Rural E-Connectivity Program

Public Notice Response Guide for Fiscal Year 2020

Rural Utilities Service

Telecommunications Program

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Executive Summary

The Public Notice Response Guide describes how to use the ReConnect Program Public Notice Filings (PNF) tool and submit a Public Notice Response (PNR). After reading the Public Notice Response Guide, users should understand how to search for active PNFs, respond to a PNR, modify an active PNR, and register for PNF notifications.

I. Searching for Active Public Notice Filings

Overview

The following instructions describe how to search for and view active Public Notice Filings (PNFs). PNFs can be accessed by the general public or as a logged-in external user.

Instructions

1. Go to the ReConnect Program Portal website.
   - As general public (user who does not have an eAuth account), click the link to access the Public Notice Filings and proceed from STEP 3: [https://reconnect-apply.rd.usda.gov/s/rd-rdae-pnf/RD_RDAE_PNF__c/00Br00000016xyl](https://reconnect-apply.rd.usda.gov/s/rd-rdae-pnf/RD_RDAE_PNF__c/00Br00000016xyl)
   - As an eAuthentication (eAuth) logged in user, click the following link to access the ReConnect Program Portal website: [https://reconnect-apply.rd.usda.gov/](https://reconnect-apply.rd.usda.gov/)

2. Click the Public Notice Filings header tab.
   - The image below is representative, this page might look different depending on whether the user is logged in or not.
   - Alternatively, click the Public Notice Filings tile.
3. The Public Notice Filings page displays. Under Search For Open Public Notice Filings, enter:
   - Numerical values in the **Search by ID** field (A) or,
   - Letters in the **Search By Text** field (B).

   **Note:** The Open Public Notice Filings table also displays, if the PNF you are looking for appears here, proceed to **STEP 5**.

4. All Active PNFs that match the search criteria display within the Open Public Notice Filings table. To view the PNF, click the applicable **PNF Name** hyperlink.
5. The Public Notice Filing page displays. Scroll down to review the PNF information.

**Note:** You may respond to the Public Notice Filing by submitting a Public Notice Response (PNR). In order to submit a PNR you must log in using your USDA Level 1 eAuthentication and password. For more information, see **SECTION II. RESPONDING TO A PUBLIC NOTICE FILING.**
II. Responding to a Public Notice Filing

Overview

An external user responds to a Public Notice Filing (PNF) by creating a Public Notice Response (PNR). This section describes the process of submitting a PNR.

Notes:

- You may view active PNFs as an unauthenticated user but to respond to a Service Area within a PNF, you must log in to the ReConnect Program Portal website.
- You must have at least a Level 1 eAuth ID to log into the Portal.
- To obtain an eAuthentication (eAuth) Level 1 or Level 2 ID, apply here: https://identitymanager.eems.usda.gov/registration/index.aspx.

Instructions


   Notes:
   - Alternatively, click the Public Notice Filings tile.
   - The ReConnect Program Portal page might look different depending on whether the user is logged in with a Level 1 or Level 2 eAuth.
   - The image below illustrates a user logged in with a level 1 eAuth.
2. The Public Notice Filings page displays. Under the Open Public Notice Filings table, locate the PNF you wish to respond to, click the PNF’s Name hyperlink.

Note: You may also use the Search functions to locate the PNF you wish to respond to.

3. The selected Public Notice Filing page displays. Scroll down to see the information provided by the applicant for ReConnect funding from USDA.

4. Continue to scroll down to view their Proposed Funded Service Areas (PFSA) in the map

Notes:
• You may see one or more shapes in the map depending upon how many Service Areas are part of the selected Public Notice Filing.
• Click the menu (≡) to access the Legend (which identifies the PNF Service Area and its color in the map); Map Gallery (where you can choose from a variety of options and change the look of the map); and Full Map (which hides the top blue banner to allow you to see an increased area of the map). Note: Upon selecting the Full Map option, the menu bar will still be accessible at the top left corner of the map. Click the menu (≡) and select the Full Map option again in order to restore the blue banner.
• Click and hold within the map to move the map area around.
• Use the zoom controls to zoom in (↑) closer to the Service Area or zoom out (→). An approximate zoom scale appears at the lower-left corner of the map.
• Use the home button (🏠) to return to the area of the map in which the Service Area(s) are located, or refresh the page to reset the original view.

