

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: USCOC of Greater Missouri, LLC (referred to as U.S. Cellular)

Public Notice Submissions

-----**Service Area:** MISSOURI

Submitter: Fidelity Communications Co. and subsidiaries

Comment: Fidelity is an ILEC, CLEC, cable TV and internet service provider, who serves a portion of the Applicant's proposed funded underserved service area. Fidelity Communications provides service through its wholly-owned subsidiaries: Fidelity Telephone Co, Fidelity Communications Services I, Fidelity Cablevision and Fidelity Networks. The specific areas served by Fidelity include the city limits of Sullivan, New Haven, Owensville, Gerald, Rosebud, Salem, Lebanon, and Rolla, Missouri and some surrounding areas of Franklin, Gasconade, Washington, Dent, Laclede, Phelps and Crawford counties. Fidelity has built a robust fiber, coax and copper network providing a large number of subscribers with a package of voice, video and broadband services. Fidelity has provided quality broadband service via DSL and cable modems in these areas since as early as 2000 with current speeds up to 15Mbps.

Submitter: Cable One, Inc.

Comment: Cable One, Inc. is a multi-system broadband provider operating in 19 states. Cable One offers residential broadband service with speeds up to 10 MB and customizable commercial solutions with flexible bandwidth offerings from 5Mbps to 1 Gbps. By November 1, 2009, the majority of Cable One systems will also be offering 12 Mb residential broadband service with a 20 MB boost. Cable One provides its subscribers with quality service offerings at competitive rates. Cable One expends substantial capital and resources to ensure that customers enjoy the latest technology and the highest standards of customer service, and has made its customers and its communities its first priority.

Please refer to our supporting documentation and comments that establish that Cable One already operates in census tract(s) encompassing or included in Applicant's Proposed Funded Service Area. The uploaded document includes maps showing census tracts and homes passed for each the applicable systems, current advertisements for residential and commercial broadband offerings, and subscriber data by census tract.

Cable one's current broadband service offerings are as follows:

Residential:

Economy, Speed (Down/up) - 1.5 Mb/150 kbps, Service Rate - \$20.00

Standard , Speed (Down/up) - 5 Mb/500 kbps, Service Rate - \$43.00

Premium, Speed (Down/up) - 10 Mb/1 Mb, Service Rate - \$53.00

Commercial:

Economy, Speed (Down/up) - 5 Mb/1.0 Mb, Service Rate - \$69.65

Standard, Speed (Down/up) - 10.0 Mb/1.0 Mb, Service Rate - \$85.95

Premium, Speed (Down/up) - 12.0 Mb/1.5 Mb, Service Rate - \$99.95

Ultra, Speed (Down/up) - 15.0 Mb/2.0 Mb, Service Rate - \$199.95

Enterprise Plus, Speed (Down/up) - 20.0 Mb/2.5 Mb, Service Rate - \$299.95

Discounted bundles and promotional pricing are also available.

Submitter: Granby Telephone Company

Comment: Granby Telephone Company (GTC) has been serving this area since 1904 and Stouffer Communications, a partner company, has been providing Internet access service since 1995. Broadband services at speeds up to 1 Mbps has been available since 2005 and 3 Mbps have been available since April 2009. We were the first in the area to provide broadband service to rural Americans. We continue to be a leader in providing advanced communications to 99% of our service areas. Being a full service provider, GTC offers our customers the opportunity for consolidated packaging of communication services with competitive discounts. GTC is one of the top employers in the area. Because GTC's employees are hometown people, our community benefits from GTC's local customer service where customers always receive personal attention.

In keeping with our long tradition of providing cutting-edge technologies in communities that large providers ignore, GTC has begun a Fiber To The Home (FTTH) project. The first section of our FTTH project will be completed by the first quarter 2010. Additionally, the entire project is estimated to be

completed in 2014, and every customer in GTC's service areas, even in the most remote rural areas, will have a direct fiber feed from their home and business to the world.

