
Section 1: S-8 (S-8)

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on May 23, 2018.

Registration No.

**UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**
Washington, D.C. 20549

**Form S-8
REGISTRATION STATEMENT**
*UNDER
THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933*

CENTURYLINK, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Louisiana
(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation)

4813
(Primary Standard Industrial
Classification Code Number)

72-0651161
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification Number)

**100 CenturyLink Drive
Monroe, LA 71203
(318) 388-9000**

(Address, including zip code and telephone number, including area code of registrants' principal executive offices)

CenturyLink, Inc. 2018 Equity Incentive Plan
(Full title of the plan)

**Stacey W. Goff, Esq.
CenturyLink, Inc.
100 CenturyLink Drive
Monroe, LA 71203
(318) 388-9000**

(Name, address, including zip code and telephone number, including area code of agent for service)

Copy to:

**Hope M. Spencer, Esq.
Jones Walker LLP
201 St. Charles Avenue
New Orleans, Louisiana 70170-5100**

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, a smaller reporting company or an emerging growth company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer," "smaller reporting company" and "emerging growth company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer

Accelerated filer

Non-accelerated filer (Do not check if a smaller reporting company)

Smaller reporting company

Emerging Growth Company

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 7(a)(2)(B) of the Securities Act.

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of securities to be registered	Amount (number of shares) to be registered⁽¹⁾	Proposed maximum offering price per share⁽²⁾	Proposed maximum aggregate offering price⁽²⁾	Amount of registration fee⁽²⁾
Common Stock (par value \$1 per share)				
CenturyLink, Inc. 2018 Equity Incentive Plan	34,600,000	\$19.265	\$666,569,000	\$82,988

- (1) Upon a stock split, stock dividend, or similar transaction in the future during the effectiveness of this Registration Statement and involving our Common Stock, the number of shares registered shall be automatically increased to cover the additional securities in accordance with Rule 416(a) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "Securities Act").
- (2) Estimated solely for the purpose of calculating the registration fee pursuant to Rules 457(c) and (h) under the Securities Act, based on the average of the high and low price per share of the Common Stock as reported on the New York Stock Exchange on May 18, 2018.
-
-

PART I
INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE SECTION 10(a) PROSPECTUS

Information required by Part I of Form S-8 to be contained in the applicable prospectus is omitted from this Registration Statement in accordance with Rule 428 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the “Securities Act”).

PART II
INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT

Item 3. Incorporation of Documents by Reference.

The following documents, which have been filed by us with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (the “Commission”), are incorporated herein by reference:

- (a) Our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2017, filed with the Commission on March 1, 2018;
- (b) Our Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the fiscal quarter ended March 31, 2018, filed with the Commission on May 10, 2018;
- (c) The description of Company Common Stock included in Amendment No. 4 to our Registration Statement on Form 8-A filed with the Commission on March 2, 2015; and
- (d) Our Current Reports on Form 8-K or Form 8-K/A (in all cases other than information furnished rather than filed pursuant to any such form), filed January 16, 2018; February 14, 2018; February 23, 2018; March 9, 2018; March 27, 2018; and May 9, 2018.

In addition, all documents, reports and definitive proxy or information statements filed by us with the Commission pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14, and 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the “Exchange Act”), after the date of this Registration Statement and prior to the filing of a post-effective amendment that indicates that all securities offered have been sold or that deregisters all unsold securities shall, except to the extent otherwise provided by Regulation S-K or any other rule promulgated by the Commission, be deemed to be incorporated by reference in this Registration Statement and to be part hereof from the date of filing of such documents. Notwithstanding the foregoing, and except as otherwise provided in the relevant filing with the Commission, we are not incorporating by reference any documents, portions of documents or information deemed to have been “furnished” and not “filed” in accordance with Commission rules.

Any statements contained in a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference shall be deemed to be modified or superseded to the extent that a statement contained herein or in any other document subsequently filed or incorporated by reference herein modifies or supersedes such statement. Any statement so modified or superseded shall not be deemed, except as so modified or superseded, to constitute a part of this Registration Statement.

Item 4. Description of Securities.

Not applicable.

Item 5. Interests of Named Experts and Counsel.

Not applicable.

Item 6. Indemnification of Directors and Officers.

Sections 1-850 through 1-859 of the Louisiana Business Corporation Act provide in part that the Company may indemnify each of its current or former directors and officers (each an “indemnitee”) against liability (including judgments, settlements, penalties, fines, or reasonable expenses) incurred by the indemnitee in a proceeding to which the indemnitee is a party if the indemnitee acted in good faith and reasonably believed either (i) in the case of conduct in an official capacity, that such indemnitee’s conduct was in the best interests of the Company or (ii) in all other cases, that such indemnitee’s conduct was at least not opposed to the best interests of the Company, and, with respect to any criminal proceeding, the indemnitee had no reasonable cause to believe such indemnitee’s conduct was unlawful. The Company may also advance expenses to the indemnitee provided that the indemnitee delivers (i) a written affirmation of such indemnitee’s good faith belief that the relevant standard of conduct has been met by such indemnitee or that the proceeding involves conduct for which liability has been eliminated and (ii) a written undertaking to repay any funds advanced if (a) such indemnitee is not entitled to mandatory indemnification by virtue of being wholly successful, on the merits or otherwise, in the defense of any such proceeding and (b) it is ultimately determined that such indemnitee has not met the relevant standard of conduct. The Company has the power to obtain and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was acting for us, regardless of whether the Company has the legal authority to indemnify, or advance expenses to, the insured person with respect to such liability.

Under Article II, Section 10 of the Company’s bylaws, which we refer to as the indemnification bylaw, the Company is obligated to indemnify its current or former directors and officers, except that if any of the Company’s current or former directors or officers are held liable under or settle any derivative suit, the Company is permitted but not obligated to indemnify the indemnified person to the fullest extent permitted by Louisiana law.

As permitted by Louisiana law, the Company’s articles of incorporation include a provision that, subject to certain exceptions, eliminates personal liability of a director or officer to the Company and its shareholders for monetary damages resulting from breaches of the duty of care, and further provides that any amendment or repeal of this provision will not affect the elimination of liability accorded to any director or officer for acts or omissions occurring prior to such amendment or repeal.

The Company’s articles of incorporation authorize the Company to enter into contracts with directors and officers providing for indemnification to the fullest extent permitted by law. The Company has entered into indemnification contracts providing contracting directors or officers the procedural and substantive rights to indemnification currently set forth in the indemnification bylaw. The Company refers to these contracts as indemnification contracts. The right to indemnification provided by these indemnification contracts applies to all covered claims, whether such claims arose before or after the effective date of the contract.

