



September 24, 2021

Senator Terry Rice, Co-Chair  
Representative Jeff Wardlaw, Co-Chair  
Arkansas Legislative Council  
500 Woodlane Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Senator Rice and Representative Wardlaw,

As required by Section 27 of Act 1005 of 2021, I have enclosed three (3) Rural Broadband I.D. grant awards for approval by the Arkansas Legislative Council or Joint Budget Committee. The UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation (IDHI) Technical Review Committee completed a thorough evaluation of the applications submitted by the cities and counties. I have enclosed copies of the successful applications with supporting information for your review.

#### Rural Broadband I.D. Grant Awards

City of Russellville– Primary Contact, Mayor Richard Harris – Award Amount \$75,000.00  
City of Berryville – Primary Contact, Mayor Tim McKinney – Award Amount \$75,000.00  
Phillips County – Primary Contact, Judge Clark Hall – Award Amount \$73,826.46

The grants are available to help cities, incorporated towns, counties and unincorporated communities conduct broadband due-diligence business studies. The studies are required in federal grant and loan applications for broadband infrastructure. Communities can use their broadband due-diligence business studies to apply for funding from:

The Federal Communications Commission's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Program  
The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural eConnectivity Pilot Program (ReConnect)  
The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Bill; and  
Other federal grants or loans for broadband development programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph A. Sanford Jr., M.D." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joseph A. Sanford Jr., M.D.  
Director  
Institute of Digital Health & Innovation  
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

**Rural Broadband I.D. Trust Fund Program  
Cover Sheet**

**Applicant Name:** Russellville, Arkansas

**Applicant Address:** 203 S. Commerce Avenue / Russellville, Arkansas 72801

**Applicant Phone Number:** 479.968.2098

**Applicant Tax ID or EIN Number:** 71-6010871

**Key Contact Person:** Mayor Richard Harris

**Total Amount Requested:** \$75,000

**Project Description:**

Russellville, Arkansas has 29,193 residents, of which an estimated 5% lack reliable, affordable broadband access. With a growing reliance on broadband, Russellville must implement a plan to bring broadband to our citizens and businesses. Through this proposal, Russellville leaders respectfully request support in conducting Broadband Due Diligence to include a Market and Feasibility Study.