5. If, after reviewing the PNF information and looking at the Service Area(s) within the map, you wish to submit a Public Notice Response, scroll up, and then click the Service Areas tab.
6. The PNF Service Area page displays a table. Click the applicable **PNF Service Area Name** hyperlink.

7. The selected PNF Service Area displays within the map. Use the mapping tools to draw or upload the applicable shape on top of the PNF's Service Area.
Notes:

- The map initially displays at a 20-mile scale, for demonstration purposes, the map was zoomed in and the image above was taken at a 2-mile scale.
- In the image above, the purple area represents the PNF’s Service Area to which you are submitting a Public Notice Response.
- Use the zoom in (+) or zoom out (-) buttons to adjust the distance in the map and get close or farther from the PNF’s Service Area.
- Click and hold, move your cursor to adjust the geographic location within the map.
- Click the Menu (≡) to access:
  - PNR Service Areas, which will display an option to add a PNR Service Area. In order to begin the process of creating a new PNR Service Area, click the add (+) PNR Service Area option. Once you have selected this option, you can use the mapping tools (described below) to create your PNR Service Area. Note, an error message will appear directing you to create a PNR Service Area if you attempt to use the map tools before selecting the New PNR Service Area option.
  - The Census data of the created Public Notice Response shape. Note, the Public Notice Response Census Data table will not show any data if you have not created or uploaded a shape.
  - The Map Gallery, which allows you to change the look of the map.
The Full Map option, which hides the blue banner, allowing you to see an increased area of the map.

To draw a shape (after selecting the Add PNR Service Area option from the menu bar), use the:

- **Draw Polygon tool** ( ) to create an irregular shape. Upon clicking this button, your cursor becomes a cross ( ), click on the map and hold to create the shape’s initial vertex as your starting point, move your cursor around, once you are satisfied with the created shape, double click to mark your last vertex and close the shape.

- **Draw Rectangle tool** ( ) to create square and rectangle shapes. Upon clicking this button, your cursor becomes a cross ( ), click and hold to create the shape’s initial vertex as your starting point, move the cursor away from the initial vertex and once you are satisfied with the created shape, release.

- **Draw Circle tool** ( ) to create round shapes. Upon clicking this button, your cursor becomes a cross ( ), click and hold to create the shape’s initial vertex as your starting point, move the cursor away from the initial vertex and once you are satisfied with the created shape, release.

To upload a shapefile, click the Upload Shapefile ( ) button, which opens your computer’s file explorer and allows you to select the applicable shapefile.

- All map areas must be closed, non-overlapping polygons with a single, unique identifier.
- The Shapefile must have an assigned projection with an accompanying .prj file. The Shapefile must use an unprojected (geographic) WGS84 geographic coordinate system.
- The Shapefile must be submitted as a *.zip file. This can be done with a WinZip or in Windows by selecting the files associated with a Shapefile, right-clicking the files, then clicking “Send” to Compressed (zipped) fold. The *.zip file must contain only one Shapefile.
- The .zip file size must not exceed 2GB

To edit drawn or uploaded shapes:

- **Resize/Rotate**: Click the applicable shape **once**, then resize or rotate the selected shape as needed. Once you are finished editing, click outside of the shape to release control.
- **Edit Vertices**: Click once, pause, then click again. Click and hold one of the vertices and move it as desired to change the shape’s form. Once you are finished editing, click outside of the shape to release control.
To move the location of the shape, click the shape once, then click and hold the dot that appears in the center of the selected shape, while still holding the shape, move it to the preferred location and release.

