Executive Summary

The US Census Bureau states that 67.41 percent of Coloradans age 3 and older use the internet from home or some other location. That means 22.6 percent of this population is not using the internet and therefore the demand for this program is generated. Using these figures approximately 1.5 million Coloradans age 3 and older are not using the internet from any location. The project outlined here would focus on increasing the internet use throughout this population by providing general information and education on broadband, specifically demonstrating the applications of broadband, and increasing the awareness of broadband availability and accessibility.

According to a Pew report 16 percent of those who do not use the Internet report that it is because they do not have access. The project detailed here will leverage coverage maps to show the technologies available in a given area. It will also determine if broadband is available to citizens and if so, it will allow them to sign up for the service. If broadband is not available, the program will be responsible for working with providers to determine what opportunities exist. It can then be determined what areas need an increase in coverage and what barriers are preventing them from deploying such services.

Colorado is taking a multi-pronged approach to meeting the needs of the State. The Broadband Promises project will use a mobile vehicle that has the necessary equipment installed to demonstrate the capabilities of broadband delivered through DSL, Cable, Wireless, and Satellite. By using such a vehicle the project staff will be able to go where the people are rather than relying on them to come to us. This vehicle will also allow the project staff to demonstrate in real time the differences between the services which should lead to a diffusion of the stigma that is at times attached to satellite service providers. Satellite is a worthwhile option to many Colorado residents and as such the residents need to become more familiar with its capabilities.

The second approach will be to partner with local area libraries, community centers, senior centers, K-12 facilities, and chambers of commerce in order to provide demonstrations and education within a brick and mortar facility. It is the intent when partnering with these facilities that we will tailor our demonstration to the group that is present. If the attendees are teachers and parents project staff will
highlight the capabilities of broadband in relation to distance learning, tutoring, and educational programming. If the attendees are primarily business leaders the demonstration will highlight how broadband connections open up distant markets, allow for expanded hours of operations, and create a business community with similar businesses around the State and country. It is necessary to not only educate and demonstrate the capabilities of broadband, but it is critical to showcase available applications to the different communities so they can directly understand the benefits to them. Our project starts with a premise that most people know what broadband is, but what they do not fully understand is the impacts it can have on their health care, communications, entertainment, and business. By showcasing the various applications available to them it is the projects intent to create a demand for broadband not simply awareness.

Beyond educating the residents of Colorado on the capabilities of broadband opportunities it presents, the project staff will also work with area and national providers to sign individuals up for service at our demonstrations. If an area has only one provider available, the project staff with partner with that provider. However, if multiple providers are available the project staff will partner with each one and showcase the different technologies to allow the individual to decide which technology type is best suited for them. Finally, the project staff will be working with state and national application developers to showcase applications that are beneficial to the end user.

The Colorado Broadband Promises program intends to serve an area that extends to all areas of the State. In the first year, the program is committing to visiting 27 locations comprised of urban and rural areas. The population of these locations varies from less than 150 to over 100,000. The racial makeup of all these locations is primarily White followed by Hispanic or Latino, the majority of residents are 25 to 44 years of age followed by 0 to 18 years of age, and the median household income is a between $39,937 and $49,874.

The Governor’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) has the necessary qualifications to implement and complete this project. These qualifications are demonstrated through its organizational structure of over 1,000 Full Time Employees (FTE) that can be called upon to provide “on-demand” support. OIT has implemented similar projects in size, scope, and complexity and is directly engaged with the Information Communications Technology (ICT) sector whose input and support will be needed to have the statewide affect this project requires. OIT has led the deployment of a state wide network, managed multiple projects from creation to completion, been directly involved with long term projects of 5 or more years, and has provided oversight of federal grants.
To be successful the project will require a program manager, project manager, community coordinator, network engineer, budget coordinator, and administrative support. This is a total of 6 FTE that will all be new positions.

The total cost of the project is $2,510,770 for year 1 and $1,219,970 for year two for a total funding request of $3,730,740.