# Project Narrative

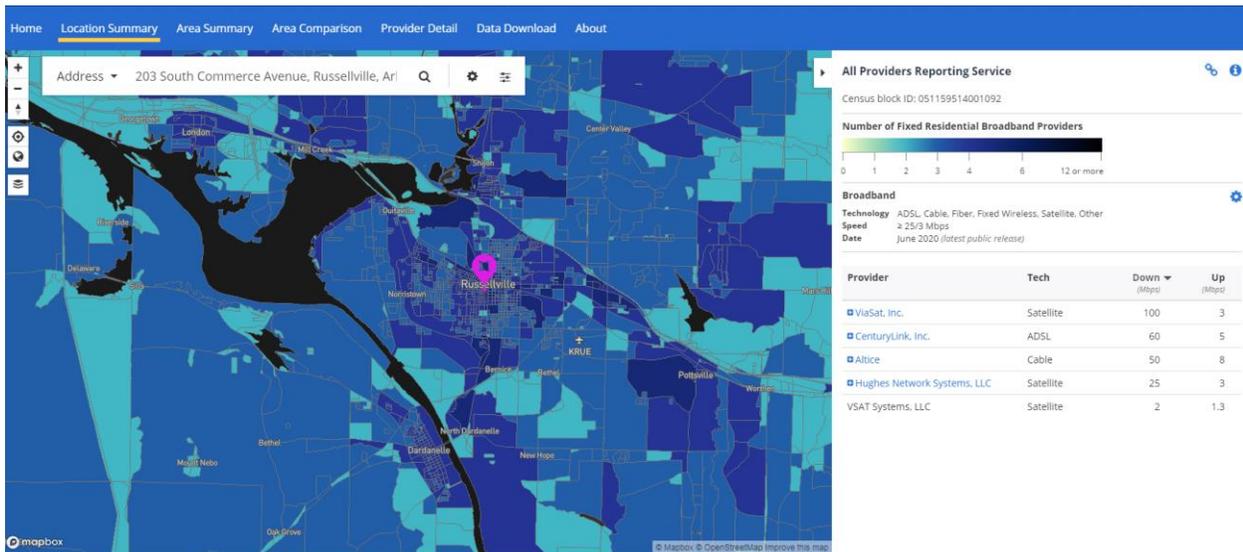
## Introduction

### Proposed Service Area

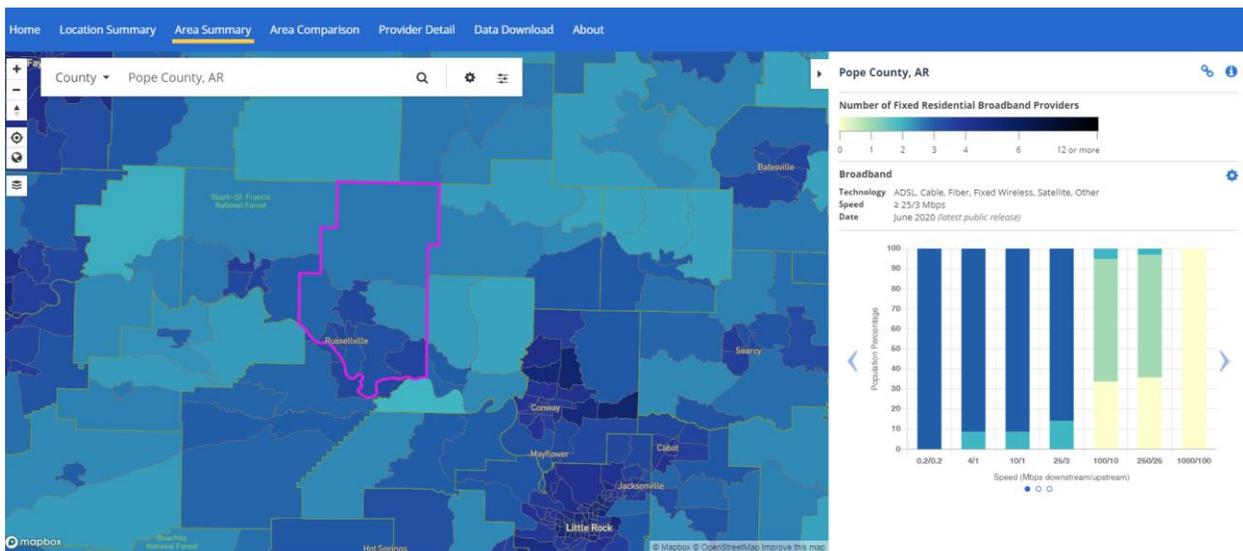
This proposal will serve Russellville, Arkansas.

### Percent of your proposed service area that is unserved by 25/3 broadband

This is Russellville's area broadband map, as reported by the FCC. As you see, our City is located in an area with only a few providers, three (3) of which are satellite providers with limited bandwidth.



This is the broadband coverage for Pope County:



According to the FCC, three (3) providers offer 25/3 broadband to 86% of our county’s residents. Two (2) providers offer 25/3 broadband to just over 14% of our county’s residents.

These maps and data were found at <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/#/> using the “Location Summary” and “Area Summary” features.

**Total population, number of residents who are rural and urban**

According to the US Census Bureau 2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, Russellville has a population of 29,193 individuals. 100% of our area is an urban cluster, as our community has more than 2,500, and fewer than 50,000, residents. We found this data at <https://www.census.gov/data.html>.

**Percent of individuals in your proposed service area who are living in poverty**

According to the US Census Bureau, Russellville, Arkansas has 20.6% of residents living in poverty. We found this information at <https://www.census.gov/data.html>. Having affordable broadband options available to this population is vital to providing educational, workplace and healthcare opportunities to them.

**Medically underserved**

According to the Health Resources and Services Administration MUA Find tool, Pope County is a medically underserved area. We found this information at <https://data.hrsa.gov/tools/shortage-area/mua-find>.

	Discipline	MUA/P ID	Service Area Name	Designation Type	Primary State Name	County	Index of Medical Underservice Score	Status	Rural Status	Designation Date	Update Date
+	Primary Care	00206	Dover/ Martin Service Area	Medically Underserved Area	Arkansas	Pope County, AR	59.1	Designated	Rural	05/11/1994	05/11/1994
+	Primary Care	1052389424	Pottsville Service Area	Medically Underserved Area	Arkansas	Pope County, AR	60.0	Designated	Rural	12/30/2013	07/06/2018

As a medically-underserved area, our residents need better access to healthcare from their homes, which would be made possible by broadband connections via telemedicine to physicians, clinics, hospitals, and the Veterans Administration health system. Without adequate, affordable access to broadband in their homes, our residents cannot easily access telehealth care.

**Description of Need**

**Staffing needs:**

The leaders of Russellville, Arkansas have some broadband experience. In addition, we also have experience in hiring contractors and consultants, managing budgets, and completing projects on time. Our Mayor handles a budget of \$17,083,216 annually and manages 35 existing contracts for consultants and other contractors. Our City Council members have expertise in business relations, forming and convening committees, and in our area’s needs.

### Population Needs:

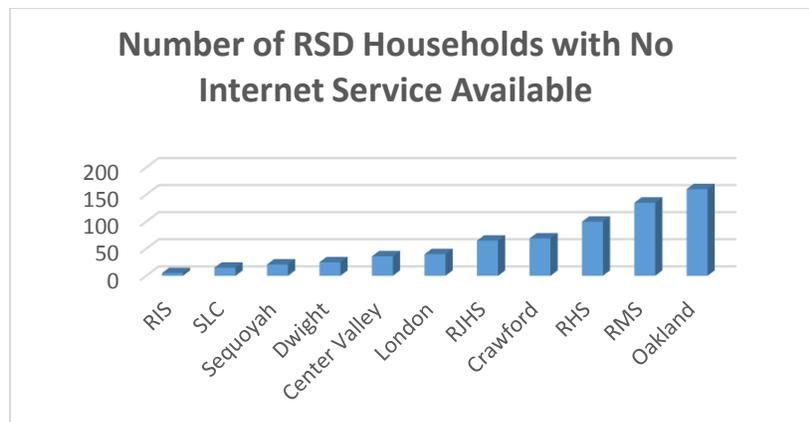
According to the US Census Bureau Profile for Russellville, Arkansas, the median age of our population is 28 years of age. Our community has a mix of 85.7% white, 6.0% black, 1.9% Asian and 2.2% make up other races. Over 6% of our residents experience difficulty living independently and almost 8% have ambulatory difficulty. The majority of our residents (83%) have a high school degree or equivalent, 43% have some college but no degree and 15% have a Bachelor's degree or higher. As of the 2019 estimates, 2% of our residents worked from home, although we expect these numbers to be elevated due to Covid-19. Males had a median income of \$40,751, while females made \$26,496. As of the 2019 survey, our employment rate was 53.5%.