The Company maintains an insurance policy covering the liability of the directors and officers of the Company and its subsidiaries for actions taken in their official capacity. Subject to certain limitations, the indemnification contracts provide that, to the extent insurance is reasonably available, the Company will maintain comparable insurance coverage for each contracting party as long as such person serves as a director or officer and thereafter for so long as such person is subject to possible personal liability for actions taken in such capacities.

The foregoing is only a general summary of certain aspects of Louisiana law, certain provisions of the Company's articles of incorporation and bylaws, and the Company's indemnification contracts, and does not purport to be complete. It is qualified in its entirety by reference to (i) the relevant provisions of the Louisiana Business Corporation Act and (ii) the Company's articles of incorporation, bylaws, and form of indemnification contract, each of which is on file with the Commission.

Item 7. Exemption from Registration Claimed.

Not applicable.

Item 8. Exhibits.

- 5 [Opinion of Jones Walker L.L.P.](#)
- 23.1 [Consent of KPMG LLP, Independent Registered Public Account Firm to CenturyLink, Inc.](#)
- 23.2 [Consent of Jones Walker L.L.P. \(included in Exhibit 5\)](#)
- 24 [Powers of Attorney \(included in the signature pages of this Registration Statement\)](#)
- 99.1 [CenturyLink, Inc. 2018 Equity Incentive Plan](#)

Item 9. Undertakings.

(a) The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes:

- (1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this Registration Statement:
 - (i) To include any prospectus required by section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act;

(ii) To reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of this Registration Statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in this Registration Statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value of securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than a 20 percent change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the "Calculation of Registration Fee" table in the effective Registration Statement;

(iii) To include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in this Registration Statement or any material change to such information in this Registration Statement;

Provided, however, that paragraphs (a)(1)(i) and (a)(1)(ii) do not apply if the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed with or furnished to the Commission by the Registrant pursuant to section 13 or section 15(d) of the Exchange Act that are incorporated by reference in this Registration Statement.

(2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(3) To remove from registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.

(b) The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes that, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each filing of the Registrant's annual report pursuant to section 13(a) or section 15(d) of the Exchange Act that is incorporated by reference in the Registration Statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(c) Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of the Registrant pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, the Registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the Registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the Registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the Registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question of whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act, the Registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-8 and has duly caused this Registration Statement on Form S-8 to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the City of Monroe, State of Louisiana, on May 23, 2018.

CENTURYLINK, INC.

By: /s/ Stacey W. Goff

Stacey W. Goff
Executive Vice President,
General Counsel and Secretary

POWER OF ATTORNEY

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that each person whose signature appears below constitutes and appoints Jeff K. Storey, Sunit S. Patel, and Stacey W. Goff, or any one of them, his or her true and lawful attorney-in-fact and agent, with full power of substitution, for him or her and in his or her name, place, and stead, in any and all capacities, to sign any and all amendments (including post-effective amendments) to this Registration Statement, and to file the same with all exhibits thereto, and other documents in connection therewith, with the Commission, granting unto such attorney-in-fact and agent full power and authority to do and perform each and every act and thing requisite and ratifying and confirming all that such attorney-in-fact and agent or his or her substitute or substitutes may lawfully do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act, this Registration Statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities indicated on the dates indicated.

<u>Signature</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>/s/ Jeff K. Storey</u> Jeff K. Storey	President, Chief Executive Officer and Director <i>(Principal Executive Officer)</i>	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ Sunit S. Patel</u> Sunit S. Patel	Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer <i>(Principal Financial Officer)</i>	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ Eric Mortensen</u> Eric Mortensen	Senior Vice President and Interim Controller <i>(Principal Accounting Officer)</i>	May 23, 2018

<u>/s/ Martha H. Bejar</u> Martha H. Bejar	Director	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ Virginia Boulet</u> Virginia Boulet	Director	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ Peter C. Brown</u> Peter C. Brown	Director	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ Kevin P. Chilton</u> Kevin P. Chilton	Director	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ Steven T. Clontz</u> Steven T. Clontz	Director	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ T. Michael Glenn</u> T. Michael Glenn	Director	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ W. Bruce Hanks</u> W. Bruce Hanks	Director	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ Mary L. Landrieu</u> Mary L. Landrieu	Director	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ Harvey P. Perry</u> Harvey P. Perry	Director	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ Glen F. Post, III</u> Glen F. Post, III	Director	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ Michael J. Roberts</u> Michael J. Roberts	Director	May 23, 2018
<u>/s/ Laurie A. Siegel</u> Laurie A. Siegel	Director	May 23, 2018

S-2

[\(Back To Top\)](#)

Section 2: EX-5 (EX-5)

Exhibit 5



May 23, 2018

CenturyLink, Inc.
100 CenturyLink Drive
Monroe, Louisiana 71203

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have acted as counsel to CenturyLink, Inc., a Louisiana corporation (the "Company"), in connection with the Company's preparation of its Registration Statement on Form S-8 (the "Registration Statement") to be filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission with respect to registration under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, of up to 34,600,000 shares of Common Stock of the Company, \$1 par value per share (the

“Common Stock”). The Common Stock is to be issued under the CenturyLink, Inc. 2018 Equity Incentive Plan (the “Plan”).

We have examined instruments, documents, and records which we deemed relevant and necessary for the basis of our opinion hereinafter expressed. In such examination, we have assumed the following: (a) the authenticity of original documents and the genuineness of all signatures; (b) the conformity to the originals of all documents submitted to us as copies; and (c) the truth, accuracy, and completeness of the information, representations, and warranties contained in the records, documents, instruments, and certificates we have reviewed.

Based upon the foregoing, we are of the opinion that the shares of Common Stock to be issued by the Company pursuant to the Plan after the filing of this Registration Statement are validly authorized shares of Common Stock and, when issued in accordance with the provisions of the Plan, will be legally issued, fully paid, and non-assessable.

We hereby consent to the filing of this opinion as an exhibit to the Registration Statement and to the use of our name wherever it appears in the Registration Statement. In giving such consent, we do not consider that we are “experts” within the meaning of such term as used in the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, or the rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission issued thereunder, with respect to any part of the Registration Statement, including this opinion as an exhibit or otherwise.

/s/ JONES WALKER L.L.P.

JONES, WALKER, WAECHTER, POITEVENT, CARRÈRE & DENÈGRE L.L.P.
201 ST. CHARLES AVENUE • NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70170-5100 • 504-582-8000 • FAX 504-582-8583
• E-MAIL info@joneswalker.com • www.joneswalker.com

ALABAMA ARIZONA DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FLORIDA GEORGIA LOUISIANA TEXAS

[\(Back To Top\)](#)

Section 3: EX-23.1 (EX-23.1)

Exhibit 23.1

Consent of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

The Board of Directors
CenturyLink, Inc.:

We consent to the use of our reports dated February 28, 2018, with respect to the consolidated balance sheets of CenturyLink, Inc. and subsidiaries as of December 31, 2017 and 2016, and the related consolidated statements of operations, comprehensive income, cash flows, and stockholder’s equity for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2017, and the effectiveness of internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2017, incorporated by reference herein, which reports appear in the December 31, 2017 annual report on Form 10-K of CenturyLink, Inc.

