

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Communications Infrastructure Group, LLC

Project Title: Georgia Rural Connection

Project Type: Middle Mile

Executive Summary

a) The purpose of the project is to provide voice and data transmission on a broader and faster basis to thirty five economically challenged Georgia counties and the critical community facilities and anchor institutions located therein. Installation of eighty five additional cell towers would benefit underserved vulnerable rural populations by resulting improvement in delivery of healthcare, public safety, local government and educational services. b) The immediate proposed funded service areas are 85 rings 3.0 miles in diameter located in thirty five economically challenged rural and underserved counties in three regions of Georgia. The first region is in southwest Georgia and the counties in which the rings would be located are: Sumter, Webster, Stewart, Quitman, Randolph, Clay, Early, Seminole, Decatur, Grady, and Thomas. The second region is in middle/south Georgia and the counties in which the rings would be located are: Putnam, Baldwin, Wilkinson, Screven, Jenkins, Emanuel, Johnson, Laurens, Treutlen, Montgomery, Wheeler, Jeff Davis, Telfair, Dodge, Wilcox, Ben Hill, Irwin, Turner, Crisp, and Dooly. The third region is in northeast Georgia and the counties in which the rings would be located are: Rabun, Stephens, Habersham and White. Within the 28.3 sq. miles encompassed within each ring's 3.0 mile radius in southwest Georgia the average population is 2120 residing in 790 households. The number of businesses located within the average ring service area is 94. In middle/south Georgia the average population is 1271 residing in 422 households. The number of businesses located within the average ring service area is 37. In northeast Georgia the average population is 1610 residing in 633 households. The number of businesses located within the average ring service area is 80. (Please see the responses to questions 12 and 14 for demographic and economic detail regarding each of the 85 rings.) The benefits of the project are also accurately understood in the context of the demographics and economics of the individual county and regional populations they would serve. Vulnerable rural populations in thirty five underserved counties in Georgia would benefit from the resulting improvement in delivery of healthcare, public safety, educational and local government services. The total population of the southwest Georgia region is 170,955 with an average population density of 32.2. The counties within the service area are among the most economically challenged in Georgia: median household income ranges from \$21,448 (Clay) to \$31,115 (Thomas); per capita income ranges from \$11,809 (Randolph) to \$16,211 (Thomas); families below the poverty level range from 28.1% (Clay) to 13.6% (Thomas); and individuals below the poverty level range from 31.3% (Clay) to 13.6% (Thomas). Thus, the average percentage of families below the poverty level in the region (18.7%) is 9.5% greater than the national average (9.2%) with a rate of familial poverty 203% greater than the national average; and the average percentage of individuals below the poverty level in the region (24%) is 11.6% greater than the national average (12.4%) with a rate of individual poverty 194% greater than the national average. The total population of

the middle/south Georgia region is 315,921 with an average population density of 86.8. The counties within the service area are among the most economically challenged in Georgia: median household income ranges from \$23,848 (Johnson) to \$36,956 (Putnam); per capita income ranges from \$12,384 (Johnson) to \$20,161 (Putnam); families below the poverty level range from 24.6% (Crisp) to 10.5% (Putnam); and individuals below the poverty level range from 29.3% (Crisp) to 14.6% (Putnam). Thus, the average percentage of families below the poverty level in the region (17.5%) is 8.3% greater than the national average (9.2%) with a rate of familial poverty 203% greater than the national average; and the average percentage of individuals below the poverty level in the region (21.8%) is 9.4% greater than the national average (12.4%) with a rate of individual poverty 176% greater than the national average. The total population of the northeast Georgia region is 96,331 with an average population density of 79.5. The counties within the service area are among the historically most economically isolated in Georgia: median household income ranges from \$29,461 (Stephens) to \$36,321 (Habersham); per capita income ranges from \$15,529 (Stephens) to \$20,608 (Rabun); families below the poverty level range from 8.1% (Rabun) to 11.3% (Stephens); and individuals below the poverty level range from 10.5% (White) to 15.1% (Stephens). Thus, the average percentage of families below the poverty level in the region (9.2%) is equal to the national average (9.2%) and the average percentage of individuals below the poverty level in the region (12.2%) is slightly below the national average (12.4%). c) The number of households and businesses located within the service area of each of the 85 rings and their location by census block(s) are detailed in the response to questions 12 and 14 respectively. In aggregate, 47,237 households and 5095 businesses are located within the rings with 18,972 households and 2257 businesses in southwest Georgia; 19,399 households and 1713 businesses in middle/south Georgia; and 8866 households and 1125 businesses in northeast Georgia. d) The number of community anchor institutions, public safety entities, and critical community organizations passed and/or involved with the project are as follow by region (according to the website HomeTownLocator): Southwest: 45 Middle/south: 70 Northeast: 36 TOTAL: 151 e) Provide voice and data transmission on a broader and faster basis to thirty five economically challenged and/or isolated Georgia counties and the critical community facilities and anchor institutions located therein. Installation of eighty five additional cell towers would benefit underserved vulnerable rural populations by resulting improvement in delivery of healthcare, public safety, local government and educational services. f) CIG's proposed Georgia tower network will offer an open and technologically neutral telecommunications network for all "for profit" and "not for profit" broadband providers to use to offer service to unserved and underserved rural areas. This system meets all interconnection, non-discrimination, and network management practice obligations established by the Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) and the supporting Grant Guidelines for the BIP and BTOP programs. CIG proposes multi-tenant towers through which consumers can access lawful internet content through their choice of providers in compliance with the guidelines of the FCC's Internet Principles. These towers will be capable of maximizing the number of carriers per tower, though still complying with all structural and zoning requirements. By proposing multi-tenant towers, CIG provides competition among network providers and servicers and gives the end user a variety of internet applications and devices to choose from. By offering an agnostic shared platform, CIG would reduce the cost for all competitors to deploy their services. g) Enhanced breadth and speed of existing area broadband systems would be facilitated by the erection of eighty five cell towers in thirty five counties. h) The proposed project would be realized through the financial and technical collaboration of

Communications Infrastructure Group LLC (CIG) and WFI. CIG is an Atlanta-based developer of multi-provider communications infrastructure focused on telecommunications tower design, construction, acquisition and management throughout the Southeast. WFI is a broadly experienced network infrastructure design, deployment, program management, quality assurance and maintenance service provider. WFI has engineered and successfully, rapidly and cost-effectively developed more than \$2 billion in telecom infrastructure since 1994. i) Overall infrastructure cost: \$14,711,384 j) The FCC reports average national wireless subscription rates of 86%. The population segment with access to high speed broadband is only 22% of that 86%. This project brings high speed broadband to rural locations across GA currently are not offered broadband coverage. k) We estimate each tower will create or sustain at least 50 jobs per year in each of the two years of the projects' first two phases. The project will directly stimulate economic growth and job creation by: 1) Directly creating demand for the manufacture of 81 towers and the equipment associated with their operation; 2) Directly creating demand for the installation of 35 towers, which includes the transport and installation of the towers and components, clearing the land and providing access and utilities to the site and 3) Directly creating demand for ongoing expansion (adding service providers) and ongoing tower maintenance. Further, this will create professional service jobs.