

## Compendium of universal service policies in support of people with disabilities in CARICOM countries

Antigua and Barbuda	<a href="http://laws.gov.ag/bills/2016/Telecommunications_Bill_2016.pdf">http://laws.gov.ag/bills/2016/Telecommunications_Bill_2016.pdf</a>	<p>There is no currently operational USF in Antigua and Barbuda. The current Telecommunications Act dates from 1951, and has not yet been replaced. The below is in reference to Draft 7 (2016) of the Telecommunications Bill.... this has not yet been passed into law.</p> <p>Section 47 of the 2016 Telecommunications Bill says that the Minister may establish a fund known as the Antigua and Barbuda Universal Service Fund, and is empowered to make regulations providing for the administration of the fund.</p> <p>As a universal service requirement, Section 48 refers to the “provision of [telephone] services to enable a different-abled user to make and receive a call.” There appears to be some flexibility on the part of the Ministry with regard to designation of other services to which universal services requirements apply.</p>
Bahamas	<a href="http://www.urcaba.amas.bs/download/088554800.pdf">http://www.urcaba.amas.bs/download/088554800.pdf</a>  <a href="http://www.urcaba.amas.bs/download/012155400.pdf">http://www.urcaba.amas.bs/download/012155400.pdf</a>  <a href="http://www.urcaba.amas.bs/download/026184300.pdf">http://www.urcaba.amas.bs/download/026184300.pdf</a>	<p>Universal Service is addressed in Part VII of the The Communications Act of 2009. The Act says that licensees subject to a universal service obligation are entitled to apply for funding from a universal service fund. The legislation does not make reference to disability... the focus is on providing service to geographically far-flung areas of the Bahamas.</p> <p>Schedule 5 of the act provides an “Interim determination of universal service obligations,” pending further action by the regulator. This indicates that free service is to be provided by telecommunications operators to “specified institutions,” which includes “community centres” registered with the regulator (URCA)</p> <p>Based on the 2009 Act, a framework for the implementation of universal service obligations was presented in 2013, which stated that “For the avoidance of doubt, "Community Centers" include organizations that represent or provide specialized services to the differently abled and shall include but is not limited to Bahamas Alliance for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Bahamas Association of the Physically Disabled, and Training Centre for the Disabled.”</p> <p>Draft regulation for the establishment of a Universal Service Fund was put forth in 2013, though it does not appear that this has been implemented.</p>
Barbados	<a href="http://www.sice.oa">http://www.sice.oa</a>	<p>Section 33(1)(e) of the 2003 Telecommunications Act creates a universal service obligation for carriers to</p>

	<a href="http://s.org/compol/natleg/Barbados/telecommunications_act_cap282b.pdf">s.org/compol/natleg/Barbados/telecommunications_act_cap282b.pdf</a>	<p>“provide appropriate telecommunications equipment to disabled persons to ensure access by those persons to the basic telecommunications service.”</p> <p>A universal service fund was established by the 2003 Act, but it is not clear if it was implemented, if it is currently functional or how it is administered.</p>
Belize	<a href="http://www.puc.bz/index.php/publications/telecom-sector/telecom-laws-of-belize/acts-1/60-belize-telecom-act/file">http://www.puc.bz/index.php/publications/telecom-sector/telecom-laws-of-belize/acts-1/60-belize-telecom-act/file</a>	<p>The Belize Telecommunications Act of 2002 allows the regulator (PUC) to create a universal access fund, and says that the regulator may impose “any obligations with regard to the provision of universal service to the widest users including those with disabilities...”</p> <p>A universal access fund was established by the 2002 Act, but it is not clear if it was implemented, if it is currently functional or how it is administered.</p>
Dominica	<a href="http://www.ntrcdo.org/index.php/en/universal-service-fund/introduction">http://www.ntrcdo.org/index.php/en/universal-service-fund/introduction</a>	<p>A universal service fund was established by the Telecommunications Act of 2000, in accordance with Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations SRO 21 of 2009. The funds definition of “universal service” includes “Telecommunication services to schools, hospitals and similar institutions, and the disabled and physically challenged.”</p> <p>Project proposal forms are available on the regulator’s website, however procurement activities through the website appear to have last been active in 2011, and most project information listed on the site actually pertains to Saint Lucia..</p> <p>While a full accounting of disability-related projects is not available, the site does indicate that one project has involved “Supply of Equipment and Assistive Software for Dominica Association for People Living with Disabilities.”</p>
Grenada	<a href="http://ntrc.gd/universal-service-fund/">http://ntrc.gd/universal-service-fund/</a>  <a href="https://s3.amazonaws.com/ectel-web/consultations/2015/Proposed-Changes-to-">https://s3.amazonaws.com/ectel-web/consultations/2015/Proposed-Changes-to-</a>	<p>A universal service fund was established by the Telecommunications Act of 2000, in accordance with Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations SRO 21 of 2009. According to data released by ECTEL, very little collected funds had been released by 2014, but activity picked up significantly in 2015.</p> <p>There is no specific mention of disabilities in no mention in Telecommunications Act or USF regulations.</p> <p>In 2015, a project was funded on ICT for Disabilities. According to the NTRC website “The project supplied and installed ICT equipment and broadband internet services to agencies for serving persons with disabilities. Among the equipment supplied were portable note takers, braille keyboard, braille</p>