/s/ KPMG LLP

Shreveport, Louisiana
May 23, 2018

[\(Back To Top\)](#)

Section 4: EX-99.1 (EX-99.1)

Exhibit 99.1

CENTURYLINK 2018 EQUITY INCENTIVE PLAN

1. Purpose. The purpose of the CenturyLink 2018 Equity Incentive Plan (the “Plan”) is to increase shareholder value and to advance the interests of CenturyLink, Inc. (“CenturyLink”) and its subsidiaries (collectively, the “Company”) by furnishing stock-based economic incentives (the “Incentives”) designed to attract, retain, reward, and motivate the Company’s key employees, officers, directors, consultants, and advisors and to strengthen the mutuality of interests between such persons and CenturyLink’s shareholders. Incentives consist of opportunities to purchase or receive shares of common stock, \$1.00 par value per share, of CenturyLink (the “Common Stock”) or cash valued in relation to Common Stock, on terms determined under this Plan. As used in this Plan, the term “subsidiary” means any corporation, limited liability company, or other entity of which CenturyLink owns (directly or indirectly) within the meaning of Section 424(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the “Code”), 50% or more of the total combined voting power of all classes of stock, membership interests, or other equity interests issued thereby.

2. Administration.

2.1 Composition. This Plan shall generally be administered by the compensation committee of the Board of Directors of CenturyLink (the “Board”) or by a subcommittee thereof (such administrator, as used in this Plan, the “Committee”). The Committee shall consist of not fewer than two members of the Board, each of whom shall qualify as a “non-employee director” under Rule 16b-3 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the “1934 Act”) or any successor rule.

2.2 Authority. The Committee shall have plenary authority to award Incentives under this Plan and to enter into agreements with or provide notices to participants as to the terms of the Incentives (collectively, the “Incentive Agreements”). The Committee shall have the general authority to interpret this Plan, to establish any rules or regulations relating to this Plan that it determines to be appropriate, and to make any other determination that it believes necessary or advisable for the proper administration of this Plan. Committee decisions regarding matters relating to this Plan shall be final, conclusive, and binding on the Company, participants, and all other interested persons. The Committee may delegate its authority hereunder to the extent provided in Section 3.2.

3. Eligible Participants.

3.1 Eligibility. Key employees, officers, and directors of the Company and persons providing services as consultants or advisors to the Company shall become eligible to receive Incentives under the Plan when designated by the Committee.

3.2 Delegation of Authority to Chief Executive Officer. With respect to participants not subject to Section 16 of the 1934 Act, the Committee may delegate to the chief executive officer of CenturyLink its authority to designate participants, to determine the size and type of Incentives to be received by those participants, to determine any performance objectives for these participants, and to approve or authorize the form of Incentive Agreement governing

such Incentives. Following any grants of Incentives pursuant to such delegated authority, the chief executive officer of CenturyLink or any officer designated by him may exercise any powers of the Committee under this Plan to accelerate vesting or exercise periods, to terminate restricted periods, to waive compliance with specified provisions, or to otherwise make determinations contemplated hereunder with respect to those participants; provided, however, that (a) the chief executive officer may only grant options at a per share exercise price equal to or greater than the Fair Market Value (as defined in Section 12.10) of a share of Common Stock on the later of the date the officer approves such grant or the date the participant commences employment and (b) the Committee retains sole authority to make any of the determinations set forth in Section 5.4, 12.10 or Section 11 of this Plan.

4. Types of Incentives. Incentives may be granted under this Plan to eligible participants in the forms of (a) incentive stock options, (b) non-qualified stock options, (c) stock appreciation rights (“SARs”), (d) restricted stock, (e) restricted stock units (“RSUs”), and (f) Other Stock-Based Awards (as defined in Section 10).

5. Shares Subject to the Plan.

5.1 Number of Shares. Subject to adjustment as provided in Section 5.4, the maximum number of shares of Common Stock that may be delivered to participants and their permitted transferees under this Plan shall be 34,600,000.

5.2 Share Counting. Subject to adjustment as provided in Section 5.4:

(a) The maximum number of shares of Common Stock that may be issued upon exercise of stock options intended to qualify as incentive stock options under Section 422 of the Code shall be 34,600,000.

(b) Any shares of Common Stock subject to an Incentive that is subsequently canceled, forfeited, or expires prior to exercise or realization, whether in full or in part, shall be available again for issuance or delivery under the Plan. Notwithstanding the foregoing, shares subject to an Incentive under the Plan shall not be available again for issuance or delivery under the Plan if such shares were (a) tendered in payment of the exercise price of a stock option; (b) covered by, but not issued upon settlement of, stock-settled SARs; or (c) delivered or withheld by the Company to satisfy any tax withholding obligation related to a stock option or stock-settled SAR. If an Incentive, by its terms, may be settled only in cash, then the grant, vesting, payout, settlement, or forfeiture of such Incentive shall have no impact on the number of shares available for grant under the Plan.

5.3 Participant Limits. Subject to adjustment as provided in Section 5.4, the following additional limitations are imposed under the Plan:

(a) The maximum number of shares of Common Stock that may be covered by Incentives granted under the Plan to any one individual during any calendar year shall be 1,500,000.

(b) The maximum value of Incentives that may be granted under the Plan to each non-employee director of CenturyLink during any single calendar year shall be \$500,000, with any shares granted under such Incentives valued at Fair Market Value on the date of grant.

5.4 Adjustment.

(a) In the event of any recapitalization, reclassification, stock dividend, stock split, combination of shares or other comparable change in the Common Stock, all limitations on numbers of shares of Common Stock provided in this Section 5 and the number of shares of Common Stock subject to outstanding Incentives shall be equitably adjusted in proportion to the change in outstanding shares of Common Stock. In addition, in the event of any such change in the Common Stock, the Committee shall make any other adjustment that it determines to be equitable, including adjustments to the exercise price of any option or the Base Price (defined in Section 7.5) of any SAR and any per share performance objectives of any Incentive in order to provide participants with the same relative rights before and after such adjustment.