Submitter: McDonald County Telephone

Comment: McDonald County Telephone Company is capable of providing broadband at speeds of at 3.0 Mbps downstream and 1.5 Mbps upstream to 100% of its customers in all of its exchanges where US Cellular's application overlaps McDonald County's service territory. McDonald County's territory is neither unserved nor underserved.

Submitter: Grand River Mutual Tel.

Comment: U.S. Cellular's application covers part of Grand River Mutual Telephone Company's exchange. Grand River is capable of providing wireline broadband service to 100% of its customers throughout its territory. The majority of Grand River's customers receive service at 6.0 Mbps. Grand River's territory is neither unserved nor underserved.

Submitter: Utopian Wireless Corporation

Comment: Proprietary data regarding actual service provider broadband penetration in the proposed service area for this application demonstrates the area is already served by broadband options and therefore this application is ineligible for funding pursuant to the requirements of the Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) and Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP).

Submitter: Mark Twain Rural Telephone Company

Comment: The application submitted by USCOC of Greater Missouri, LLC (referred to as U.S. Cellular) contains inaccurate and incomplete information and, consistent with the NOFA, should be rejected. USCOC of Greater Missouri, LLC (referred to as U.S. Cellular) incorrectly classifies a significant portion of the proposed service area that is currently being served by Mark Twain as "unserved" and / or "underserved" as defined by the NOFA. Mark Twain responds by providing evidence and supporting documentation to prove that these areas served by Mark Twain are in fact adequately "served" with copper, wireless and / or fiber optic facilities. Mark Twain herein provides proof that all subscribers in the designated areas served by Mark Twain have access to adequate and affordable broadband service that exceeds 3 Mbps. As such, the proposed service area contained in the application that is currently

served by Mark Twain should not be eligible for funding according to the NOFA rules and regulations posted by NTIA and RUS.

Submitter: Northeast Missouri Rural Telephone Company

Comment: The application submitted by USCOC of Greater Missouri, LLC (referred to as U.S. Cellular) contains inaccurate and incomplete information for the proposed funded service area. Northeast Missouri Rural Telephone Company (NEMR) demonstrates that it provides broadband service with download speeds greater than 768K to 100% of the households and businesses located within its service territory. As such, this area is “SERVED” based on the definitions as established in the Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA). In this public notice response NEMR is providing; 1) a map of the overlapping area where NEMR provides broadband services, 2) NEMR’s DSL high speed Internet advertising 3) the number of residential households and business establishments capable of receiving broadband services from NEMR within our service area, 4) the number of residential households and business establishments subscribing to our broadband, which is 46.5% of households and 71.0% of businesses; 5) the advertised download and upload speeds and service rates, and 6) comments addressing the existing services offered within the proposed funded service area.

Submitter: Ellington Telephone Company, Inc.

Comment: Ellington Telephone Company provides DSL Broadband Service (at speeds of at least 768 Kbps downstream and 200 Kbps upstream) that is available to more than 95% of the households within the USCOC of Greater Missouri, LLC (referred to as U.S. Cellular) proposed funded service area application overlapping Ellington Tel’s exchange area boundaries. Forty percent (40%) of Ellington Tel’s telephone service customers currently subscribe to Ellington Tel’s Broadband Service; and, the majority of Ellington Tel’s Broadband customers can receive downstream speeds of 3 Mbps or higher.

Submitter: Seneca Goodman and Ozark Telephone Companies

Comment: Seneca, Goodman, and Ozark Telephone Companies, an RUS/RDUP telecom loan program borrower, currently provides broadband internet service access to all establishments located within their certificated service areas. The lowest advertised broadband internet service package is 1 Mb downstream with 3 Mb internet service also being advertised. I.P. Video services are available throughout all exchange areas, further demonstrating and utilizing the capacity of the established broadband facilities. The Seneca Goodman and Ozark Telephone Companies have provided dedicated

fiber access for broadband service transmission to schools located within their exchange areas, and in 2004 began providing broadband internet access in their certificated exchange areas of rural southwest Missouri, Northwest Arkansas, and Northeast Oklahoma. Currently several fixed broadband facility and nationwide wireless providers are competing for broadband services within the exchange areas of Seneca, Goodman, and Ozark Telephone Companies.