To delete a shape, click to select the shape you wish to delete and then click the delete button (🗑️) in the list of tools along the right side of the map.

To cut a selected drawing or shapefile, use the cut shape (🪨) functionality (similar to a cookie cutter):
  
  o Create an initial shape.
  o Create a second shape over the top of the first shape.
  o Click to select the second shape, click the cut button (🪨), then click the delete button (🗑️).
  o The overlapping area is removed from the initial shape.

Avoid creating or uploading shapes that self-intersect. If shapes are self-intersecting, the system displays the shape in red and will not allow you to save it.

8. In the screenshot below, a round shape representing a PNR Service Area is displayed along with the corresponding Census data. Once you are satisfied with the drawn or uploaded shape, click the Save button (حفظ).

Notes:

  • Make sure the newly drawn Service Area shape is attached to (or overlapping) the applicable PNF’s Service Area.
  
  • The system only saves one shape, in most cases it would be the first shape you created.
9. Upon saving the PNR Service Area shape, the Public Notice Response form displays. Fill out the following fields:

**Note:** Fields denoted with a red asterisk are mandatory. These fields must be populated before you can successfully submit the PNR.
A. **Company Name** – enter the applicable name
B. **Number of Subscribers** – enter the corresponding amount
C. **Point of Contact** – enter the applicable name
D. **Point of Contact Email** – enter the applicable email
E. **Point of Contact Phone** – enter the corresponding phone number
F. **Rates URL** – enter the link to the where your service rates are displayed
G. **Service Provider** – enter the applicable name
H. **Price per month** – enter the corresponding amount
I. **Service Package** – provide a description of the service package
J. **Services** – click the applicable check box(es)

**Note:** If you select any of the options that contain Data, two fields display. Click each one and select the applicable Upload and Download Speeds.
K. **Is the existing service provider an existing RUS borrower or grantee?** – click the applicable radio button.

*Note: If you select Yes, a text entry field appears. Enter the 6-digit alphanumeric RUS ID.*

L. **Is the respondent capable of providing fixed, terrestrial broadband service delivering at least 10 Mbps downstream and 1 Mbps upstream within the entire Service Area for which this Public Notice Response is responding to?** – click the applicable radio button.

M. **Use the functionality below for uploading supporting documents** – to upload supporting documentation, scroll down to reach the Files table, click the Add Files button, and select the applicable file from your computer; upon successful upload, click the Done button.
Note: Once the file has been uploaded, you may click the Action Menu ( ) to the right to manage the file: view, upload a new version, or delete the previously uploaded file.

N. Are you willing to provide a local technician who can meet with our Service Area Validation field researchers? – click the applicable radio button.

Note: Local Technicians may be contacted by USDA in advance of and during Service Area Validations.

O. I Certify that the information contained herein is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. – after reviewing the entered information, and if you agree with the statement, click the Agree radio button.

P. Submit Public Notice Response – once all information has been completed, and supporting documentation uploaded, click to Submit.

Note: The provided information is saved, and you are redirected back to the selected Public Notice Filing page; from here you can respond to another Service Area within the selected PNF or edit your PNR. For more information, see SECTION III: MODIFYING AN ACTIVE PNR.
III. Modifying an Active PNR

Overview

This section describes how a respondent reviews an active Public Notice Response (PNR) and modifies it to make necessary edits. For active PNRs, the respondent can modify and save responses any time prior to the 45-day window closing. PNRs are created on a Service Area basis, edits are also made on a per Service Area basis.

Note: Before you begin, make sure you have:

- Logged in using your Level 1 eAuth ID.
- Previously created a PNR by RESPONDING to an active Public Notice Filing (PNF).
- SEARCHED for and accessed the respective PNF.

