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Organization:	Merit Network, Inc.
Project Name:	REACH Michigan Middle Mile Collaborative
Project Type:	Infrastructure
State(s):	Michigan
Federal Award:	\$33,289,221

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The REACH Michigan Middle Mile Collaborative project proposes to build a 955-mile advanced fiber-optic network through underserved counties in Michigan's Lower Peninsula to serve institutions, businesses and households. The project will extend Merit's 1600 miles of existing network and intends to directly connect 44 anchor institutions including libraries, universities, community colleges, and community health care centers. The open design of the proposed expansion enables all service providers to directly connect to the network to make broadband more easily available to more than 886,000 households, 45,800 businesses, and 422 anchor institutions. In addition, the proposed service area includes 86 government organizations, 69 K-12 institutions, 63 public library systems, 58 major healthcare facilities, and 50 higher education locations. The proposal has strong community support including four partnerships, one of which is a Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Small Business, and three last mile providers: Peninsula Fiber Network, Allband Communications Cooperative, and Air Advantage.

The REACH Michigan Middle Mile Collaborative project also proposes to:

- Foster economic development and growth in underserved areas of Michigan that lack widely available and affordable broadband services.
- Offer fiber services and speeds from 1.5 Mbps to 10 Gbps to a service area with more than 932,000 anchor institutions, households, and businesses.
- Collaborate with its partners to offer broadband Internet, voice, and video services to households and businesses.

ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY

Merit Network, Inc., a not-for-profit broadband service provider, has built and run networks for anchor institutions throughout the state for 43 years, supporting the education and not-for-profit community. Michigan State University uses Merit's current network and high definition video to teach remote medical school classes around the state. Merit currently operates 1,600 fiber miles, including the Michigan Lambda Rail and Blue Line fiber projects in its network, and the REACH project expands the reach of the network by more than 50 percent. Merit has more than 70 letters of support from private industry, the state, counties, cities, libraries and anchor institutions that view the project as a means for improving access within local communities.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- ACD.net
- Lynx Network Group, LLC
- The Iserv Company
- TC3Net

Data provided in the project description is based on information supplied by the applicant. An executive summary of this application can be found on www.broadbandusa.gov.

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