(b) If the Company merges, consolidates, sells substantially all of its assets, or dissolves, and such transaction is not a Change of Control as defined in Section 11 (each of the foregoing, a “Fundamental Change”), then thereafter, upon any exercise or payout of an Incentive granted prior to the Fundamental Change, the participant shall be entitled to receive (i) in lieu of shares of Common Stock previously issuable thereunder, the number and class of shares of stock or securities to which the participant would have been entitled pursuant to the terms of the Fundamental Change if, immediately prior to such Fundamental Change, the participant had been the holder of record of the number of shares of Common Stock subject to such Incentive or (ii) in lieu of payments based on the Common Stock previously payable thereunder, payments based on any formula that the Committee determines to be equitable in order to provide participants with substantially equivalent rights before and after the Fundamental Change. In the event any such Fundamental Change causes a change in the outstanding Common Stock, the aggregate number of shares available under the Plan may be appropriately adjusted by the Committee in its sole discretion, whose determination shall be conclusive.

5.5 Type of Common Stock. Common Stock issued under the Plan may be authorized and unissued shares or issued shares held as treasury shares.

5.6 Minimum Vesting Requirements. All Incentives must be granted with a minimum vesting period of at least one year, except for any Incentives that are issued in payment of cash amounts earned under our short-term incentive program.

6. Stock Options. A stock option is a right to purchase shares of Common Stock from CenturyLink. Stock options granted under the Plan may be incentive stock options (as such term is defined in Section 422 of the Code) or non-qualified stock options. Any option that is designated as a non-qualified stock option shall not be treated as an incentive stock option. Each stock option granted by the Committee under this Plan shall be subject to the following terms and conditions:

6.1 Price. The exercise price per share shall be determined by the Committee, subject to adjustment under Section 5.4; provided that in no event shall the exercise price be less than the Fair Market Value (as defined in Section 12.10) of a share of Common Stock as of the date of grant, except in the case of a stock option granted in assumption of or substitution for an outstanding award of a company acquired by the Company or with which the Company combines. In the event that an option grant is approved by the Committee, but is to take effect on a later date, such as when employment or service commences, such later date shall be the date of grant.

6.2 Number. The number of shares of Common Stock subject to the option shall be determined by the Committee, subject to Section 5, including, but not limited to, any adjustment as provided in Section 5.4.

6.3 Duration and Time for Exercise. The term of each stock option shall be determined by the Committee, but shall not exceed a maximum term of ten years. Subject to Section 5.6, each stock option shall become exercisable at such time or times during its term as determined by the Committee and provided for in the Incentive Agreement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Committee may accelerate the exercisability of any stock option at any time.

6.4 Manner of Exercise. A stock option may be exercised, in whole or in part, by giving written notice to the Company, specifying the number of shares of Common Stock to be purchased. The exercise notice shall be accompanied by the full purchase price for such shares. The option price shall be payable in United States dollars and may be paid (a) in cash; (b) by check; (c) by delivery to the Company of currently-owned shares of Common Stock (including through any attestation of ownership that effectively transfers title), which shares shall be valued for this purpose at the Fair Market Value on the business day immediately preceding the date such option is exercised; (d) by delivery of irrevocable written instructions to a broker approved by the Company (with a copy to the Company) to immediately sell a portion of the shares issuable under the option and to deliver promptly to the Company the amount of sale proceeds (or loan proceeds if the broker lends funds to the participant for delivery to the Company) to pay the exercise price; (e) if approved by the Committee, through a net exercise procedure whereby the optionee surrenders the option in exchange for that number of shares of Common Stock with an aggregate Fair Market Value equal to the difference between the aggregate exercise price of the options being surrendered and the aggregate Fair Market Value of the shares of Common Stock subject to the option; (f) in such other manner as may be authorized from time to time by the Committee; or (g) through any combination of the foregoing methods.

6.5 Limitations on Repricing. Except for adjustments pursuant to Section 5.4 or actions permitted to be taken by the Committee under Section 11 in the event of a Change of Control, unless approved by the shareholders of the Company, (a) the exercise price for any outstanding option granted under this Plan may not be decreased after the date of grant; and (b) an outstanding option that has been granted under this Plan may not, as of any date that such option has a per share exercise price that is greater than the then-current Fair Market Value of a share of Common Stock, be surrendered to the Company as consideration for the grant of a new option or SAR with a lower exercise price, shares of restricted stock, restricted stock units, an Other Stock-Based Award, a cash payment, or Common Stock.

6.6 Incentive Stock Options. Notwithstanding anything in the Plan to the contrary, the following additional provisions shall apply to the grant of stock options that are intended to qualify as incentive stock options (as such term is defined in Section 422 of the Code):

(a) Any incentive stock option agreement authorized under the Plan shall contain such other provisions as the Committee shall deem advisable, but shall in all events be consistent with and contain or be deemed to contain all provisions required in order to qualify the options as incentive stock options.

(b) All incentive stock options must be granted within ten years from the date on which this Plan is adopted by the Board.

(c) No incentive stock options shall be granted to any non-employee or to any participant who, at the time such option is granted, would own (within the meaning of Section 422 of the Code) stock possessing more than 10% of the total combined voting power of all classes of stock of CenturyLink.

(d) The aggregate Fair Market Value (determined with respect to each incentive stock option as of the time such incentive stock option is granted) of the Common Stock with respect to which incentive stock options are exercisable for the first time by a participant during any calendar year (under the Plan or any other plan of CenturyLink or any of its subsidiaries) shall not exceed \$100,000. To the extent that such limitation is exceeded, the excess options shall be treated as non-qualified stock options for federal income tax purposes.

7. Stock Appreciation Rights.

7.1 Grant of Stock Appreciation Rights. A stock appreciation right, or SAR, is a right to receive, without payment to the Company, a number of shares of Common Stock, cash, or any combination thereof, the number or amount of which is determined pursuant to the formula set forth in Section 7.5. Each SAR granted by the Committee under the Plan shall be subject to the terms and conditions of the Plan and the applicable Incentive Agreement.

7.2 Number. Each SAR granted to any participant shall relate to such number of shares of Common Stock as shall be determined by the Committee, subject to adjustment as provided in Section 5.4.

7.3 Duration and Time for Exercise. The term of each SAR shall be determined by the Committee, but shall not exceed a maximum term of ten years. Subject to Section 5.6, each SAR shall become exercisable at such time or times during its term as shall be determined by the Committee and provided for in the Incentive Agreement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Committee may accelerate the exercisability of any SAR at any time in its discretion.

7.4 Exercise. A SAR may be exercised, in whole or in part, by giving written notice to the Company, specifying the number of SARs that the holder wishes to exercise. The date that the Company receives such written notice shall be referred to herein as the "Exercise Date." The Company shall, within 30 days of an Exercise Date, deliver to the exercising holder certificates for the shares of Common Stock to which the holder is entitled pursuant to Section 7.5 or cash or both, as provided in the Incentive Agreement.