	<a href="#">Universal-Service-Fund/Initial-Comments/NTRC-GND-comments-USF-public-consultation.pdf</a>	<p>embossers, printers, computers, touch screen computers, digital screen reader, digital magnifier. The project targeted the blind and visually impaired and persons with autism. The project was awarded to Affordable Island Communications Inc. The project completed in August 2015. A final site visit to the agencies was completed in July 2015, all equipment were functional with routine maintenance carried out by the Contractor. A final maintenance will be executed by the Contractor and a final disbursement will be made by November 2015 when the final report is submitted by the Contractor. The Agencies targeted were: Grenada National Council of the Disabled, Resource Centre of the Blind, School for the Deaf, Bel Air Home, Grand Anse School for Special Education, School for Special Education (Grenville), School for Special Education (Victoria), Society for Friends of the Blind, Friends of the Mentally Ill”</p> <p>Currently, project proposals are restricted to licensed telecommunications service providers.</p> <p>In consulting on the revision of ECTEL standards for Universal Service Funds, a statement from the Grenada regulator indicated that “A CTO meeting on ICTs for persons with disabilities addressed the issue of USF used to finance projects for persons with disabilities. A recommendation was made at the meeting to allocate a percent of the USF annually for projects targeting persons with disabilities, which is in keeping with the objective and mandate of USF. It was noted that these projects will have a significant impact because technologies can make a significant impact in their lives. Hence, NTRC Grenada recommends that the persons with disabilities should be included as a distinct element in the USF regulations and the annual allocations should be considered. Further, disabilities should be defined in the USF Regulations; reference can be made to TATT Draft Regulations.”</p>
Guyana	<a href="http://www.officialgazette.gov.gy/images/gazettes-files/Extraordinary-gazette_5aug16.pdf">http://www.officialgazette.gov.gy/images/gazettes-files/Extraordinary-gazette_5aug16.pdf</a>	<p>The Telecommunications Act of 2016 says that the regulatory Agency “shall establish a Universality Fund, as one means by which universal access and universal services may be funded...”</p> <p>The act also states that “The public telecommunications networks and public telecommunications services [to which the requirements of universal access and universal service shall apply] shall include... as the Minister may specify, special arrangements for persons who are blind or otherwise differently-abled.”</p> <p>As of this March 2017 the fund does not yet appear to have been implemented</p>
Haiti		<p><b>Information needed</b></p>

