

# *RURAL COMMUNICATION ACCESS FUND (RCAF)*

## *Under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)*

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (Revised 4/4/2023)

#### **What is the Rural Communication Access Fund (RCAF)?**

*The Nebraska Legislature, under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 and LB1014, set aside \$500,000 in federal funds for Fiscal Years 2022-23 and 2023-24 to reimburse expenses incurred in the provision of qualified, licensed sign language interpreters (whether on-site or remote), licensed video remote interpreting (VRI) services, real-time captioning (CART) or any other auxiliary aid or service to ensure access to effective communication in rural communities for individuals who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing.*

#### **What areas are “rural” for the purposes of RCAF?**

*For the RCAF, rural is defined as any area outside Lincoln and Omaha metro areas and their suburbs.*

#### **Why was the RCAF created?**

*Navigating the pandemic has been incredibly difficult on everyone, placing an immense strain on our physical and emotional health, and completely disrupting what we know to be a “normal life.” The pandemic and its restrictions also changed the way people who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing receive access to effective communication. These funds for the RCAF are appropriated to ensure effective communication access in rural areas is provided to Nebraskans who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing.*

#### **What are examples of communication access requests that are covered by the RCAF?**

- ✓ *Medical Appointments: Hospitals, Medical Offices, Doctors, Dentists, and Mental Health Services*
- ✓ *Work Settings: Job Interviews, Job Site and Staff Meetings, Employee Training, etc.*
- ✓ *Community Settings: Events, Meetings, Presentations, Classes, or Training Programs that are open to the public*
- ✓ *Local Government: Appointments, Meetings, or Events that are open to the public*
- ✓ *State agency appointments, events, or programs*
- ✓ *Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade School Related Events: Parent and teacher/principal meetings,*

*school events*

- ✓ *Church Services and Funerals*

**What are examples of communication access requests that are NOT covered by the RCAF?**

- ♦ *Educational interpreting for students (pre-K to grade 12; college/university settings)*
- ♦ *Federal agency appointments, events, or programs (contact the federal agency to make ADA requests)*
- ♦ *Private events that are not open to the public (for example, weddings, baby showers)*

**Is there a limit to how many times I can request reimbursement from the RCAF?**

*No, there is no limit to how many times requests for reimbursements may be requested through the RCAF, provided they are requests accepted under the program.*

**Are the communication access services provided in-person, virtually, or both?**

*Funding reimbursement for communication access requests are for both in-person and virtually.*

**How is the reimbursement process handled?**

*Complete the RCAF Reimbursement Request Form and Itemized Cost Worksheet and submit forms via mail or email. Information on form submissions can be found at [www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov/arpa](http://www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov/arpa).*

**Who can I contact if I have other questions?**

*More information on how to submit a reimbursement request, introduction to the program and more can be found on the NCDHH website at [www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov/arpa](http://www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov/arpa).*