7.5 Payment.

(a) The number of shares of Common Stock which shall be issuable upon the exercise of a SAR payable in Common Stock shall be determined by dividing:

(i) the number of shares of Common Stock as to which the SAR is exercised, multiplied by the amount of the appreciation in each such share (for this purpose, the “appreciation” shall be the amount by which the Fair Market Value (as defined in Section 12.10) of a share of Common Stock subject to the SAR on the trading day prior to the Exercise Date exceeds the “Base Price,” which is an amount, not less than the Fair Market Value of a share of Common Stock on the date of grant, which shall be determined by the Committee at the time of grant, subject to adjustment under Section 5.4); by

(ii) the Fair Market Value of a share of Common Stock on the Exercise Date.

(b) No fractional shares of Common Stock shall be issued upon the exercise of a SAR; instead, the holder of a SAR shall be entitled to purchase the portion necessary to make a whole share at its Fair Market Value on the Exercise Date.

(c) If so provided in the Incentive Agreement, a SAR may be exercised for cash equal to the Fair Market Value of the shares of Common Stock that would be issuable under Section 7.5(a), if the exercise had been for Common Stock.

7.6 Limitations on Repricing. Except for adjustments pursuant to Section 5.4 or actions permitted to be taken by the Committee under Section 11 in the event of a Change of Control, unless approved by the shareholders of the Company, (a) the Base Price for any outstanding SAR granted under this Plan may not be decreased after the date of grant; and (b) an outstanding SAR that has been granted under this Plan may not, as of any date that such SAR has a Base Price that is greater than the then-current Fair Market Value of a share of Common Stock, be surrendered to the Company as consideration for the grant of a new option or SAR with a lower exercise price, shares of restricted stock, restricted stock units, an Other Stock-Based Award, a cash payment, or Common Stock.

8. Restricted Stock.

8.1 Grant of Restricted Stock. The Committee may award shares of restricted stock to such eligible participants as determined pursuant to the terms of Section 3. An award of restricted stock shall be subject to such restrictions on transfer and forfeitability provisions and such other terms and conditions, including the attainment of specified performance goals, as the Committee may determine, subject to the provisions of the Plan.

8.2 The Restricted Period. Subject to Section 5.6, at the time an award of restricted stock is made, the Committee shall establish a period of time during which the transfer of the shares of restricted stock shall be restricted and after which the shares of restricted stock shall be vested (the “Restricted Period”). Each award of restricted stock may have a different Restricted Period.

8.3 Escrow. The participant receiving restricted stock shall enter into an Incentive Agreement with the Company setting forth the conditions of the grant. Any certificates representing shares of restricted stock shall be registered in the name of the participant and deposited with the Company, together with a stock power endorsed in blank by the participant. Each such certificate shall bear a legend in substantially the following form:

The transferability of this certificate and the shares of Common Stock represented by it are subject to the terms and conditions (including conditions of forfeiture) contained in the CenturyLink 2018 Equity Incentive Plan (the “Plan”), and an agreement entered into between the registered owner and CenturyLink, Inc. (the “Company”) thereunder. Copies of the Plan and the agreement are on file at the principal office of the Company.

Alternatively, in the discretion of the Company, ownership of the shares of restricted stock and the appropriate restrictions shall be reflected in the records of the Company’s transfer agent and no physical certificates shall be issued.

8.4 Dividends on Restricted Stock. Any and all cash and stock dividends paid with respect to the shares of restricted stock shall not be paid currently, but rather shall vest or be forfeited in tandem with the related shares of restricted stock.

8.5 Forfeiture. In the event of the forfeiture of any shares of restricted stock under the terms provided in the Incentive Agreement (including any additional shares of restricted stock that may result from the reinvestment of cash and stock dividends, if so provided in the Incentive Agreement), such forfeited shares shall be surrendered, any certificates shall be cancelled, and any related accrued but unpaid cash dividends will be forfeited. The participants shall have the same rights and privileges, and be subject to the same forfeiture provisions, with respect to any additional shares received pursuant to Section 5.4 due to a recapitalization or other change in capitalization.

8.6 Expiration of Restricted Period. Upon the expiration or termination of the Restricted Period and the satisfaction of any other conditions prescribed by the Committee, the restrictions applicable to the restricted stock shall lapse, and the Company shall cause to be delivered to the participant or the participant’s estate, as the case may be, the number of shares of restricted stock with respect to which the restrictions have lapsed, free of all such restrictions and legends, except any that may be imposed by law. The Company, in its discretion, may elect to deliver such shares through issuance of a stock certificate or by book entry.

8.7 Rights as a Shareholder. Subject to the terms and conditions of the Plan and the applicable Incentive Agreement, each participant receiving restricted stock shall have all the rights of a shareholder with respect to shares of stock during the Restricted Period, including without limitation, the right to vote any shares of Common Stock.

9. Restricted Stock Units.

9.1 Grant of Restricted Stock Units. A restricted stock unit, or RSU, represents the right to receive from the Company on the respective scheduled vesting or payment date for such RSU, one share of Common Stock. An award of RSUs may be subject to the attainment of specified performance goals or targets, forfeitability provisions and such other terms and conditions as the Committee may determine, subject to the provisions of the Plan

9.2 Vesting Period. Subject to Section 5.6, at the time an award of RSUs is made, the Committee shall establish a period of time during which the restricted stock units shall vest (the "Vesting Period"). Each award of RSUs may have a different Vesting Period.

9.3 Dividend Equivalent Accounts. Subject to the terms and conditions of this Plan and the applicable Incentive Agreement, as well as any procedures established by the Committee, the Committee may determine to pay dividend equivalent rights with respect to RSUs, in which case the Company shall establish an account for the participant and reflect in that account any securities, cash, or other property comprising any dividend or property distribution with respect to the share of Common Stock underlying each RSU. The participant shall have no rights to the amounts or other property credited to such account until such time as the related RSUs have vested.

9.4 Rights as a Shareholder. Subject to the restrictions imposed under the terms and conditions of this Plan and subject to any other restrictions that may be imposed in the Incentive Agreement, each participant receiving restricted stock units shall have no rights as a shareholder with respect to such restricted stock units until such time as shares of Common Stock are issued to the participant.

10. Other Stock-Based Awards. The Committee may grant to eligible participants "Other Stock-Based Awards," which shall consist of awards (other than options, SARs, restricted stock, or RSUs, described in Sections 6 through 9 hereof) paid out in shares of Common Stock or the value of which is based in whole or in part on the value of shares of Common Stock. Other Stock-Based Awards may be awards of shares of Common Stock, awards of phantom stock, or may be denominated or payable in, valued in whole or in part by reference to, or otherwise based on or related to, shares of, or appreciation in the value of, Common Stock (including, without limitation, securities convertible or exchangeable into or exercisable for shares of Common Stock), as deemed by the Committee consistent with the purposes of this Plan. Subject to Section 5.6, the Committee shall determine the terms and conditions of any Other Stock-Based Award (including which rights of a shareholder, if any, the recipient shall have with respect to Common Stock associated with any such award) and may provide that such award is payable in whole or in part in cash. An Other Stock-Based Award may be subject to the attainment of such specified performance goals or targets as the Committee may determine, subject to the provisions of this Plan.

