

## Broadband USA Applications Database

**Applicant Name:** Florida Department of Management Services

**Project Title:** Connect Florida

**Project Type:** Sustainable Adoption

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### Executive Summary

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Florida's rural and economically disadvantaged communities are on the wrong side of the digital divide. This chasm manifests itself in lost economic opportunity, less effective health care, educational programs and use of government programs. Florida is committed to address the challenges for our citizens in rural and economically disadvantaged communities through this plan. The State of Florida recognizes the need and challenge of closing the digital divide. In June 2009, Senate Bill No. 2626 was signed into law designating and authorizing the Florida Department of Management Services (DMS) to assess the need for broadband Internet service in the state, plan for such service, and encourage the statewide deployment of such service; authorizing the department to apply for and accept certain funds; authorizing the department to enter into contracts; authorizing the department to establish committees or workgroups; and authorizing the department to adopt rules. This legislation further authorizes DMS to conduct a needs assessment of broadband Internet service in collaboration with communications service providers, including, but not limited to, wireless and wire line Internet Service Providers (ISPs), to develop geographical information system maps at the census tract level that will be developed and maintained using these and other data. Through a competitive bidding process, DMS has posted an intent to award to Connected Nation, Inc, by and through its wholly owned subsidiary Connect Florida, LLC (collectively the "Vendor") to employ industry-standard GIS toolsets and experienced personnel to assist with the broadband sustainable adoption programs. Our innovative approach is based upon the solid belief that states, communities, families, and individuals can realize great economic and social advantages by accelerating broadband access and use in underserved areas and increasing broadband use in all areas, rural and urban, alike. Connect Florida( \*\*pending final review and branding decisions by the State of Florida) will facilitate public-private partnerships to increase access to and use of broadband and related technology, creating dramatic results that translate into economic and community development, better education, higher quality healthcare, more efficient public service and improved quality of life. We will work directly with local leaders, consumers, and broadband providers to build public-private partnerships. In these partnerships we will conduct local-level research on broadband and computer adoption and the barriers to technology use; develop grassroots technology planning teams in every county across the state for improved broadband adoption, and establish computer distribution and technology literacy and workforce training programs for low-income and disenfranchised people. Connect Florida will develop a state level, public-private steering committee to serve as the official advisory committee to the overall program. The committee will work with local officials in every county across the state to develop e-Community Leadership Teams. The focus of each e-Community Leadership Team is to develop a comprehensive, actionable technology

growth plan for that community - one that encompasses the current and future needs of all relevant sectors in the community - from healthcare, education and agriculture to business and industry, local government and tourism, libraries and community organizations. While the initiative will have a comprehensive approach, we will target concentrated geographic areas of underserved and vulnerable populations including Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern (RACECs) defined as communities where median household income is more than 30% lower than the state mean; suburban and urban areas with heavy concentrations of generationally economically disadvantaged individuals and families; Native American tribal areas and reservations; and senior citizen communities. Populations in the targeted areas total almost 6 million residents including approximately 900 thousand citizens living in RACECs, 2 million citizens living below the poverty line, 55 thousand Native Americans and more than 2.9 million senior citizens. All are existing or potential broadband subscribers. In an optimal broadband environment Florida will realize a total economic impact of more than \$7.5 billion dollars and almost 150 thousand new and/or retained jobs. Team Connect Florida brings a high level of expertise in this area. Our team is prepared to develop, and leverage our existing highly-collaborative relationships with broadband Internet providers and technology companies with demonstrated commitments in Florida. Collectively, these relationships provide the necessary platforms upon which to build demand aggregation models and constructive creation of market intelligence, with the intent of ultimately improving quality of life for Florida's citizens and stimulating the economy. Our team includes members that are formally engaged in ten states in adoption expansion programs and also tracks and analyzes broadband activity in all fifty states and in several countries. The Florida Department of Management Services will form an organizational structure that engages participation and fosters accountability at all levels, across public and private sectors. We will establish a Connect Florida Executive Advisory Group to provide a mechanism of accountability for the state's (and by extension, the federal government's) investment in the Connect Florida initiative. The State of Florida will enter into a written agreement that outlines specific reporting guidelines, including timelines for accomplishing objectives. Working with the Connect Florida Program Director, the Board will ensure that all established objectives are being met in a timely and satisfactory manner. Connect Florida's comprehensive adoption expansion program total three year costs are approximately \$10.8 million dollars.