

## Broadband USA Applications Database

**Applicant Name:** Florida Public Broadcasting Service, Inc.

**Project Title:** Florida Public Broadcasting - HELPS (Health, Education, Local, Public Safety) Network

**Project Type:** Middle Mile

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### Executive Summary

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Overview: Twenty Florida Public Broadcasting stations have joined together to develop and build a statewide broadband network to serve citizens by addressing critical issues related to education, health care, public safety and work force strategies. This grant application, in the amount of \$22.8 million (not including our 26% matching funds), will assist in the funding of this project which would otherwise not be undertaken. Florida Public Broadcasting Service (FPBS) will construct a fiber network that provides “middle mile” broadband connectivity (1Gb) to 12 regional locations throughout the State of Florida. This middle mile connectivity will bridge the gap between today’s already existing Florida LambdaRail fiber backbone and the statewide Florida Public Broadcasting Service member stations. This will allow us to create the next generation public broadcast station business model of real-time content sharing statewide; the creation of new services for vulnerable population segments and improve access to broadband in unserved and underserved areas. Our vision is to optimize and enhance our current public broadcasting operations by integrating state-of-the-art technologies, both broadcast and broadband, with quality content and programming that can serve and reach 99% of Florida’s population, focusing on opening broadband access to underserved and unserved communities and their residents. The network build-out will focus primarily on five underserved and/or unserved areas of the state and will be completed within 12 months. It will add more than 40 incremental full time employment positions. The resulting economic and job growth impact to the newly served communities will increase at an anticipated geometric multiple of the grant funds. FPBS is committed to creating a successful and sustainable broadband model that can be replicated by other public broadcasting stations, whether by single station or by other regional or state public broadcasting collaborations. Support: This program is supported by PBS, NPR, the Association for Public Television Stations (APTS) and National LambdaRail among other entities. In support of our grant and overall vision for the state and beyond, we have received numerous letters of support from leaders within Florida and throughout the country, including Sen. Bill Nelson, Florida CIO David Taylor, Florida Rural Regional leaders Jeff Hendry and Rick Marcum, Florida Secretary for Elder Affairs Dr. E. Doug Beach, Special Advisor to Gov. Crist-Don Winstead (Economic Recovery Office), Florida Learning Alliance, National LambdaRail CEO Tom West and Phil Halstead, President, Florida LambdaRail. (See Supplement #1.) Purpose: Florida public broadcasting stations have successfully provided educational services to underserved communities for many years. FPBS’ vision is to integrate cutting edge technologies, both broadband and broadcast, in order to develop and deliver innovative educational applications, public health and safety resources, and work force related strategies to Florida residents, particularly rural, underserved, and also target segments of the population that have until now been unserved. The addition of this newly constructed broadband

network will enable expanded services in areas that will have a direct and immediate impact on education, public safety and economic growth, while providing more content targeted to unique underserved segments of the population, and will be continuously available -- 24/7. Additionally, we will also be able to offer advanced services to critical institutions, including public safety and educational facilities, within these underserved and unserved areas, plus affordable broadband access that will improve the social and economic environments in these areas, while making significant contributions to job and income growth. Because public broadcasting can reach 99% of Florida's homes, we can bring public awareness to the new services created through this new broadband network, which will result in better and more effective use of the broadband services thus creating a population that is better able to embrace future opportunities based on the deployment of broadband technologies. We will seek out wireless service providers to interconnect with, so that last mile broadband may be provided to rural and underserved households and K-12 institutions. Market Reach: This application includes five service areas which cover more than 1.3 million households, more than 410,000 businesses, and almost 52,000 anchor institutions, critical community facilities, public safety entities, educational facilities and healthcare services. The estimated number of subscribers by the end of the first year of the completed build-out is anticipated to be more than 100 strategic institutions and 12 business entities and at five years, approximately 450 critical facilities and businesses. Enhanced Health Care, Public Safety and Education Services: Florida Public Broadcasting stations have an extensive history of partnering with national (PBS, NPR, APTS, USDOE, CCSSO), state (FLDOE, Florida Learning Alliance, FL Dept of Health, Dept of Agriculture, Dept of Elder Affairs, Governor's office, Florida Legislature, Work Force Florida) and local government agencies, non-profits, foundations and community organizations focused on enriching our communities. We bring established facilities to key areas of Florida, experienced staff, long-term relationships and the ability to build public awareness and sustainability to this project. At present, we deliver teacher plans and curriculum to over 80,000 classrooms across the state through a digital broadcast signal donated by FPBS stations to the Florida Dept of Education called the Florida Knowledge Network. We can greatly improve FKN by integrating broadband, digitizing programs and repurposing them for classroom use. In addition to broadcast services, each year our stations provide hundreds of live literacy workshops in rural and low-income areas to improve the performance of low scoring schools. With the build out of a broadband network, our stations can deliver live workshops and distance learning initiatives through the internet and build an on-demand service that would address multiple classroom needs. Along with educational applications, this broadband network will also provide resources to the "Senior Communities" of Florida. Each week Florida Public Broadcasting stations reach 75% of the population 65+ and 60% of those who are 45+. Working with our partners, FPBS stations will provide an information conduit to access Medicare and Medicaid data, integrate application processes, deliver content focused on key health issues, etc. System Design: The FPBS network would provide access to a scalable point-to-point optical transport network solution that meets long-term network requirements. This FPBS network will offer several advantages: a reliable and flexible network infrastructure that can grow and incorporate technological advancements; enhanced network performance and bandwidth capabilities; and collaboration and advanced communication among member participants. Management Team: Our organizational/management team includes the existing FPBS station management and operational teams as well as long-term telecommunications executives, financial managers and experienced engineers proficient in network design, network management,

provisioning, billing and customer care. We also have SDB subcontractors who are ready to assist us in the build-out once the grant is awarded. We have existing contracts and letters of interest from the management team demonstrating their readiness and ability to begin the project immediately.

**Network Openness:** FPBS will be fully compliant with the NOFA's non-discrimination and network interconnection obligations. We are fully committed to exceeding the minimum requirements for interconnection and nondiscrimination established in section V.C.2.b. of the Federal Government's NOFA. FPBS will prominently display the network's nondiscrimination and interconnection policies on our already existing Web page.

**Affordability** We will offer wholesale access to anchor institutions and critical facilities at reasonable rates and terms that are priced lower than traditional commercial service offerings to enable them to have access to affordable broadband services. We will also seek out wireless providers to interconnect with to provide last mile affordable services to households and K-12 facilities in unserved and underserved areas. Our pricing for broadband services will be affordable in comparison to the pricing of existing broadband services in our proposed funded service areas because we are a non-profit institution and will be providing the services on a cost plus basis. Furthermore, our use of the Florida LambdaRail backbone network, also a non-profit organization, is a critical differentiator for us and adds to our ability to provide affordable broadband services.

**Cost:** The overall cost for the network build out and sustainability model will be approximately \$31 million, of which 26% is matching funds. Included in these costs are the network build-out, engineering and design, physical plant build-out, program management, business development, market outreach, and educational, health care, public safety and elder care program enhancements.

**Conclusion:** FPBS is a key element to Florida's coordinated efforts to build a globally competitive regional economy. This grant will enable improved government services, enhanced educational opportunities, expanded access to health care resources while providing increased access to affordable broadband services through which we will be able to close the digital divide.