

Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) Rulemaking Overview

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March 19, 2025



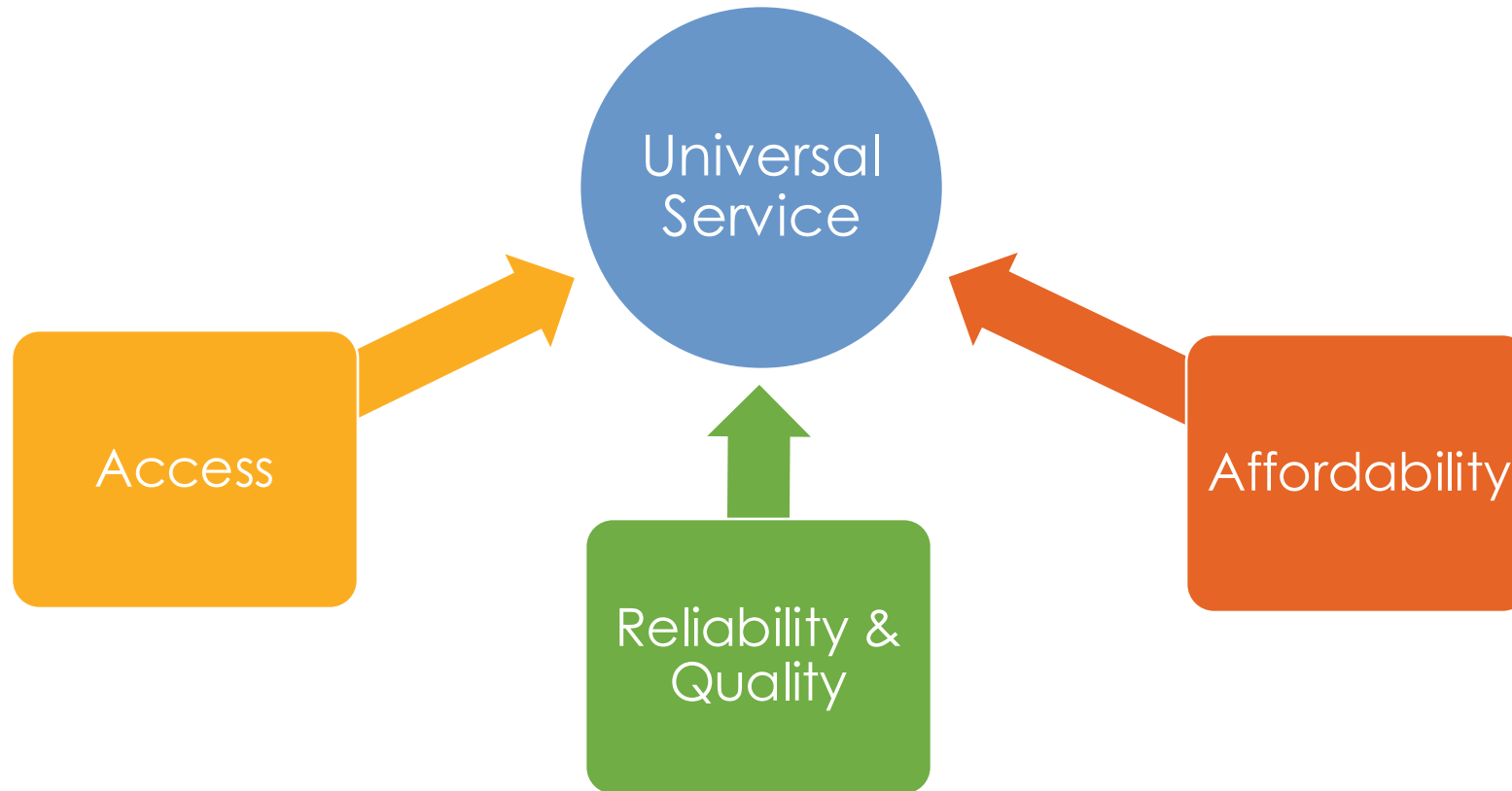
California Public
Utilities Commission

Presentation Overview

- Universal Service and Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) Obligations
- Past Request to Relinquish Obligations to Serve
- General Review of COLR Obligations
 - Proceeding Schedule and Input Opportunities
 - Resources

Universal Service and Carrier of Last Resort Obligations

Communications for All



Public Utilities Code Section 709 defines universal service.