We found this information at <https://www.census.gov/data.html> by entering our city name into the search field and selecting our profile.

### Broadband Needs:

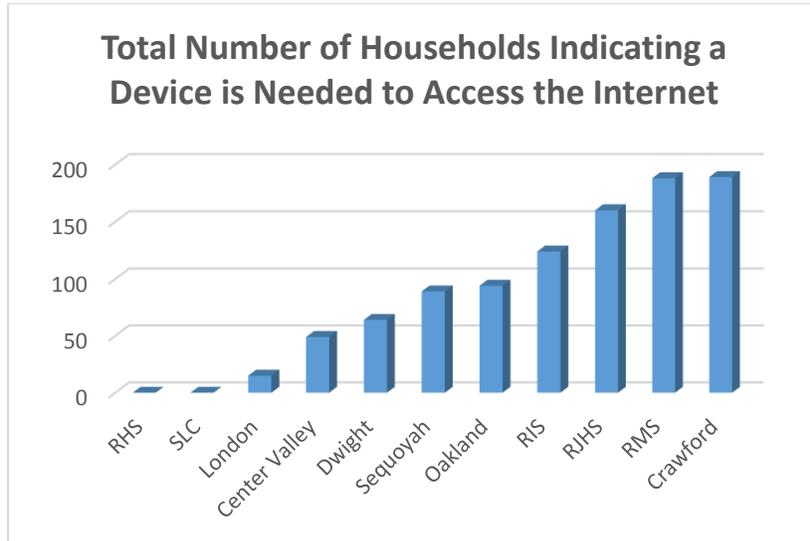
Although the FCC indicates that Russellville has adequate broadband coverage, our experiences are quite different. Our City is home to Tyson Foods, ConAgra, Denali and other large manufacturing companies who have experienced interruption of online availability stemming from slow broadband connection to their facilities. During Covid-19, many of our residents were required to work from home, but slow, frequently interrupted or non-existent internet made productivity difficult. Russellville is also home to a K-12 school system and Arkansas Tech University. Students and families were forced to use broadband "hot spots" from local businesses (sometimes from their parking lots) as well as neighboring communities in order to access online curriculum during the pandemic school closures. Some students and teachers were unable to attend school at all due to lack of internet.

The Russellville School District conducted an internal survey to determine needs for implementing virtual learning during the Covid-19 shutdown. The first chart shows the number of households in which students lacked internet service completely due either to availability or cost.

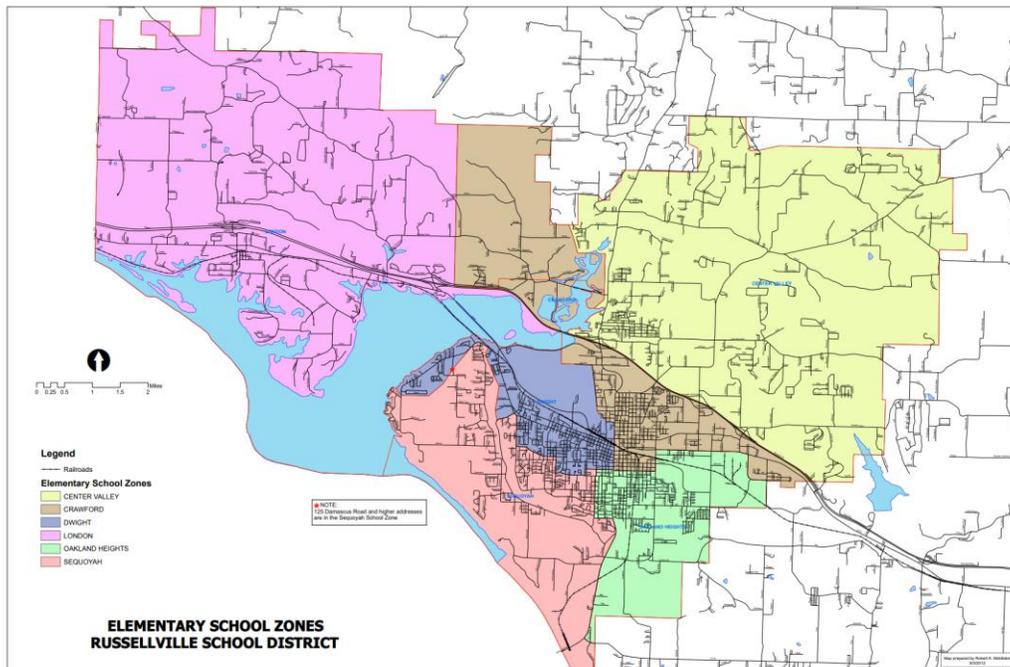


Oakland and Crawford Elementary Schools are in low-income areas of the City. RMS is Russellville Middle School and RHS is Russellville High School. Both draw students from the entire City and some outlying regions around it.