11. Change of Control.

(a) A Change of Control shall mean:

(i) the acquisition by any person of beneficial ownership of 30% or more of the outstanding shares of the Common Stock or 30% or more of the combined voting power of CenturyLink's then outstanding securities entitled to vote generally in the election of directors; provided, however, that for purposes of this subsection (i), the following acquisitions shall not constitute a Change of Control:

(A) any acquisition (other than a Business Combination (as defined below) which constitutes a Change of Control under Section 11(a)(iii) hereof) of Common Stock directly from the Company,

(B) any acquisition of Common Stock by the Company,

(C) any acquisition of Common Stock by any employee benefit plan (or related trust) sponsored or maintained by the Company or any corporation controlled by the Company, or

(D) any acquisition of Common Stock by any corporation pursuant to a Business Combination that does not constitute a Change of Control under Section 11(a)(iii) hereof; or

(ii) individuals who, as of May 23, 2018, constituted the Board of Directors of CenturyLink (the "Incumbent Board") cease for any reason to constitute at least a majority of the Board of Directors; provided, however, that any individual becoming a director subsequent to such date whose election, or nomination for election by CenturyLink's shareholders, was approved by a vote of at least two-thirds of the directors then comprising the Incumbent Board shall be considered a member of the Incumbent Board, unless such individual's initial assumption of office occurs as a result of an actual or threatened election contest with respect to the election or removal of directors or other actual or threatened solicitation of proxies or consents by or on behalf of a person other than the Incumbent Board; or

(iii) consummation of a reorganization, share exchange, merger or consolidation (including any such transaction involving any direct or indirect subsidiary of CenturyLink) or sale or other disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Company (a "Business Combination"); *provided, however*, that in no such case shall any such transaction constitute a Change of Control if immediately following such Business Combination:

(A) the individuals and entities who were the beneficial owners of CenturyLink's outstanding Common Stock and CenturyLink's voting securities entitled to vote generally in the election of directors immediately prior to such Business Combination have direct or indirect

beneficial ownership, respectively, of more than 50% of the then outstanding shares of common stock, and more than 50% of the combined voting power of the then outstanding voting securities entitled to vote generally in the election of directors of the surviving or successor corporation, or, if applicable, the ultimate parent company thereof (the “Post-Transaction Corporation”), and

(B) except to the extent that such ownership existed prior to the Business Combination, no person (excluding the Post-Transaction Corporation and any employee benefit plan or related trust of either CenturyLink, the Post-Transaction Corporation or any subsidiary of either corporation) beneficially owns, directly or indirectly, 20% or more of the then outstanding shares of common stock of the corporation resulting from such Business Combination or 20% or more of the combined voting power of the then outstanding voting securities of such corporation, and

(C) at least a majority of the members of the board of directors of the Post-Transaction Corporation were members of the Incumbent Board at the time of the execution of the initial agreement, or of the action of the Board of Directors, providing for such Business Combination; or

(iv) approval by the shareholders of CenturyLink of a complete liquidation or dissolution of CenturyLink.

For purposes of this Section 11, the term “person” shall mean a natural person or entity, and shall also mean the group or syndicate created when two or more persons act as a syndicate or other group (including a partnership or limited partnership) for the purpose of acquiring, holding, or disposing of a security, except that “person” shall not include an underwriter temporarily holding a security pursuant to an offering of the security.

(b) No Incentive Agreement shall provide for acceleration of vesting upon the occurrence of a Change of Control without a contemporaneous or subsequent termination of the participant’s employment or service relationship. Notwithstanding the foregoing, no later than 30 days after a Change of Control of the type described in subsections (a)(i) or (a)(ii) of this Section 11 and no later than 30 days after the approval by the Board of a Change of Control of the type described in subsections (a)(iii) or (a)(iv) of this Section 11, the Committee, acting in its sole discretion without the consent or approval of any participant (and notwithstanding any removal or attempted removal of some or all of the members thereof as directors or Committee members), may act to effect one or more of the alternatives listed below, which may vary among individual participants and which may vary among Incentives held by any individual participant; *provided, however*, that no such action may be taken if it would result in the imposition of a penalty on the participant under Section 409A of the Code as a result thereof:

(i) require that all outstanding options, SARs or Other Stock-Based Awards be exercised on or before a specified date (before or after such Change of Control) fixed by the Committee, after which specified date all unexercised options, SARs and Other Stock-Based Awards and all rights of participants thereunder would terminate,

(ii) make such equitable adjustments to Incentives then outstanding as the Committee deems appropriate to reflect such Change of Control and provide participants with substantially equivalent rights before and after such Change of Control (provided, however, that the Committee may determine in its sole discretion that no adjustment is necessary),

(iii) provide for mandatory conversion or exchange of some or all of the outstanding options, SARs, restricted stock units or Other Stock-Based Awards held by some or all participants as of a date, before or after such Change of Control, specified by the Committee, in which event such Incentives would be deemed automatically cancelled and the Company would pay, or cause to be paid, to each such participant an amount of cash per share equal to the excess, if any, of the Change of Control Value of the shares subject to such option, SAR, restricted stock unit or Other Stock-Based Award, as defined and calculated below, over the per share exercise price or Base Price of such Incentive or, in lieu of such cash payment, the issuance of Common Stock or securities of an acquiring entity having a Fair Market Value equal to such excess, or

(iv) provide that thereafter, upon any exercise or payment of an Incentive that entitles the holder to receive Common Stock, the holder shall be entitled to purchase or receive under such Incentive, in lieu of the number of shares of Common Stock then covered by such Incentive, the number and class of shares of stock or other securities or property (including cash) to which the holder would have been entitled pursuant to the terms of the agreement providing for the reorganization, share exchange, merger, consolidation or asset sale, if, immediately prior to such Change of Control, the holder had been the record owner of the number of shares of Common Stock then covered by such Incentive.

(c) For the purposes of conversions or exchanges under paragraph (iii) of Section 11(c), the “Change of Control Value” shall equal the amount determined by whichever of the following items is applicable:

(i) the per share price to be paid to holders of Common Stock in any such merger, consolidation or other reorganization,

(ii) the price per share offered to holders of Common Stock in any tender offer or exchange offer whereby a Change of Control takes place, or

(iii) in all other events, the fair market value of a share of Common Stock, as determined by the Committee as of the time determined by the Committee to be immediately prior to the effective time of the conversion or exchange.

