

Broadband USA Applications Database

Applicant Name: Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners

Project Title: Okaloosa County Fiber Optic Densification Initiative

Project Type: Middle Mile

Executive Summary

Opportunity General Description The basis of the Okaloosa County grant submittal is to provide broadband service to rural underserved residences in northern Okaloosa County. These rural areas also include schools, critical facilities for Public Safety, as well as town hall and community centers. This outreach program will extend the World Wide Web (WWW) to these rural communities bridging a 25+ mile gap to the nearest community Internet access point. The grant funding will provide opportunities for education, commerce, video conferencing to military personnel abroad and networking other vital services including Emergency Management, hospitals and public schools. Broadband will also be provided to Elder Services in an underserved and economically disadvantaged area promoting jobs and expanding educational opportunities. In addition, public libraries will be connected with video conferencing capabilities giving them the ability to further extend the offer of lifelong learning to disadvantaged areas. This project leverages the existing Okaloosa County Fiber Optic Network (OCFN) which already connects many county departments and agencies. However, many Community Anchor Institutions and Critical Community Facilities are not connected to OCFN due to lack of funding and the shortage of robust middle mile infrastructure, particularly in the underserved North Okaloosa Service Area. This grant is specifically targeted to connect the remaining Community Anchor Institutions and Critical Community Facilities and provide dark fiber for incumbents to provide last mile services in those areas designated as underserved.

Service Area Anchor Institutions The proposed "North Okaloosa Service Area" in northern Okaloosa County contains approximately 326 square miles, 550 census blocks, 290 businesses and over 7800 inhabitants. There are eleven (11) primary stakeholders in this grant application including: Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners Blackman Community Center City of Laurel Hill Baker Community Center Baker Block Museum Elder Services Okaloosa County Public Safety Okaloosa County Medical Services Florida Department of Agriculture (Division of Forestry) Okaloosa County School Board Okaloosa County Libraries Non Discrimination Interconnection

The fiber optic network constructed with these grant funds will be a shared resource open to interconnection to any entity desirous of the opportunity extended by this grant. Fiber connections will be made available in a clear and concise manner allowing for multiple uses by different entities. Services and Application

The fiber network extensions to be constructed with these grant funds would never have been achievable if this grant was not available. The proposed middle mile fiber network to rural areas connects sixty eight (68) Community Anchor Institutions and Critical Community Facilities to include: forty eight (48) public school facilities, seven (7) public safety entities, four (4) underserved economically disadvantaged community center locations, six (6) libraries and three (3) hospitals. Public Safety entities will benefit through increased communication to emergency responders and critical facilities. Several

rural Public Safety centers, including fire departments and sheriff department substations, will be networked with the remainder of the public safety facilities in Okaloosa County. These remote locations are vital to Public Safety as they are used as staging areas in the aftermath of hurricanes or other catastrophic events. The proposed fiber ring in the North Okaloosa Service Area will help provide the fault tolerance necessary to support mission critical applications. The Okaloosa County School Board (OCSB) will benefit by reducing and stabilizing their annual budget for communications and connectivity. These savings can be reallocated for teachers, technology, distance learning and other critical educational needs. This project will also lay an avenue of growth for future technologies as they develop. During the first year of operation alone at current costs, the OCSB will save over \$700,000. The Okaloosa County Library Cooperative will be networked and outfitted with new video teleconferencing equipment. Opportunities for distance learning will then extend to underserved and unserved remote areas promoting education and lifelong learning. Qualifications Implementation Sustainability Okaloosa County has designed, developed, implemented and sustained a fiber optic system since 2001. This system has been sustainable in providing communications to county government at many levels over a widespread area. Overall Infrastructure Cost The overall cost of the project is \$9,386,694.28. The cost will be allocated between new conduit and fiber, LAN connections, building modifications, computers, wireless and network hardware, as well as telecommunications hardware and software. Overall Subscribers As there will be no charge for the broadband service provided to Community Anchor Institutions and Critical Community Facilities there will be no associated subscription fees from users. Potentially, over 7,800 residences with the proposed underserved service area will have access to the system as well as over 30,000 students. Sixty eight (68) Community Anchor Institutions and Critical Community Facilities will be connected using the proceeds of this grant. The new fiber project will interconnect to the existing Okaloosa County Fiber Network. Okaloosa County will provide a 20.2% match including dark fiber resources and equipment that will link rural areas to educational institutions and the WWW. With this expansion comes added cost and responsibilities for Okaloosa County. The Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) will have increased costs for extending its network to Community Anchor Institutions and Critical Community Facilities and underserved areas. As miles of fiber are added to the existing network, locating and maintenance costs will increase. These costs will be shared by OCSB for their portion of the expanded fiber network. Additionally, providing internet access to new locations will increase the cost to the BCC as well. As the BCC is already engaged in and will continue to be engaged in the procurement of internet bandwidth, we hereby commit and directly state in our letter of support to provide Internet bandwidth on a sustainable basis to meet or exceed 768 Kb downstream and 200 Kb upstream per location. The net result of increased internet access will be providing a vital service to underserved constituents. In addition, these grant proceeds will help to curb the cost of operations for government entities, increase communication between Public Safety facilities and medical services in Okaloosa County, as well as greatly expanding educational opportunities throughout the County.