

## Broadband USA Applications Database

**Applicant Name:** Contact Network Inc. d/b/a InLine

**Project Title:** Northwest Alabama Broadband Infrastructure Project

**Project Type:** Last Mile

---

### Executive Summary

---

Opportunity: Contact Network Inc, d/b/a InLine (henceforth referred to as “InLine”), believes there is a significant need and opportunity to develop a hybrid broadband network in the northwest area of Alabama, where currently there are large regions that are unserved or underserved. InLine believes that universal access to broadband Internet is as critical to the future of a community as telephone service and electric service were to previous generations, and that we are uniquely qualified to deliver this network. We have a plan for building a sustainable, hybrid fiber/wireless network that is based around what we call Anchor Institutions. These consist of the community hospitals, school systems and other strategic institutions that make up the backbone of these communities. By designing this network to be centered on the 7 hospitals and 47 schools within these communities as the arteries of the network, we enable quality health care and support the educational opportunities that will change the lives of the next generation within these communities. Proposed Service Area: InLine’s proposed network is made up of a broad service area covering over 8500 square miles, in Alabama between Northport, Addison, and Hamilton. This service area covers a total of 6 counties and 24,501 census blocks, with 2000 U.S. Census Population of 200,919. Of these, 129,458 residents – 64% – live in rural areas. We will ensure that broadband connectivity is available to the 4,115 businesses in the area, allowing them a greater chance of competing in the 21st century economy. We will also provide connectivity for 7 hospitals, 47 schools, as well as 25 other key community institutions, allowing them to enhance their organizational performance and effectiveness in serving the community. We do all this at a cost of only \$70.79 per capita, for an average cost per county of only \$2,370,597. Potential Entities Served: InLine’s proposed network will enable connectivity for over 79,835 Households, 4,115 businesses, 47 public schools, 7 hospitals, 15 public libraries, 7 law enforcement agencies, 6 county emergency management agencies, and 42 cities, towns, and census designated places. By using a hybrid system InLine is able to drastically increase both the number of potential entities that can be served, but also increase the speed with which service can be rolled out and reduce the number of remaining unserved areas within the service footprint as opposed to purely wire or fiber based solutions. InLine has letters of support from many of these key organizations, including the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). Proposed Services and Applications: InLine will provide multiple service tiers with access speeds ranging from 1 to 6 MBps for residential customers, and up to 20MBps for business and institutional customers. InLine intends to be able to offer an entry level residential service at a monthly cost of only \$29.95. Because of InLine’s extensive datacenter and managed services experience, we intend to offer a variety of value added services over the network on a single bill and contract period. These services include such items as managed e-mail anti-spam and content protection, web hosting, cloud desktop and server services,

and technology management services. Most importantly for an area that is prone to tornadoes and other severe weather, InLine can use this network to deliver a complete backup and disaster recovery solution for businesses, schools, and local government entities. In addition, InLine will be able to supply multi-gigabit WAN connections between schools, community health centers, and other strategic institutions over its fiber network, enabling the deployment of applications such as high definition video conferencing, telemedicine, distance learning, streaming of public meetings, telemedicine, hosted Virtual Desktop Infrastructure, and telecommuting. For students and parents, ready access to affordable broadband service opens up a world of education content and access to the tools that citizens in more urban and better served communities take for granted. For patients, this brings access to services that normally would require lengthy drives into metropolitan areas. Further, the proposed network is engineered to allow mobile data to be added to it at any time for use by first responders on a community-by-community basis. This capability expands the reach of the network to anywhere that a first responder might travel. InLine has built the largest deployment of mobile data in the Southeast, covering over 70 square miles in Murfreesboro TN. This has proven capability to save lives and allows first responders to better serve their communities. The network will also provide the backbone for deploying Intelligent Traffic Systems (ITS) on a community-by-community basis. InLine won ITS America's 2008 "Best of Show in ITS Innovation" award for its ITS project on the Highway 90 corridor in coastal Mississippi, showing that these systems both save lives and enhance the efficiency of transportation departments. The proposed network will serve to leverage planned spending through the Universal Service Administrative Company for the 2009 Rural Health Care Pilot Program for the Northwest Alabama Mental Health Center (NWAMHC), Project #17239. NWAMHC and USAC have recently issued a request for proposals for the development of a wide-area broadband network that would connect six community mental health centers located in the five counties in the proposed service area. The development of a hybrid network throughout the region would not only serve this RFP's goals of connecting these centers with broadband service, but also would enable them to partner with other community health centers and medical offices throughout the area through fiber and wireless connectivity. Non-Discrimination and Interconnection: InLine's network will be designed to provide for interconnection with competitive providers. The proposed network is designed in such a way that additional strands of dark fiber and tower space will exist and allow potential competitors to buy access to our infrastructure and provide competing services. We actively encourage the leasing of bandwidth from the network by competing service providers. InLine's network management practices comply fully with the nondiscrimination and network openness obligations as outlined in the Notice of Funding Availability. Type of Systems: InLine has determined that a hybrid wired and wireless network would provide the broadest and most cost effective solution for coverage in this region of Alabama. This network will be built by creating a system of gigabit fiber arteries interconnecting schools and other critical community organizations located within the communities. This system of arteries will be enhanced by the build-out of lower bandwidth fiber connections and wireless tower sites in order to provide access to the more distant locations within the service area. From these key sites, broadband coverage would be expanded using registered spectrum wireless technology designed for large scale broadband applications using the 3.65 GHz frequency. This project will not rely on mesh or other 802.11 technologies that were designed for consumer and smaller scale deployments. We strongly believe that this hybrid approach, using well proven technologies, will provide the most universal and fastest

broadband service available with the fastest adoption rate. Qualifications of the Applicant: InLine is a Birmingham, AL based company that has been in operation for over 17 years, and which also staffs regional offices in Montgomery, AL and Jackson, MS. Founded in 1992 as a professional services firm, InLine has become the leading Total Solutions Provider (TSP) in Alabama and Mississippi, offering Internet services, information technology products, and end-to-end solutions to small, medium, and large businesses and government agencies. InLine has experienced significant and consistent growth in recent years, generating over \$26 million in 2008 revenue. InLine is a licensed public utility in both Alabama and Mississippi. Delivering and supporting thousands of voice and data circuits across the region and managing thousands of local and wide area networks has given us a tremendous amount of experience in working with broadband technologies. We have built multiple networks with its own last-mile technologies that provide up to 1000-Mbps connections. InLine has wireline and wireless networks throughout Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi including a fiber network that connects the Demopolis City Schools, located within 50 miles of the proposed network. Overall Infrastructure Cost and Subscriber Count: InLine has designed its proposed network with an expected construction cost of \$14,223,579, and we project a total subscriber count within 60 months of rollout of 119 community institutions, including schools and other core facilities, 11,345 residential and business wireless clients, and 86 additional business fiber clients. Job Growth and Preservation: A 2009 report by the Fiber to the Home Council suggests that a \$1 million of investment in fiber deployment will result in almost 20 jobs created. Taking a more conservative approach, we predict that this network will directly create 20 new jobs in the area, with as many as 100 additional jobs created by the trickle-down effects. Further, we believe and that the presence of broadband services will encourage economic growth and development throughout Southern Mississippi, as small businesses are able to utilize these services to compete in the broader international marketplace, and as local governments are able to leverage the presence of the network to attract large industry and corporations to the region.