

# **State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program**

## **Louisiana Division of Administration**

### **Executive Summary**

The Division of Administration Office of Information Technology was designated by Governor Bobby Jindal as the Louisiana organization to request grant funding under the National Telecommunications and Information Association (NTIA) State Broadband Data and Development program. The Office of Information Technology is uniquely positioned to manage this broadband availability mapping and planning initiative due to its statewide perspective under the State Chief Information Officer, management responsibilities over the Louisiana GIS Council and Louisiana Geographic Information Center (LaGIC), and existing relationship with the Louisiana Broadband Advisory Council.

The Division of Administration submitted a grant application for \$1.2 million in funding over two years related to Broadband data collection and mapping activities as well as \$500,000 for Broadband planning activities over five years. The Division of Administration will also contribute \$300,000 and \$125,000 respectively in state funds and in-kind contributions to bring the total project cost to \$2.1 million. In-kind contributions will consist of existing computer hardware, software, and salaries of state personnel highly skilled in policy, telecommunications, planning, and geospatial technology.

Through a competitive procurement process, the Division of Administration has selected the firm Michael Baker, Jr. Inc. (Baker) to provide consulting services in support of the mapping initiative. Baker reports that it has over 60 years of corporate geospatial experience and has mapped millions of square miles of the earth's surface. From the broadband mapping perspective, Baker cites its work with the California Broadband Task Force and the State of North Carolina as applicable experience for the Louisiana initiative.

Mapping activities in support of this program will include Broadband availability data collection, verification, mapping, analysis, and updating of data, as well as the provision of this data to the NTIA for inclusion in the national broadband mapping site and publication of an interactive Louisiana Broadband Availability mapping application. LaGIC will maintain the statewide map in a manner that both serves the public and ensures the protection of confidential information. The mapping project will occur over a five year span and updates will be provided to NTIA semi-annually, as required by the grant.

Planning activities associated with this program will be supported by LaGIC under the direction of the Office of Information Technology in association with the Louisiana Broadband Advisory Council. The planning team will partner with broadband providers, universities, community colleges, tribal organizations, local governments, regional planning organizations, and others to survey business and households in "underserved" and "unserved" areas to determine their broadband needs and identify barriers to adoption. The expected outcome of these efforts is to raise awareness of the availability of broadband, identify barriers to adoption, and develop a plan for sustainable broadband adoption for currently "underserved" and "unserved" businesses and households. Parish specific data on broadband service demands coupled with geographic analysis of demand relative to existing infrastructure will allow the planning team to make recommendations regarding infrastructure investments or tailored tax incentive programs to ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with demand. The expected outcome is better coordination and collaboration between the state and regional economic development efforts.