In some situations, students lacked a device to access the internet, which may be a proxy for both low income and lack of affordable internet service.



For reference, here are the school districts displayed on a map.



Our businesses, residents, and economy will all benefit from improved broadband in our City. We believe these improvements will spur economic development in our City and give our residents the ability to participate in online learning and healthcare, as well as telecommute as needed. The work-from-home offering would be a stimulant to economic growth as well as opening up new avenues of advancement for our skilled residents and attract new residents because of the quality of life in the Arkansas River Valley.

The City of Russellville has never received a broadband grant or loan in the past.

#### Internet Service Provider Relationship Needs:

Russellville has talked to some of the Internet Service Providers in our region to partner with us to expand their broadband services to our area. We plan to contract with CTC Technology and Rural Innovation Strategies to conduct a Municipal Broadband Market and Feasibility Study.

#### Financial Needs:

Russellville operates on \$17,083,216 per year, which pays for our police department, fire department, and public works along with salaries for 204 full-time and 19 part-time employees. This grant could help us to better define needs, identify options, and determine whether a nearby Internet Service Provider would have the business case to expand their services to our businesses and homes. The funds needed to improve broadband in Russellville cannot be found in our current budget. We understand that there are federal grants available for broadband construction and expansion, and we believe this grant can strategically position us to compete for these funds.

#### Community Relationship Needs:

This proposal embodies the needs and requests of the leaders of our community as they support the idea of improving broadband for the purpose of improving educational attainment, e-commerce, healthcare, and entertainment purposes.

#### **Description of Plan**

Through this study, we plan to achieve the following:

- \*Conduct a Municipal Broadband Market and Feasibility Study
- \*Further educate City leaders on the broadband options available

We have considered the following broadband consultants for this grant:

- **CTC Technology and Rural Innovation Strategies**
- **CT&T / Palmetto Engineering and Consulting**

Our objectives and timeline are as follows:

Month 1: Objective – Launch the Russellville Broadband Feasibility Study

*Month 1 Goals:*

1. Hire the Broadband Consultant to conduct a Market and Feasibility Study and require them to participate in Committee meetings
2. Hold bi-weekly meetings of the Broadband Committee

Month 2: Objective – Hold Regular Meetings with the Broadband Committee

*Month 2 Goals:*

1. Continue holding bi-weekly meetings of the Broadband Committee
2. Receive a monthly update on the Market and Feasibility Study
3. Evaluate progress and provide input as necessary

Month 3: Objective – Hold Regular Meetings with the Broadband Committee

*Month 3 Goals:*

1. Continue holding bi-weekly meetings of the Broadband Committee
2. Receive a monthly update on the Market and Feasibility Study
3. Evaluate progress and provide input as necessary

Month 4: Objective – Receive Monthly Updates from the Broadband Consultant

*Month 4 Goals:*

1. Continue holding bi-weekly meetings of the Broadband Committee
2. Receive a monthly update on the Market and Feasibility Study
3. Evaluate progress and provide input as necessary

Month 5: Objective – Receive Monthly Updates from the Broadband Consultant

*Month 5 Goals:*

1. Continue holding meetings of the Broadband Committee
2. Receive a monthly update on the Market and Feasibility Study
3. Evaluate progress and provide input as necessary

Month 6: Objective – Receive Findings of the Broadband Market and Feasibility Study

*Month 6 Goals:*

1. Share the final draft of the Market and Feasibility Study with Committee members, City leaders and the UAMS Institute for Digital Health and Innovation
2. Evaluate the results of the study to determine the most appropriate options for the City of Russellville and develop a strategy for implementation
3. Determine the next steps for further broadband grants and loans or other steps necessary to act upon the identified needs

**Final Products:**

- Asset Report and Integrated GIS Mapping
- Specifications Report
- Market Analysis Report with Integrated GIS Mapping
- Comprehensive Feasibility Analysis Report and Financial Model(s)
- Opportunities and Threats Report
- Final Report

While we are not familiar with all of the broadband grants and loans we may pursue, our due diligence will give Russellville leadership great confidence of accurate and efficient use of the broadband grants we will pursue. We will rely on CTC Technology and Rural Innovation Strategies to provide expert analysis to lead us through future federal grants and loans.

**Budget**

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES					
6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				Total (5)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
a. Personnel	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
b. Fringe Benefits					
c. Travel					
d. Equipment					
e. Supplies					
f. Contractual	75,000.00				75,000.00
g. Construction					
h. Other					
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)	75,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$75,000.00
j. Indirect Charges					\$
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$75,000.00
7. Program Income	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

## **Budget Justification**

### ***Contractual:***

**Broadband Consultant:** We have a proposal from CTC Technology and Rural Innovation Strategies to conduct a Municipal Broadband Market and Feasibility Study. They will conduct market research, gather insight on needs, and conduct a comprehensive feasibility analysis report and financial model. They will also educate the Committee members as merited on broadband basics and options that are available, will coach us on future broadband grant and loan applications, and will act as a liaison with Internet Service Providers to communicate the needs of our community. The Broadband Consultant is vital to evaluating existing infrastructure, assessing our broadband needs, and improving our knowledge so that we can ensure that Russellville will be able to negotiate and communicate effectively with Internet Service Providers to ultimately achieve better city-wide access to high-speed internet.