Communications for All

- In 1996, the CPUC adopted rules on Carrier of Last Resort (COLR) obligations.
- COLR is a local exchange service provider that stands ready to provide **basic service** to any customer requesting such service within a specified area and meets other Commission-approved qualifications.

CPUC adopted rules in Decision (D.) 96-10-066 and affirmed in D.12-12-038.



Access to Basic Service

- COLRs must provide “basic service” to all customers upon request within the COLR territory
- Basic service currently includes
 - Voice-grade calls over all distances (reliability)
 - Free access to 911, directory, 800, and California Relay Service (safety)
 - Flat, basic rate for incoming/outgoing calls (basic voice service)
 - LifeLine rates for low-income households (affordability)
- Providers of basic service are also subject to service quality reporting required under General Order (GO) 133-D

COLRs may use any technology to satisfy obligations to provide basic service.

Technology Neutral

Basic Service requirements adopted in Decision (D.) 12-12-38: <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M039/K603/39603602.PDF> . Basic Service information can be found at <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/internet-and-phone/broadband-mapping-program/broadband-public-feedback/basic-service-definition>

Past Request to Relinquish Obligations to Serve

AT&T 2023 COLR Application

Application (A.) 23-03-003 made two key requests:

- 1) Relief from COLR obligations in census blocks with a “demonstrated voice alternative” (>99% of its territory)
 - As defined as wireless with >50% coverage of census block, availability of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and other wireline carriers
 - 2) Opportunity to opt out of COLR in remaining census blocks via Tier 1 Advice Letter once there is a “demonstrated voice alternative”
- AT&T said it would continue service for at least 6 months following approval and would be subject to FCC’s “discontinuance process.”
 - For areas currently without voice alternatives, AT&T offered to submit an Advice Letter for when those areas became served by voice alternatives.

Decision Dismissing AT&T Application (D.24-06-024)

- The Commission's COLR withdrawal rules, adopted in a 1996 Decision, require a replacement COLR.
- No other COLR serves AT&T's service territory, and no potential COLR applied to replace AT&T.
- Most public comment voicing concerns with AT&T's application.
 - 8 Public Participation Hearings in Clovis, Mendocino, Indio, and remote
 - More than 5,000 public comments on the Docket Card
- Decision identified that a new Rulemaking to consider whether to revise the COLR rules was necessary.

General Review of COLR Obligations

Purposes of Rulemaking (R.) 24-06-012

- The Rulemaking is considering whether to update the COLR Rules, given the age of the COLR rules and changes in the marketplace.
 - Current rules are nearly 30 years old, enacted in 1996.
- Review whether the basic service requirements and elements should be revised.
 - Basic Service definition last updated in 2012.
- Review what communications needs or activities still require COLR service.
- Consider what conditions, if any, could allow for COLR withdrawal in defined area(s) or under specific circumstances

Proceeding Schedule and Input Opportunities

- Parties submitted Initial Proposals and reply comments late 2024
- Scoping ruling issued Feb. 5
- Public Participation Hearings scheduled April – May
 - Mix of in-person and remote hearings (see next slide for schedule)
- Workshops
- Staff Proposal - Q3 2025
- Proposed Decision anticipated later this year into mid-2026

Three COLR Workshops Planned

- **Date: April 4**

- Location: Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians
- Panels: Tribal, Public Safety, Rural Counties, and Other States
- Type: In-person (remote for some panel participants)

- **Date: April 11**

- Location: Junipero Serra Office, L.A.
- Panels: Carriers and Advocates
- Type: In-person only

- **Date: TBD May-June**

- Location: Remote videoconference
- Panels: COLR Ecosystem: Resellers and Providers of Accessibility and Other Ancillary Services

Resources

- Carrier of Last Resort web page
 - <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/industries-and-topics/internet-and-phone/carrier-of-last-resort-rulemaking>
- Public Participation Hearings

| Date & Time | City (County) |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| April 9, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. | City of Vista (San Diego County) |
| April 10, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. | City of Walnut (Los Angeles County) |
| April 15, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. | City of Bakersfield (Kern County) |
| April 17, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. | Remote |
| April 23, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. | City of Roseville (Placer County) |
| April 30, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. | City of Santa Rosa (Sonoma County) |
| May 5, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. | Remote |
| May 13, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. | Remote |



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