(d) In the event that the consideration offered to shareholders of CenturyLink in any transaction described in this Section 11 consists of anything other than cash, the Committee shall determine the fair cash equivalent of the portion of the consideration offered that is other than cash.

12. General.

12.1 Duration. No Incentives may be granted under the Plan after May 23, 2028; provided, however, that subject to Section 12.8, the Plan shall remain in effect after such date with respect to Incentives granted prior to that date, until all such Incentives have either been satisfied by the issuance of shares of Common Stock or otherwise been terminated under the terms of the Plan and all restrictions imposed on shares of Common Stock in connection with their issuance under the Plan have lapsed.

12.2 Transferability.

(a) No Incentives granted hereunder may be transferred, pledged, assigned, or otherwise encumbered by a participant except:

(i) by will;

(ii) by the laws of descent and distribution;

(iii) if permitted by the Committee and so provided in the Incentive Agreement or an amendment thereto, pursuant to a domestic relations order, as defined in the Code; or

(iv) as to options only, if permitted by the Committee and so provided in the Incentive Agreement or an amendment thereto, (i) to Immediate Family Members (as defined in Section 12.2(b)); (ii) to a partnership in which the participant and/or Immediate Family Members, or entities in which the participant and/or Immediate Family Members are the sole owners, members, or beneficiaries, as appropriate, are the sole partners; (iii) to a limited liability company in which the participant and/or Immediate Family Members, or entities in which the participant and/or Immediate Family Members are the sole owners, members, or beneficiaries, as appropriate, are the sole members; or (iv) to a trust for the sole benefit of the participant and/or Immediate Family Members.

(b) “Immediate Family Members” shall be defined as the spouse and natural or adopted children or grandchildren of the participant and their spouses. To the extent that an incentive stock option is permitted to be transferred during the lifetime of the participant, it shall be treated thereafter as a nonqualified stock option. Any attempted assignment, transfer, pledge, hypothecation, or other disposition of Incentives, or levy of attachment or similar process upon Incentives not specifically permitted herein, shall be null and void and without effect.

12.3 Effect of Termination of Employment or Death. In the event that a participant ceases to be an employee of the Company or to provide services to the Company for any reason, including death, disability, early retirement or normal retirement, any Incentives may be exercised, shall vest or shall expire at such times as may be determined by the Committee and provided in the Incentive Agreement.

12.4 Additional Conditions. Anything in this Plan to the contrary notwithstanding: (a) the Company may, if it shall determine it necessary or desirable for any reason, at the time of award of any Incentive or the issuance of any shares of Common Stock pursuant to any Incentive, require the recipient of the Incentive, as a condition to the receipt thereof or to the receipt of shares of Common Stock issued pursuant thereto, to deliver to the Company a written representation of present intention to acquire the Incentive or the shares of Common Stock issued pursuant thereto for his own account for investment and not for distribution; and (b) if at any time the Company further determines, in its sole discretion, that the listing, registration or qualification (or any updating of any such document) of any Incentive or the shares of Common Stock issuable pursuant thereto is necessary on any securities exchange or under any federal or state securities or blue sky law, or that the consent or approval of any governmental regulatory body is necessary or desirable as a condition of, or in connection with the award of any Incentive, the issuance of shares of Common Stock pursuant thereto, or the removal of any restrictions imposed on such shares, such Incentive shall not be awarded or such shares of Common Stock shall not be issued or such restrictions shall not be removed, as the case may be, in whole or in part, unless such listing, registration, qualification, consent or approval shall have been effected or obtained free of any conditions not acceptable to the Company.

12.5 Withholding.

(a) The Company shall have the right to withhold from any payments made or stock issued under the Plan or to collect as a condition of payment, issuance or vesting, any taxes required by law to be withheld (up to the maximum permissible withholding rate). At any time that a participant is required to pay to the Company an amount required to be withheld under applicable income tax laws in connection with an Incentive (each such date, a "Tax Date"), the participant may, subject to Section 12.5(b) below, satisfy this obligation in whole or in part by electing (the "Election") to deliver currently owned shares of Common Stock or to have the Company withhold shares of Common Stock, in each case having a value equal to the maximum statutory amount required to be withheld under federal, state and local law. The value of the shares to be delivered or withheld shall be based on the Fair Market Value of the Common Stock on the Tax Date.

(b) Each Election must be made prior to the Tax Date. For participants who are not subject to Section 16 of the 1934 Act, the Committee may disapprove of any Election, may suspend or terminate the right to make Elections, or may provide with respect to any Incentive that the right to make Elections shall not apply to such Incentive. If a participant makes an election under Section 83(b) of the Code with respect to shares of restricted stock, an Election to have shares withheld to satisfy withholding taxes is not permitted to be made.

12.6 No Continued Employment. No participant under the Plan shall have any right, solely based on his or her participation in the Plan, to continue to serve as an employee, officer, director, consultant, or advisor of the Company for any period of time or to any right to continue his or her present or any other rate of compensation.

12.7 Deferral Permitted. Payment of an Incentive may be deferred at the option of the participant if permitted in the Incentive Agreement. Any deferral arrangements shall comply with Section 409A of the Code.

12.8 Amendments to or Termination of the Plan. The Board may amend or discontinue this Plan at any time; *provided, however*, that no such amendment may:

(a) amend Section 6.5 or Section 7.6 to permit repricing of options or SARs without the approval of shareholders;

(b) materially impair, without the consent of the recipient, an Incentive previously granted, except that the Company retains all of its rights under Section 11; or

(c) materially revise the Plan without the approval of the shareholders. A material revision of the Plan includes (i) except for adjustments permitted herein, a material increase to the maximum number of shares of Common Stock that may be issued through the Plan, (ii) a material increase to the benefits accruing to participants under the Plan, (iii) a material expansion of the classes of persons eligible to participate in the Plan, (iv) an expansion of the types of awards available for grant under the Plan, (v) a material extension of the term of the Plan and (vi) a material change that reduces the price at which shares of Common Stock may be offered through the Plan.

12.9 Repurchase. Upon approval of the Committee, the Company may repurchase all or a portion of a previously granted Incentive from a participant by mutual agreement by payment to the participant of cash or Common Stock or a combination thereof with a value equal to the value of the Incentive determined in good faith by the Committee; provided, however, that in no event will this section be construed to grant the Committee the power to take any action in violation of Section 6.5, 7.6, or 12.13.