CTC Technology and Rural Innovation Strategies has informed us that to conduct this study, they need at least 6 months and \$75,000. We believe this amount will compensate another Broadband Consultant should we decide to pursue another partner to conduct the Broadband Market and Feasibility Study. Request: \$75,000

**Rural Broadband I.D. Trust Fund Program  
Cover Sheet**

**Applicant Name:** City of Berryville

**Applicant Address:** P. O. Box 227, Berryville, ARF 72616

**Applicant Phone Number:** 870-423-4286

**Applicant Email Address:** chris.claybaker@berryville.com

**Applicant Tax ID or EIN Number:** 71-6000684

**Key Contact Person:** Mayor Tim McKinney

**Total Amount Requested:** \$75,000.00

**Project Description:**

Berryville lacks the traditional economic development tools for attracting businesses such as multi-lane highways, navigable waterways, and an airport runway of at least 4,500ft. Berryville does have a strong and trainable work force that can be attractive to many businesses and a new Business Park to which we are attempting to attract employers. Developing a robust Internet infrastructure in this area will allow us to be more marketable for today's tech focused companies seeking an affordable and dependable business environment.

Through this proposal, Berryville city leaders respectfully request support in conducting a broadband due diligence study consisting of the following activities to be completed in six-months:

- Contract with a broadband consultant to educate our leaders of broadband options and act as an intermediary in communicating with potential Internet Service Providers in our area.
- Hire an engineer to design an effective network that would be attractive to potential occupants of the Business Park.
- Have the engineer determine feasibility to extend this high-speed Internet connection from the business park to the surrounding low-income housing areas.
- Engage the 3 Internet Service Providers serving nearby Carroll County to conduct a feasibility study to extend their broadband services to our area.

The afore mentioned low-income areas, sorely lacking high speed Internet, are identified on the FCC Broadband map as Census ID numbers 050159503003006 and 050159503002021.

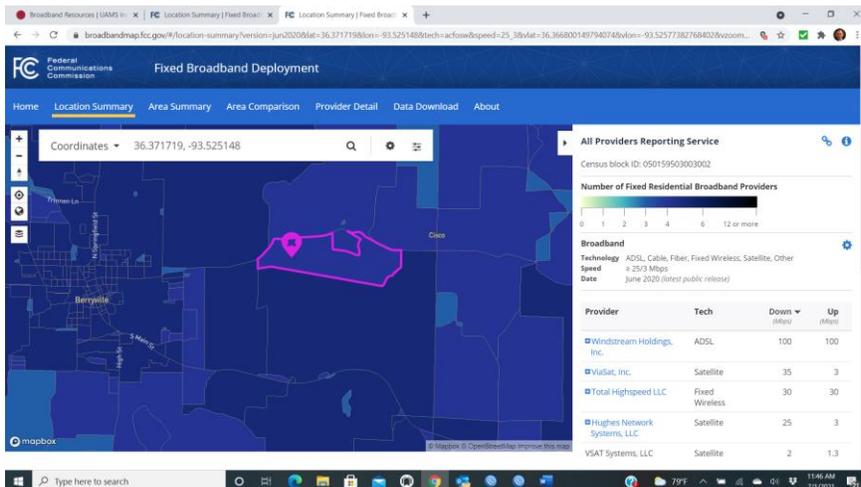
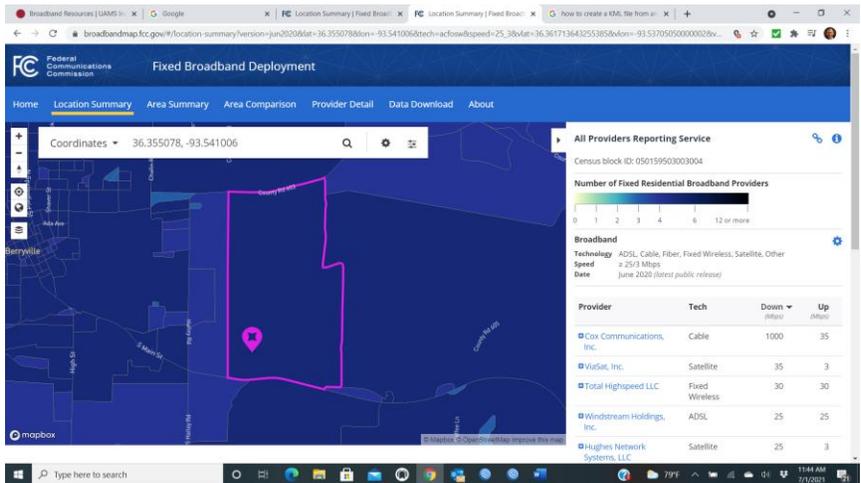
# Project Narrative

## Introduction (up to 30 points)

### Proposed Service Area

Berryville, Arkansas: The specific area is defined on the FCC broadband coverage map as Census ID numbers 050159503003004, 050159503003002, 050159503003006 and 050159503002021.

