



August 10, 2020

Dear Mayors, County Judges and ISPs:

The purpose of this letter is to let Mayors and County Judges know that it is permissible to negotiate with ISPs as to the rate of broadband services for their communities prior to the submission of an ARC application. However, the AEDC Broadband Office will have no enforcement authority over such agreements, but fully encourage them.

We also encourage ISP's, that are currently serving an area under 25Mbps/3Mbps, to apply for a grant to upgrade their technology to 25Mbps/3Mbps. According to ARC rules, an area is deemed underserved if the residents receive broadband below 25Mbps/3Mbps. ISPs can apply for these ARC funds as a new deployment. The community must qualify under the ARC rules to apply. However, the deployment of 25Mbps/3Mbps to that underserved area must be completed by December 30, 2020.

Finally, and as stated in my last letter, make sure that ANY application submitted to ARC includes equipment prices. And please note, any project that is smaller or greater than the community boundaries must include a KMZ or shapefile map of your project footprint. Time is short so please take advantage of the CARES Act funding and connect rural Arkansas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "S. Porch", written over a blue circular line.

Steven Porch
Chief Legal Counsel and
Executive Broadband Manager for ARC Broadband Program
Arkansas Department of Commerce