Submitter: Kingdom Telephone Company

Comment: Kingdom Telephone Company is capable of providing broadband at speeds of at 4.0 Mbps downstream and 512K Kbps upstream to 100% of its customers in all of its exchanges where U.S. Cellular's application overlaps Kingdom's service territory. Over 90% of Kingdom's broadband customers receive service at 1.0 Mbps or higher. Kingdom's territory is neither unserved nor underserved.

Submitter: Cable America Missouri LLC

Comment: CableAmerica currently provides Broadband Internet speeds of 5.2Mbps download and 512Kbps upload.

Submitter: Farber Telephone Company

Comment: Farber Telephone Company currently deploys DSL capable of providing a minimum of 768kbps Broadband Internet Service, all households in the Farber Telephone Exchange area are capable of receiving this service. Farber Telephone Company began planning for the construction of an RUS/RDUP financed Fiber to The Home project in the 1st Quarter of 2008, upon completion the network will be capable of delivering a minimum of 100Mbps to each establishment within the Farber Telephone Company Exchange. Completion of this project should be accomplished well within the build out timeframe given to successful applications awarded thru the Broadband Initiatives Program or Broadband Technology Opportunities Program.

Submitter: Craw-Kan Telephone Cooperative, Inc.

Comment: Craw-Kan Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (CKT) is a telecommunications company serving rural areas of Southeast Kansas, Southwest Missouri and Northeast Oklahoma with high quality communication services for more than 55 years. As a full service provider, CKT was among the first in the area to provide broadband service to rural customers. CKT has diligently worked to extend broadband services to over 97% of our customer base. CKT counts among its broadband service customers community anchor institutions including public safety agencies, schools, libraries and

healthcare providers. CKT is in the midst of a Fiber to the Home project to provide additional broadband capability in an ever evolving industry.

Submitter: New Florence Telephone Company

Comment: New Florence Telephone Company is capable of providing broadband at speeds to 1.5mbps downstream and 512kbps upstream to 100% of its local exchange territory. It appears that USCOC of Greater MO - US Cellular application overlaps the company's exchange service area that includes the community of New Florence and New Florence Telephone believes that its service area is neither unserved or underserved.

Submitter: CenturyLink

Comment: Respondent's Summary (Not confidential)

The proposed service areas are not wholly underserved or unserved.

CenturyLink is submitting data that shows the application's proposed service area is not underserved or unserved, under program guidelines. Accordingly, the application must be denied as ineligible. With limited funding and a large pool of applications, program grants and loans must be directed only to areas that are truly underserved or unserved, as stipulated in the program guidelines.

CenturyLink can certify that its affiliates currently offer broadband service in some or all of the applicant's proposed service areas. Attached is a state map that is a representative sample of areas where the application overlaps our existing broadband deployment. CenturyLink also provides data showing broadband availability in our local telephone exchanges within the proposed service areas. We will provide additional information on request if that will further assist the agency's review.

This data is not exhaustive; the application may include other areas also currently served with broadband by other providers, which should be considered in the assessment of the application. Our data combined with that of other broadband providers would likely show further duplication and overlap of broadband services in the proposed service areas.

CenturyLink has committed to upgrade and extend broadband.

CenturyLink has an extensive broadband footprint today, and has committed to extend that service even further. As part of its merger commitments to the Federal Communications Commission, CenturyLink committed to offer retail broadband Internet access service to 100% of its broadband eligible access lines by July 1, 2012. Consequently, virtually no areas served by CenturyTel or Embarq local operating companies, in any state, will be underserved or unserved at the end of three years.

