

Alabama Broadband Data and Development Grant Program

Executive Summary for the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) NTIA Grant Request (2 Years): \$1,896,323 Alabama Matching Contribution (2 Years): \$556,184

The Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs (ADECA) is the designated entity for the State of Alabama to apply for grant funding through the NTIA's State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program. In this role, ADECA serves as the fiscal agent on behalf of the Alabama Broadband Initiative (ALBI). Based on successful previous mapping projects, ALBI has elected to partner with the LinkAMERICA, lead by CostQuest Associates, to address the specific requirements outlined in the BDDP Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). LinkAMERICA and ALBI will engage the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama to help bring together demand for broadband with the extension of infrastructure in order to help develop local economies across Alabama.

ADECA/ALBI submitted a grant application to NTIA in August and further modified that grant application to reduce the program term from five to two years at NTIA's request.

Budget Summary:

ADECA's proposal called for a two-year total federal grant of \$1,896,322, of which \$1,433,119 is allocated for mapping and \$463,204 for broadband planning purposes. Alabama and the LinkAmerica Alliance have committed matching funds and in-kind services valued at \$556,184. Those funds exceed the 20% matching fund requirement outlined in the program NOFA. Items contributed to meet this requirement included existing statewide maps and GIS data, salaries and benefits for state employees dedicated to the project, and past consumer and business survey results.

Mapping Summary:

Previous projects supported by ALBI have resulted in initial maps of broadband access throughout Alabama. With those maps as a foundation for this project, ALBI and the LinkAmerica team will work to develop a new interactive map with more complete and current information obtained from multiple sources. Sources will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Broadband provider surveys and data requests
- Objective third party data sources
- End-user surveys and web research

Final output of the project will be a online statewide interactive map showing served and unserved (or underserved) areas throughout the state, transmission speeds in each area, and the type of access provided (i.e. wireless, cable, DSL). Maps will be made available to the general public, broadband providers, policy makers, and the NTIA via a public website. Additional programs included in the Mapping budget will also help broadband providers apply for future infrastructure grant funding, leading to a more rapid build-out of broadband capacity across the state.

Planning Summary:

The planning portion of the project is designed to identify key factors that will drive the adoption and sustainable use for broadband in Alabama. Through a series of interviews, customer surveys, and other data gathering techniques, a broadband vision document will be developed outlining critical applications (i.e. telehealth, emergency services, distance learning) that will increase demand in various state regions. Regional teams will then be assigned to work with local consumers and businesses to increase these and other uses of broadband technology – thus promoting economic development throughout the state but with a local focus.