12.10 Definition of Fair Market Value. Whenever “Fair Market Value” of Common Stock shall be determined for purposes of this Plan, except as provided below in connection with a cashless exercise through a broker, it shall be determined as follows: (a) if the Common Stock is listed on an established stock exchange or any automated quotation system that provides sale quotations, the closing sale price for a share of the Common Stock on such exchange or quotation system on the date as of which fair market value is to be determined, (b) if the Common Stock is not listed on any exchange or quotation system, but bid and asked prices are quoted and published, the mean between the quoted bid and asked prices on the date as of which fair market value is to be determined, and if bid and asked prices are not available on such day, on the next preceding day on which such prices were available; and (c) if the Common Stock is not regularly quoted, the fair market value of a share of Common Stock on the date as of which fair market value is to be determined, as established by the Committee in good faith. In the context of a cashless exercise through a broker, the “Fair Market Value” shall be the price at

which the Common Stock subject to the stock option is actually sold in the market to pay the option exercise price. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if so determined by the Committee, "Fair Market Value" may be determined as an average selling price during a period specified by the Committee that is within 30 days before or 30 days after the date of grant, provided that the commitment to grant the stock right based on such valuation method must be irrevocable before the beginning of the specified period, and such valuation method must be used consistently for grants of stock rights under the same and substantially similar programs during any particular calendar year.

12.11 Liability.

(a) Neither CenturyLink, its affiliates or any of their respective directors or officers shall be liable to any participant relating to the participant's failure to (i) realize any anticipated benefit under an Incentive due to the failure to satisfy any applicable conditions to vesting, payment or settlement, or (ii) realize any anticipated tax benefit or consequence due to changes in applicable law, the particular circumstances of the participant, or any other reason.

(b) No member of the Committee (or officer of the Company exercising delegated authority of the Committee under Section 3 thereof) will be liable for any action or determination made in good faith with respect to this Plan or any Incentive.

12.12 Interpretation.

(a) Unless the context otherwise requires, (i) all references to Sections are to Sections of this Plan, (ii) the term "including" means including without limitation, (iii) all references to any particular Incentive Agreement shall be deemed to include any amendments thereto or restatements thereof, and (iv) all references to any particular statute shall be deemed to include any amendment, restatement or re-enactment thereof or any statute or regulation substituted therefore.

(b) The titles and subtitles used in this Plan or any Incentive Agreement are used for convenience only and are not to be considered in construing or interpreting this Plan or the Incentive Agreement.

(c) All pronouns contained in this Plan or any Incentive Agreement, and any variations thereof, shall be deemed to refer to the masculine, feminine or neutral, singular or plural, as the identities of the parties may require.

(d) Whenever any provision of this Plan authorizes the Committee to take action or make determinations with respect to outstanding Incentives that have been granted or awarded by the chief executive officer of CenturyLink under Section 3.2 hereof, each such reference to "Committee" shall be deemed to include a reference to any officer of the Company that has delegated administrative authority under Section 3.2 of this Plan (subject to the limitations of such section).

12.13 Compliance with Section 409A. It is the intent of the Company that this Plan comply with the requirements of Section 409A of the Code with respect to any Incentives that constitute non-qualified deferred compensation under Section 409A, and the Company intends to operate the Plan in compliance with Section 409A and the Department of Treasury's guidance or regulations promulgated thereunder. If the Committee grants any Incentives or takes any other action that would, either immediately or upon vesting or payment of the Incentive, inadvertently result in the imposition of a penalty on a participant under Section 409A of the Code, then the Company, in its discretion, may, to the maximum extent permitted by law, unilaterally rescind *ab initio*, sever, amend or otherwise modify the grant or action (or any provision of the Incentive) in such manner necessary for the penalty to be inapplicable or reduced.

12.14 Data Privacy. As a condition of receipt of any Incentive, each participant explicitly and unambiguously consents to the collection, use, and transfer, in electronic or other form, of personal data as described in this Section by and among, as applicable, the Company and its affiliates for the exclusive purpose of implementing, administering, and managing the Plan and Incentives and such participant's participation in the Plan. In furtherance of such implementation, administration, and management, the Company and its affiliates may hold certain personal information about a participant, including, but not limited to, the participant's name, home address, telephone number, date of birth, social security or insurance number or other identification number, salary, nationality, job title(s), information regarding any securities of the Company or any of its affiliates, and details of all Incentives (the "Data"). In addition to transferring the Data amongst themselves as necessary for the purpose of implementation, administration, and management of the Plan and Incentives and the participant's participation in the Plan, the Company and its affiliates may each transfer the Data to any third parties assisting the Company in the implementation, administration, and management of the Plan and Incentives and such participant's participation in the Plan. Recipients of the Data may be located in the participant's country or elsewhere, and the participant's country and any given recipient's country may have different data privacy laws and protections. By accepting an Incentive, each participant authorizes such recipients to receive, possess, use, retain, and transfer the Data, in electronic or other form, for the purposes of assisting the Company in the implementation, administration, and management of the Plan and Incentives and such participant's participation in the Plan, including any requisite transfer of such Data as may be required to a broker or other third party with whom the Company or the participant may elect to deposit any shares of Common Stock. The Data related to a participant will be held only as long as is necessary to implement, administer, and manage the Plan and Incentives and the participant's participation in the Plan. A participant may, at any time, view the Data held by the Company with respect to such Participant, request additional information about the storage and processing of the Data with respect to such participant, recommend any necessary corrections to the Data with respect to the participant, or refuse or withdraw the consents herein in writing, in any case without cost, by contacting his or her local human resources representative. However, if a participant refuses or withdraws the consents described herein, the Company may cancel the participant's eligibility to participate in the Plan, and in the Committee's discretion, the participant may forfeit any outstanding Incentive. For more information on the consequences of refusal to consent or withdrawal of consent, participants may contact their local human resources representative.

12.15 Participants Outside of the United States. The Committee may modify the terms of any Incentive under the Plan made to or held by a participant who is then a resident, or is primarily employed or providing services, outside of the United States in any manner deemed

by the Committee to be necessary or appropriate in order that such Incentive shall conform to laws, regulations, and customs of the country in which the Participant is then a resident or primarily employed or providing services, or so that the value and other benefits of the Incentive to such participant, as affected by non-United States tax laws and other restrictions applicable as a result of the participant's residence, employment, or providing services abroad, shall be comparable to the value of such Incentive to a Participant who is a resident, or is primarily employed or providing services, in the United States. An Incentive may be modified under this Section 12.15 in a manner that is inconsistent with the express terms of the Plan, so long as such modifications will not contravene any applicable law or regulation or result in actual liability under Section 16(b) of the 1934 Act for the participant whose Incentive is modified. Additionally, the Committee may adopt such procedures and sub-plans as are necessary or appropriate to permit participation in the Plan by Eligible Persons who are non-United States nationals or are primarily employed or providing services outside the United States.

* * * * *

[certificate intentionally omitted]

[\(Back To Top\)](#)