CenturyLink also agreed to meet targets for minimum download speeds. CenturyLink will ensure availability of retail broadband Internet access service with a download speed of 1.5 Mbps to 87% of the broadband eligible access lines by July 1, 2011. It will ensure availability with a download speed of 3 Mbps to 75% of broadband eligible access lines by July 1, 2010, to 78% of broadband eligible lines by July 1, 2011, and to 80% of broadband eligible lines within 3 years of the close date. Nationwide, our average tele-density is 23 customers per square mile. This commitment ensures availability of broadband even to very rural consumers.

The agency should consider the importance of this commitment, as CenturyLink's continuing investment inevitably will make applications that overlap CenturyLink service areas less viable. CenturyLink has proven, industry-leading experience in deploying broadband networks and services using both wireline and wireless technology, and a strong commitment and focus on rural areas. Today, it serves over 7 million access lines and 2.1 million broadband customers in 33 states.

Submitter: Imagination Inc dba I-Land Internet Services

Comment: Imagination Inc, dba I-Land Internet Services, respectfully requests that the services we offer and the customers we serve are considered in determining funding for this application. We offer point-to-point wireless broadband service and DSL in numerous areas throughout Missouri, including areas within this application, and are continually expanding our service areas. We have been providing broadband service for over five years and deployed WiMax service in the past year. We currently provide broadband service to well over 3,000 customers, and those customer numbers will only continue to grow significantly as we expand our service areas. We are committed to investing in our networks in order to provide broadband service to both our existing and future customers.

Submitter: Choctaw Telephone

Comment: Choctaw Telephone Company demonstrates that the area USCOC of Greater Missouri, LLC proposes to serve which overlaps Choctaw Telephone's service area does not meet the criteria to categorize an area as remote or unserved and does not meet all of the criteria which categorize an area as underserved.

As demonstrated, 80% of households in Choctaw Telephone's service area, including those areas which are part of Applicant's proposed funded service area, are able to readily subscribe upon request and have access to facilities-based, terrestrial broadband services at a minimum transmission speed of greater than 768 kbps downstream and 200 kbps upstream from Choctaw Telephone and, therefore, no part of this overlapping area is unserved or underserved on the basis of access to broadband service. In addition, Choctaw Telephone demonstrates that the rate of broadband subscribership for households in Choctaw Telephone's service area is significant. In addition, Choctaw Telephone is less than 50 miles from the limits of a non-rural area and, therefore, it is not remote.

Submitter: Stouffer Communications

Comment: Stouffer Communications currently serves this area with internet access and Broadband services. Speeds up to 1Mbps have been available since 2003 and speeds of 3Mbps are currently available. We were the first in our area to provide advanced broadband services to rural residents. We continue to expand our coverage areas to include as close to 100% of the customers within our service areas as possible. We have upgraded the majority of our service access points in an effort to provide even the most rural customers with advanced Broadband internet. Our backbone is fiber-based and we are able to offer a very reliable connection at an affordable price to customers in our area.

Submitter: Windstream

Comment: Windstream's data strongly suggest that the proposed funded service area likely does not qualify as an underserved area. Windstream offers facilities-based, terrestrial broadband service (meeting the definition set forth in the Notice of Funds Availability) to some of the households in the proposed funded service area, and such households can readily subscribe to Windstream's broadband service upon request. Windstream also has reason to believe that competitive broadband offerings are available in exchanges overlapping the proposed funded service area. Given this information, agency officials should further investigate existing broadband offerings within the proposed funded service area, so that officials can be sure that the area, in fact, qualifies as underserved.

Windstream is a communications and entertainment company with more than 1 million broadband customers in 16 states. Investing more than \$200 million in broadband deployment over the last several years, Windstream now offers approximately 89% of its 3 million voice customers access to quality and affordable broadband service.