Instructions

1. From the corresponding Public Notice Filing page, click the Responses tab to review if you have created a Public Notice Response for that PNF and the related Service Areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PUBLIC NOTICE FILING</th>
<th>SERVICE AREAS</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Public Notice Filing

All information submitted by existing service providers as part of a public notice response will be treated as proprietary and confidential.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0572-XXXX. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

Name | Company Name | Application Status
--- | --- | ---
PNF-000007 | Beta Industries | Pending

Address
2. The Responses page displays. Review the table and note the PNF Service Area name displayed under the PNF Service Area column. You will need this information for the next step. To modify the PNR, click the **Service Areas** tab.

   **Note:** *If the table is empty, this indicates you have not created a PNR for that PNF.*

![Responses Table](image1)

3. The PNF Service Areas page displays. Click the applicable **PNF Service Area Name** hyperlink.

![PNF Service Areas](image2)

4. The selected PNF Service Area displays within the map along with the previously created PNR Service Area; at the bottom of the page, the Responses table appears. To edit the PNR Service Area, use the mapping tools: resize, rotate, and/or delete the existing shape, then draw or upload a new applicable PNR Service Area shape over the top of the PNF Service Area.

   **Note:** Refer to **SECTION II: RESPONDING TO A PUBLIC NOTICE FILING** for detailed descriptions and steps on how to use the Mapping Tools.

![Selected PNF Service Area](image3)
5. Upon modifying the shape, click **Save**.
6. The Public Notice Response form displays with the previously entered information. Edit the applicable fields on this page and/or manage the previously uploaded supporting document(s).

7. Upon modifying the applicable data, to save the changes, click the **Submit Public Notice Response** button.

   **Note:** The provided information is saved, and you are redirected back to the selected Public Notice Filing page; from here you can respond to another Service Area within this PNF or edit your PNR.
IV. Registering for Public Notice Filing Notifications

Overview

This section describes how to register to receive Public Notice Filings (PNF) notifications.

Instructions

1. Go to the ReConnect Program Portal website.
   
   Notes:
   
   • As an eAuthentication (eAuth) logged in user, click the following link to access the ReConnect Program Portal website: https://reconnect-apply.rd.usda.gov/.
   
   • As general public (user who does not have an eAuth account), click the link to access the Public Notice Filings and proceed from STEP 3: https://reconnect-apply.rd.usda.gov/s/rd-rdae-pnf/RD_RDAE_PNF__c/00Br00000016xyl

2. Click the Public Notice Filings header tab.
   
   Note: The image below is representative, this page might look different depending on whether the user is logged in or not. Alternatively, click the Public Notice Filings tile.

3. The Public Notice Filings page displays. Click the Subscribe To Public Notice Filings button.
4. A new tab opens the GovDelivery website. Verify the Subscription Type field is set to Email. Input the applicable email address into the **Email Address** field.

5. Click **Submit**

6. The New Subscriber page displays. Re-enter the previously provided email address in the **Confirm Email Address** field.
7. If desired, in the Optional Password section, enter a password in the **Password** field.
8. Enter the same information in the **Confirm Password** field.
9. Under the Privacy section, access and read the data privacy policy, then click the **checkbox**.
10. Click **Submit**.

![Optional Password Diagram]

11. The Quick Subscribe page displays. Click the applicable **check box(es)** related to the Subscription Topics to be notified via email about, such as state specific PNFs

![Quick Subscribe for applicant@example.com]

12. Click **Submit**
13. The next GovDelivery page displays a green bar stating the Subscriptions were updated, along with a list of Featured Government Updates and Local Recommendations for additional notifications can be subscribed to. Click the applicable check box(es).

**Note:** If any of the notifications from the Featured Government Updates and Local Recommendations lists have been subscribed to, scroll down to the data privacy policy consent, and click the checkbox.
14. Click **Submit**

![Submit and Close Button]

15. A success page appears, click **Finish** to close the page.

![Success Page]

**Note:** Depending on the Internet Browser you use, a confirmation pop-up window may appear, click **Ok** to close the page, click **Cancel** to return.