Jamaica	<a href="http://usf.gov.jm/">http://usf.gov.jm/</a> <a href="http://cds.mona.uwi.edu/document-library/document/universal-service-fund-grant-application-form-2016">http://cds.mona.uwi.edu/document-library/document/universal-service-fund-grant-application-form-2016</a>	<p>Pursuant to the Telecommunications Act of 2000, Jamaica’s Universal Access Fund Company Limited (UAF) was established in 2005, later replaced by the Universal Service Fund (USF) in 2012.</p> <p>Though the authorizing language in the Telecommunications Act of 2000 does not explicitly reference disabilities, the USF has broad latitude to engage in projects with a variety of stakeholders. This has included special projects to assist members of the disabled community. Additionally, the fund provides grants for assistive technologies to University students through the UWI Moana Centre for Disability Studies</p> <p>Extensive information, including a project application form, is available on the USF website.</p>
Montserrat	<a href="http://agc.gov.ms/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/18.08-Info-communications-Act.pdf">http://agc.gov.ms/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/18.08-Info-communications-Act.pdf</a>	<p>The universal service provisions of the Info-Communications Development Act of 2009 does not make reference to disability, and does not appear to provide authorization for universal service beyond the scope of geography.</p>
Saint Kitts and Nevis	<a href="http://www.ntrc.kn/?p=143">http://www.ntrc.kn/?p=143</a>	<p>The Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations of 2008 creates a Universal Service Fund with a mandate to “ensure the reasonable availability and affordability of basic and advanced telecommunications services... to the physically challenged, elderly, and indigent communities.”</p> <p>The fund is overseen by the regulator (NTRC) and “ECTEL may contribute financial, accounting, technical and legal expertise” in a number of fund-administration areas.</p> <p>The NTRC “shall seek to support projects that can be self-sustaining beyond the Fund support.”</p> <p>No reporting documents from the fund appear to be available on the web. No project application is available on the web. The fund’s involvement with disability-related projects is unknown.</p>
Saint Lucia	<a href="http://www.ntrc.lc/universal-service-fund.html">http://www.ntrc.lc/universal-service-fund.html</a>	<p>The Telecommunications Act of 2000 established a Universal Service Fund, which is managed by the regulator (NTRC) in accordance with the Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations SI 120 of 2008.</p>

		<p>The Act defines universal services to include “telecommunications services to schools, hospitals and similar institutions, and the disabled and physically challenged”</p> <p>Among priority areas for project funding, the NTRC has included “Subsidization of the cost of equipment for persons living with disabilities to gain access to telecommunications services by partnering with telecommunications providers and agencies serving persons with disabilities.” It is not clear if any projects in this area have been completed.</p> <p>An application form for USF project proposals is available on the website.</p>
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	<a href="http://www.ntrc.vc/providers/universal-service-fund/">http://www.ntrc.vc/providers/universal-service-fund/</a>	<p>As an ECTEL Member State, the legal basis for the USF is similar to that of Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Lucia.</p> <p>Telecommunications (Universal Service Fund) Regulations 2008 Universal service Fund – includes the provision of “telecommunications services to schools hospitals and similar institutions and the physically challenged.”</p> <p>SVG has a strong history of making use of its funds, but it is not clear if this has included project specifically aimed at persons with disabilities.</p>
Suriname	<a href="https://www.itu.int/net4/itu-d/icteye/CountryProfileReport.aspx?countryID=220">https://www.itu.int/net4/itu-d/icteye/CountryProfileReport.aspx?countryID=220</a>	<p>According to the ITU, there is not an active Universal Service Fund running in Suriname, as of 2015.</p>
Trinidad and Tobago	<a href="http://www.news.gov.tt/archive//E-Gazette/Gazette%202015/Legal%20Notice/Legal%20Notice%20No.%2063%20of%202015.pdf">http://www.news.gov.tt/archive//E-Gazette/Gazette%202015/Legal%20Notice/Legal%20Notice%20No.%2063%20of%202015.pdf</a>	<p>Schedule 3 of the Act lists “Mandatory Universal Service Initiatives,” which includes “Special provision of approved assistive technology for persons with disabilities to support use of basic telecommunications services...” It is limited to set up costs and recurrent costs as defined by the Authority, with customer eligibility determined by the Ministry with responsibility for social development and other Agencies as determined by the Authority.</p> <p>Project proposals are restricted to licensed telecommunications service providers.</p>