Percent of your proposed service area that is unserved by 25/3 broadband  
Currently the described areas are 100% unserved by 25/3 broadband



Fixed Broadband Deployment

Home Location Summary Area Summary Area Comparison Provider Detail Data Download About

Coordinates 36.369152, -93.548093

All Providers Reporting Service  
Census block ID: 050159503003006

Number of Fixed Residential Broadband Providers  
0 1 2 3 4 6 12 or more

Broadband  
Technology ADSL, Cable, Fiber, Fixed Wireless, Satellite, Other  
Speed ≥ 25/3 Mbps  
Date June 2020 (first public release)

Provider	Tech	Down (Mbps)	Up (Mbps)
ViaSat, Inc.	Satellite	35	3
Total Highspeed LLC	Fixed Wireless	30	30
Hughes Network Systems, LLC	Satellite	25	3
VSAT Systems, LLC	Satellite	2	1.3

Fixed Broadband Deployment

Home Location Summary Area Summary Area Comparison Provider Detail Data Download About

Coordinates 36.369852, -93.54927

All Providers Reporting Service  
Census block ID: 050159503002021

Number of Fixed Residential Broadband Providers  
0 1 2 3 4 6 12 or more

Broadband  
Technology ADSL, Cable, Fiber, Fixed Wireless, Satellite, Other  
Speed ≥ 25/3 Mbps  
Date June 2020 (first public release)

Provider	Tech	Down (Mbps)	Up (Mbps)
ViaSat, Inc.	Satellite	35	3
Total Highspeed LLC	Fixed Wireless	30	30
Hughes Network Systems, LLC	Satellite	25	3
Windstream Holdings, Inc.	ADSL	20	1.5
VSAT Systems, LLC	Satellite	2	1.3

Fixed Broadband Deployment

Home Location Summary Area Summary Area Comparison Provider Detail Data Download About

County Enter county

Nationwide

Number of Fixed Residential Broadband Providers  
0 1 2 3 4 6 12 or more

Broadband  
Technology ADSL, Cable, Fiber, Fixed Wireless, Satellite, Other  
Speed ≥ 25/3 Mbps  
Date June 2020 (first public release)

Year	ADSL	Cable	Fiber	Fixed Wireless	Satellite	Other
2010	~80%	~15%	~5%	~0%	~0%	~0%
2011	~75%	~15%	~5%	~5%	~0%	~0%
2012	~70%	~15%	~10%	~5%	~0%	~0%
2013	~65%	~15%	~15%	~5%	~0%	~0%
2014	~60%	~15%	~20%	~5%	~0%	~0%
2015	~55%	~15%	~25%	~5%	~0%	~0%
2016	~50%	~15%	~30%	~5%	~0%	~0%
2017	~45%	~15%	~35%	~5%	~0%	~0%
2018	~40%	~15%	~40%	~5%	~0%	~0%
2019	~35%	~15%	~45%	~5%	~0%	~0%
2020	~30%	~15%	~50%	~5%	~0%	~0%

## Total population, number of residents who are rural and urban

### URBAN AND RURAL

Survey/Program: Decennial Census

Universe: Total population

TableID: PCT2

Product:

2010: DEC Summary File 2

#### Label

Berryville city, Arkansas

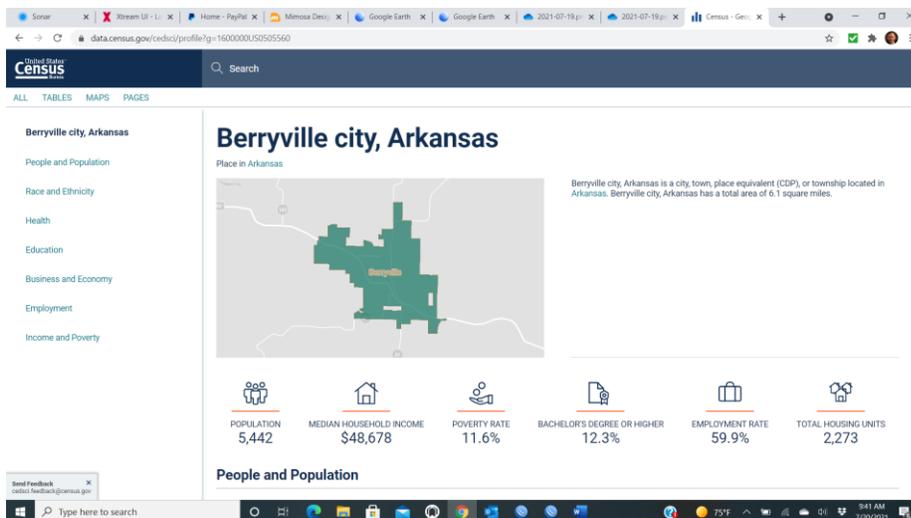
#### Total population

Total:	5,356
Urban:	0
Inside urbanized areas	0
Inside urban clusters	0
Rural	0
Not defined for this file	5,356

Columns

Cell/Column Notes

## Percent of individuals in your proposed service area who are living in poverty



The poverty rate for the City of Berryville, AR is 11.6%, well above the National average of 9.2%, according to the latest available data. The extended area proposed consists of a greatly

impoverished population. Many of these homes have children without any Internet access. The population within the census areas mentioned in this application outside of the business park is presumed to be nearly 100% impoverished.