The agencies define an “underserved area” as follows: “Underserved area means a proposed funded service area, composed of one or more contiguous census blocks meeting certain criteria that measure the availability of broadband service and the level of advertised broadband speeds. These criteria conform to the two distinct components of the Broadband Infrastructure category of eligible projects- Last Mile and Middle Mile. Specifically, a proposed funded service area may qualify as underserved for last mile projects if at least one of the following factors is met, though the presumption will be that more than one factor is present: 1. No more than 50 percent of the households in the proposed funded service area have access to facilities-based, terrestrial broadband service at greater than the minimum broadband transmission speed (set forth in the definition of broadband above); 2. No fixed or mobile broadband service provider advertises broadband transmission speeds of at least three megabits per second (“mbps”) downstream in the proposed funded service area; or 3. The rate of broadband subscribership for the proposed funded service area is 40 percent of households or less. A proposed funded service area may qualify as underserved for Middle Mile projects if one interconnection point terminates in a proposed funded service area that qualifies as unserved or underserved for Last Mile projects.”

Submitter: Suddenlink Communications

Comment: This response conclusively demonstrates that Suddenlink and its competitors already offer robust broadband service within the mapped area of the applicant’s proposed funded service area and that this mapped area is neither unserved nor underserved. Additional information is provided in the uploaded document, including (1) sample marketing material; (2) a guide on how to read the data we entered in the “Existing Broadband Subscribers” section of this response; (3) a summary of the vendor and methodology used for estimating competitive-service subscribers in the mapped area; (4) Suddenlink contact information, should one or more federal agencies have questions or require additional information; and (5) a summary of concerns with the response process and the limitations that process has placed on our ability to provide NTIA/RUS with relevant, timely data.

Submitter: Chariton Valley Telephone

Comment: Chariton Valley Telephone currently provides broadband access capability to 100% of the households within the area of the proposed funded serving area indicated "PFSA" challenged area. Chariton Valley Telephone is a rural ILEC that has been serving the area for some time. In the challenged PFSA they currently offer ADSL broadband and FTTH broadband data services. As of June 2009 they are serving broadband customers within this area or 32.8% of the households with Broadband. Chariton Valley Telephone offers speeds of over 3Mbps throughout this area. All of the wireline customers have 768Kbps or above access speeds in this area. Therefore by any of the definitions of the ARRA broadband program this area does not qualify as unserved and 3Mbps speeds are available throughout the challenge area.

Submitter: Grand River Mutual Telephone Company

Comment: Grand River Mutual Telephone Company is capable of providing broadband at speeds of at least 768Kbps down and 200 Kbps up to 100% of its customers in the exchanges where USCOC's application overlaps GRM's service territory. Over 90% of GRM's broadband customers receive service at 6.0 Mbps. GRM's territory is neither unserved nor underserved.

Submitter: Peace Valley Telephone Co., Inc.

Comment: I write on behalf of Peace Valley Telephone Co., Inc. We are a small Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier in Howell and a small portion of Oregon County Missouri. We operate as an independent telecommunications carrier of last resort. We cover approximately 100 square miles between West Plains, MO, Mountain View, MO, Pomona, MO and the Shannon County line. Also, our territory stretches into Oregon County in a few small areas. We have expended large sums of our own money, as no grants or loans were used, to provide high speed broadband internet to our customers. We have broadband availability to 100% of our customers. We use ADSL2 and HVDL technologies. Our service is very reliable.

To allow another carrier to come in, and put in place an additional service plant, would not be cost effective or necessary. We have worked hard, in a very low population density area and a high cost area, to provide quality broadband coverage without loans or grants. The issue of faster speeds, in our low population, high cost area, is not a need for a new network, it is a need for lower costs in obtaining the bandwidth connection to the internet. A lower cost would allow us to provide even higher speeds over the current network. We looked into putting up towers for aerial wireless broadband but given the hills, the trees and the general terrain, all studies showed it could not cover 100% of our customers like we currently do. Our broadband network and coverage is very reliable and meets the needs of 100% of our customers.

