broadband Opportunities (GUMBO)

Chapter 7. Compliance

§705. Disbursement and Reimbursement

A-D. ...

E. The office may allow a grant recipient to request the removal of locations from the approved project area included in its application if those locations are later determined to be ineligible for the GUMBO grant program. The office may at its discretion approve or deny the removal of the requested locations and determine whether the amount of the grant needs to be modified.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 51:2370-2370.16

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Office of the Governor, Division of Administration, Office of Broadband Development and Connectivity, LR 48:1515 (June 2022), LR 51:

Veneeth Iyengar,
Executive Director

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