## Medically underserved

population. Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) are designated by HRSA as having shortages of primary medical care, dental or mental health providers and may be geographic (a county or service area), population (e.g. low income or Medicaid eligible) or facilities (e.g. federally qualified health center or other state or federal prisons). [More about shortage areas.](#)

Discipline	MUA/P ID	Service Area Name	Designation Type	Primary State Name	Count	Index of Medical Underservice	Status	Rural Status	Designation Date	Update Date
Primary Care	00147	Carroll County	Medically Underserved Area	Arkansas	Carroll County, AR	47.5	Designated	Rural	11/01/1978	11/01/1978

## Description of need (up to 30 points)

### Staffing needs:

The staff and city leaders in Berryville have very little broadband experience; however, the city staff and mayor have vast experience in hiring contractors and consultants, managing budgets, and completing projects on time. The mayor of over 31 years and the Administrative Assistant are responsible for an annual budget of over \$14.2 million dollars and manages 20-50 contracts annually. Berryville is completing an over \$10 million rural water project that is adding approximately 33 miles of water line to Berryville’s water system. The project was made possible through a series of grants and loans from state and federal agencies.

### Population needs:

**Persons in poverty, percent** 11.4%

**PEOPLE**

**Population**

- Population estimates, July 1, 2019, (V2019) 5,550
- Population estimates base, April 1, 2010, (V2019) 5,291
- Population, percent change, April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2019, (V2019) 4.9%
- Population, Census, April 1, 2020 X
- Population, Census, April 1, 2010 5,356

**Age and Sex**

- Persons under 5 years, percent 8.3%
- Persons under 18 years, percent 24.9%
- Persons 65 years and over, percent 15.7%
- Female persons, percent 48.7%

**Race and Hispanic Origin**

- White alone, percent 85.0%
- Black or African American alone, percent (a) 1.0%
- American Indian or Alaska Native alone, percent (a) 0.3%
- Asian alone, percent (a) 3.2%
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent (a) 4.4%
- Two or More Races, percent 3.9%
- Hispanic or Latino, percent (b) 20.4%
- White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent 68.2%

**Population Characteristics**

- Veterans, 2015-2019 267
- Foreign born persons, percent, 2015-2019 12.6%

**Housing**

- Housing units, July 1, 2019, (V2019) X
- Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2015-2019 69.2%

According to the U. S Census Bureau Profile for the City of Berryville, Arkansas, the majority of our population (78.2 %) is 18 years and older and 22.6 percent 65 years and older. The median age in Carroll County 45.0.)

#### Broadband needs:

Broadband is more than critical for this project. The business park is the hub of new industry for our city. We have not been able to market our excellent workforce to companies like Walmart, Google, Facebook or Amazon because we do not have the Internet capacity necessary to attract such giants.

We will use this grant money to determine whether we can position our business park in such a way that Internet based corporate giants might find our part of Northwest Arkansas an attractive place to bring their business. This grant will also allow us to conduct a feasibility study of broadband expansion into our lower income areas and find a way to improve connectivity in those areas.

There is currently no broadband in the area of our business park. We want to make sure that when we build the broadband network it will not be obsolete in the near future. Engineering a state-of-the-art network is critical to the success of the Berryville Business Park project.

#### Internet Service Provider relationship needs:

The city has spoken with 2 Internet Service Providers about this project. Cox Communications and Berryville Broadband both have a business relationship with the City of Berryville. Both say they can provide us with the bandwidth and speed we need. They both have access to contractors who can place the conduit and fiber in the ground.

What both lack is the blueprints created by a certified engineer to ensure proper deployment. This grant will allow us to hire an engineer to design the system from which one of these providers will be able begin work.

#### Financial needs:

The City of Berryville operates under a \$14,259,00 budget for the year 2021, which covers the police department, the volunteer fire department, public works, parks department, Berryville Community Center, its share of district court, and administration. The budget reflects 42 Full-time employees, 13 Year-round Part-time employees, and 30 Seasonal Part-time employees.

#### Community relationship needs:

Individuals in leadership positions in Berryville have voiced concern for the need of high-speed internet in various public meetings held regularly by local organizations. The Berryville City Council meets twice a month. The Berryville School Board meets monthly, as does the board of directors of the Greater Berryville Area Chamber of Commerce. City Councilwoman Linda Riddlesberger, Berryville School Superintendent Owen Powell, and Chamber Director Dean Lee have agreed to serve as members of the Task Force which will provide a direct conduit into the community concerning broadband needs. Chris Claybaker, economic development director for the city, will chair the task force.

**Description of plan (up to 25 points)**

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6
Goal 1: Identify first step or goal to complete project	Establish a Broadband task force to work with the Project Manager					
Goal 2: Identify second step or goal to complete project		Contract with a broadband consultant who will sub-contract with necessary engineers, etc.	Consultant will schedule educational programs for City leadership and the public specific to Broadband and its impact upon our economic future	First meeting with City leaders	Public Education meeting to be held at the Berryville Community Center	Public Education meeting to be held at the Berryville Community Center
Goal 3: Identify third step or goal to complete project			Bi-weekly task force update meetings will be held with contractors and Project Manager to measure progress	Request proposals from ISPs to be service provider		
Goal 4: Identify fourth step or goal to					Final draft of feasibility study, engineering and design work and all	

complete project					recommendations are to be presented to the task force.	
Goal 5: Identify fifth step or goal to complete project						If feasible, we will submit applications for grant money to launch the project.