-----**Service Area:** MISSOURI NW

Submitter: American Broadband Maitland and Skidmore

Comment: Holway Telephone Company is an incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC), which is authorized by the Missouri Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to provide advanced and reliable telecommunications services ubiquitously throughout its designated serving areas in northwest Missouri. The Holway Telephone Company offers broadband internet and data services utilizing digital subscriber line (DSL) and fixed wireless technologies. Holway offers broadband services at speeds that meet and exceed the minimum download (768 Kbps) and upload (200 Kbps) speeds defined in the NOFA. This specific response is from the perspective of the Holway broadband services that are offered within its designated serving areas that overlap with U.S. Cellular's Last Mile Stimulus Application. Holway advertises broadband service alternatives that meet and exceed minimum download and upload speeds defined in the NOFA.

Holway enjoys broadband penetration rates that exceed 40% of households in many of census blocks contained within its serving areas, and this does not count/include the penetration of other broadband competitors that operate in the service area that U.S. Cellular has applied for.

The U.S. Cellular application overlaps with 381 census blocks in which Holway offers DSL and fixed wireless broadband services. In these 381 census blocks, Holway provides broadband service to 186 residential customers and 10 business customers. Holway approaches 30% penetration of residences all by itself and this does not include the number of residences served by other broadband competitors. Thus, the overlap area in the U.S. Cellular application is not unserved and it is not underserved. Furthermore, Holway offers its broadband service at speeds that exceed the NOFA minimums and exceed 3 Mbps, and Holway advertises speeds that exceed 3 Mbps.

The U.S. Cellular stimulus application should be rejected for several reasons, which include but are not limited to:

- 1.U.S. Cellular applied for Stimulus dollars in areas (Census Blocks) that are not unserved or underserved.
- 2.The U.S. Cellular application is overly broad because it did not seek to perform validations of broadband penetration rates at the Census Block level, whereas Holway currently provides, advertises, and tracks broadband penetration to the Census Block level within its designated serving areas.
- 3.Broadband stimulus dollars should not be directed to areas that do not meet the definitions of unserved or underserved territory.

4.U.S. Cellular proposes a wireless technology solution. Only Fiber-to-the-Premise solutions offer a long term future-proof solution for meeting the challenge of a rapidly increasing definition of minimum download and upload speeds. U.S. Cellular is only one of several wireless providers within the geography applied for that already offer data services over their wireless networks (Verizon, AllTel, Sprint, AT&T, etc

5.U.S. Cellular's application overlaps with the designated service areas of Holway. It is not apparent that U.S. Cellular has addressed the challenge of its application's ability to be economically sustainable in areas that lack population density, and are already served by multiple broadband providers.

6.Beyond initial network deployment, wireless infrastructure solutions have not demonstrated the ability to create sustained employment opportunities within the immediate service area. This is contrasted by the fact that Holway has a resident work force, located within its designated serving areas in northwest Missouri, and it has a history of sustained employment.

Submitter: NPG CABLE INC.,

Comment: NPG Cable, Inc. currently provides sufficient broadband access and broadband services to end users and/or end user devices in the Service Area identified by the applicant below." These services provide data rates that far exceed the underserved requirements set forth by BTOP/NITA, in addition NPG's current wire solution scales to provide data rates that are unachievable through wireless solutions.

Submitter: Grand River Mutual Tel.

Comment: U.S. Cellular's application covers part of Grand River Mutual Telephone Company's exchange. Grand River is capable of providing wireline broadband service to 100% of its customers throughout its territory. The majority of Grand River's customers receive service at 6.0 Mbps. Grand River's territory is neither unserved nor underserved.

Submitter: Century Link

Comment: The proposed service areas are not wholly underserved or unserved.

CenturyLink is submitting data that shows the application's proposed service area is not underserved or unserved, under program guidelines. Accordingly, the application must be denied as ineligible. With limited funding and a large pool of applications, program grants and loans must be directed only to areas that are truly underserved or unserved, as stipulated in the program guidelines.

CenturyLink can certify that its affiliates currently offer broadband service in some or all of the applicant's proposed service areas. Attached is a state map that is a representative sample of areas where the application overlaps our existing broadband deployment. CenturyLink also provides data showing broadband availability in our local telephone exchanges within the proposed service areas. We will provide additional information on request if that will further assist the agency's review.

This data is not exhaustive; the application may include other areas also currently served with broadband by other providers, which should be considered in the assessment of the application. Our data combined with that of other broadband providers would likely show further duplication and overlap of broadband services in the proposed service areas.

CenturyLink has committed to upgrade and extend broadband.

CenturyLink has an extensive broadband footprint today, and has committed to extend that service even further. As part of its merger commitments to the Federal Communications Commission, CenturyLink committed to offer retail broadband Internet access service to 100% of its broadband eligible access lines by July 1, 2012. Consequently, virtually no areas served by CenturyTel or Embarq local operating companies, in any state, will be underserved or unserved at the end of three years.

CenturyLink also agreed to meet targets for minimum download speeds. CenturyLink will ensure availability of retail broadband Internet access service with a download speed of 1.5 Mbps to 87% of the broadband eligible access lines by July 1, 2011. It will ensure availability with a download speed of 3 Mbps to 75% of broadband eligible access lines by July 1, 2010, to 78% of broadband eligible lines by July 1, 2011, and to 80% of broadband eligible lines within 3 years of the close date. Nationwide, our average tele-density is 23 customers per square mile. This commitment ensures availability of broadband even to very rural consumers.

The agency should consider the importance of this commitment, as CenturyLink's continuing investment inevitably will make applications that overlap CenturyLink service areas less viable. CenturyLink has

proven, industry-leading experience in deploying broadband networks and services using both wireline and wireless technology, and a strong commitment and focus on rural areas. Today, it serves over 7 million access lines and 2.1 million broadband customers in 33 states.

Submitter: Rock Port Telephone Company and Affiliates

Comment: Executive Summary: Rock Port Telephone Company and its affiliates advertise and are capable of providing broadband service at download rates of 1, 3 and 5 mbps to 99% of the households in their exchange territory. Within that ILEC service area 46% of households have subscribed to the broadband product. Countywide, we provide broadband service with speeds greater than 3mbps to 32% of the households. In that area, two other companies also offer broadband. The three companies' combined customer count is greater than 40%. Atchison County does not qualify as an unserved or underserved area.

Submitter: Oregon Farmers Mutual Telephone Company

Comment: It is impossible to understand fully what USCOC proposes to do. They have declined to provide the executive summary of their project, and while this seems to be within the grant rules, we do not have enough information to understand how this project might impact Oregon Farmers Mutual Telephone Company. USCOC should be required to produce an executive summary so that parties have a legitimate chance to understand what they are proposing. If they are required to do so, we should get another chance to respond. USCOC should not be eligible for a grant simply as a result of withholding information and this grant request probably should be rejected for obscuring the facts. There is no way to understand the technology they propose and other key information we need to analyze their proposal.

With that said, it appears that USCOC is asking to deploy some sort of wireless technology. The maps they have provided overlap with the franchised service territory of Oregon Farmers Mutual Telephone Company. Oregon Farmers is an incumbent rural telephone company that has been serving this area for over 100 years. Oregon Farmers has been granted a franchised area to serve, and since it has been willing to serve a poor and rural area also has been given a federal exemption against competition. Small rural areas like the one served by Oregon Farmers need a barrier against competition to ensure that people in the area can get service for the next century. Oregon Farmers has kept rates low and has brought advanced services and broadband to this rural area when nobody else was willing to make investments in such an impoverished area.

The Oregon Farmers service territory is 'served' using the definitions of the NOFA since the company has 1) more than a 40% broadband penetration, and 2) advertises broadband speeds of 3 Mbps.

This grant should be rejected since the applicants have not done their homework and are proposing to use grant money to cover an area at Oregon Farmers that is already served. Further, our local knowledge of this region tells us that this grant also proposes to bring broadband to many areas where AT&T and other small telephone companies already provide broadband today.

This grant should be rejected in its entirety for not adhering to the grant guidelines for serving mostly unserved and underserved areas. We believe that the vast majority of residences and businesses covered by this proposed grant are already 'served' today with broadband using the definitions defined in the NOFA. USCOC seems to think that rural equates to 'underserved' and 'unserved' as defined in the NOFA. This is not the case and the county seats, other towns and most census designated areas within the proposed service area already have broadband and are not eligible for grant funding. The NOFA allows for a small portion of any grant to cover served areas, but this grant is mostly covering served areas that already have broadband and should be rejected. USCOC seems to have done little homework about the local availability of broadband and simply has proposed to get federal money to serve large areas regardless of what is there today. We notice that they have filed similar grant requests in other surrounding states and perhaps they are hoping one of these flawed applications will sneak through. Again, this grant needs to be rejected for a host of reasons, primarily for ignoring the grant rules for eligibility, but also for refusing to provide an executive summary so that parties like Oregon Farmers can understand what they are proposing.

Submitter: Windstream

Comment: Windstream's data strongly suggest that the proposed funded service area likely does not qualify as an underserved area. Windstream offers facilities-based, terrestrial broadband service (meeting the definition set forth in the Notice of Funds Availability) to some of the households in the proposed funded service area, and such households can readily subscribe to Windstream's broadband service upon request. Windstream also has reason to believe that competitive broadband offerings are available in exchanges overlapping the proposed funded service area. Given this information, agency officials should further investigate existing broadband offerings within the proposed funded service area, so that officials can be sure that the area, in fact, qualifies as underserved.

Windstream is a communications and entertainment company with more than 1 million broadband customers in 16 states. Investing more than \$200 million in broadband deployment over the last several years, Windstream now offers approximately 89% of its 3 million voice customers access to quality and affordable broadband service.

The agencies define an “underserved area” as follows: “Underserved area means a proposed funded service area, composed of one or more contiguous census blocks meeting certain criteria that measure the availability of broadband service and the level of advertised broadband speeds. These criteria conform to the two distinct components of the Broadband Infrastructure category of eligible projects- Last Mile and Middle Mile. Specifically, a proposed funded service area may qualify as underserved for last mile projects if at least one of the following factors is met, though the presumption will be that more than one factor is present: 1. No more than 50 percent of the households in the proposed funded service area have access to facilities-based, terrestrial broadband service at greater than the minimum broadband transmission speed (set forth in the definition of broadband above); 2. No fixed or mobile broadband service provider advertises broadband transmission speeds of at least three megabits per second (“mbps”) downstream in the proposed funded service area; or 3. The rate of broadband subscribership for the proposed funded service area is 40 percent of households or less. A proposed funded service area may qualify as underserved for Middle Mile projects if one interconnection point terminates in a proposed funded service area that qualifies as unserved or underserved for Last Mile projects.”

Submitter: Suddenlink Communications

Comment: This response conclusively demonstrates that Suddenlink and its competitors already offer robust broadband service within the mapped area of the applicant’s proposed funded service area and that this mapped area is neither unserved nor underserved. Additional information is provided in the uploaded document, including (1) sample marketing material; (2) a guide on how to read the data we entered in the “Existing Broadband Subscribers” section of this response; (3) a summary of the vendor and methodology used for estimating competitive-service subscribers in the mapped area; (4) Suddenlink contact information, should one or more federal agencies have questions or require additional information; and (5) a summary of concerns with the response process and the limitations that process has placed on our ability to provide NTIA/RUS with relevant, timely data.