Through this study, we plan to achieve the following:

- Contract with a broadband consultant to educate our leaders of broadband options and act as an intermediary in communicating with potential Internet Service Providers in our area.
- Form the City of Berryville Broadband Taskforce to determine the feasibility to provide broadband at the new Berryville Regional Business Park and those nearby low-to-moderate income residents.
- Engage an Internet Service Provider to extend their broadband services to our area of need.

We have considered the following broadband consultants for this grant:

- WISP Management, LLC

We have been in communication with the following Internet Service Provider to conduct a feasibility study. If this vendor is nonresponsive or is met with other issues, we will consider other ISPs and electric cooperatives near our area:

- Berryville Broadband, LLC

Our objectives and timeline are as follows:

Month 1: Objective – Launch the City of Berryville Broadband Due Diligence Study

*Month 1 Goals:*

1. Form the Broadband Taskforce
2. Hold the first meeting of the Broadband Taskforce
3. Meet with broadband consultants

Month 2: Objective – Make Decisions Related to the Broadband Due Diligence Study

*Month 2 Goals:*

1. Contract with a broadband consultant
2. Consultant to meet with Task Force and begin collaboration with Task Force Chairman and City Economic Development Director to create the custom broadband needs assessment based on the findings of the Taskforce
3. Consultant to subcontract with engineering group
4. Continue holding meetings with the Broadband Taskforce

Month 3: Objective – Consultant and engineers begin the Feasibility Study

*Month 3 Goals:*

1. Determine which Engineer will subcontract to conduct feasibility study
2. Add content and findings to the custom broadband needs assessment
3. Consultant will schedule educational programs for City leadership and the public specific to Broadband and its impact upon our economic future
4. Continue holding meetings with the Broadband Taskforce

Month 4: Objective – Continuing Documenting Needs

*Month 4 Goals:*

1. Educational meeting with City leaders
2. Request proposals from ISPs to be service provider
3. Add content and findings to the custom broadband needs assessment
4. Receive update about feasibility study

Month 5: Objective – Sharing Documented Needs

*Month 5 Goals:*

1. Share the first draft of the City of Berryville Broadband Needs Assessment with Taskforce members and UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation
2. Make revisions on needs assessment as needed
3. Continue holding meetings with the Broadband Taskforce
4. Receive final update about feasibility study

Month 6: Objective – Receive Findings of the Feasibility Study

*Month 6 Goals:*

1. Share the final draft of the City of Berryville Broadband Needs Assessment with Taskforce members and UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation
2. Feasibility Study findings will be shared at the Taskforce Meeting
3. If the project is deemed feasible, we will submit applications for grant money to launch the project.

Final Products:

- City of Berryville Broadband Needs Assessment
- City of Berryville Broadband Feasibility Study
- Detailed engineering blueprint of the project area
- Grant application to launch project if deemed feasible

At the completion of this project phase, we will have detailed blueprints from a certified engineer. The consultant will educate key members of our leadership team on how broadband works as well as potential ideas for marketing the finished project. We will have a solid budget for the financial needs of the project, thereby putting us in a good position for applying for State or Federal grants to build out the fiber optic network.

Acquiring this grant will also better position us for assisting the low-income housing areas that adjoin the business park. We will use this project as leverage to have one of the ISPs to extend the fiber from our business park to these lower income households.

The results of this study, if deemed feasible, will allow us to apply for a grant from the Arkansas Re-Connect grant program.

**Budget**

<b>Budget Categories</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Personnel	\$ 3,379
Fringe Benefits	\$ 621
Travel	\$ 0
Equipment	\$ 3,400
Supplies	\$ 600
Contractual	\$65,000
Contingency	\$ 2,000
<b>Total Request</b>	<b>\$75,000</b>

**Budget Justification (up to 15 points):**

***Personnel:***

Mayor’s Administrative Assistant – Annual Salary \$67,700. The City’s Administrative Assistant will act as Project Director, serving as key liaison to the funders and media. He will identify taskforce members and coordinate meetings and advising the Mayor who will make final decisions on all contractors. The Administrative Assistant will spend an estimated ten (10%) of his time during the first and sixth months of the project and five percent (5%) of his time during the other four months on this six-month project. (Ten percent of salary for 2 months, \$1,128 and five percent of salary for 4 months, \$1,128). Request: \$2,256.

City Treasurer – Annual Salary \$44,900. The City Treasurer will act as the Financial Director to this project, securing the surety bond and making financial arrangements for all contractors. She will ensure timelines, objectives, and goals are met, providing troubleshooting as necessary to solve problems while working alongside the Project Director. The City Treasurer will spend an estimated one day weekly on this project for six months, accounting for 5% of her annual salary. Request: \$ 1,123.

***Fringe Benefits:***

City of Berryville pays approximately 18% of the Full-time employee salary for health insurance and other fringe benefits. Request: \$621

***Supplies:***

The City of Berryville will need office supplies (printing paper, printer ink, folders, postage, etc.), bottled water, and other sundry supplies for its Taskforce meetings. An allowance of \$100 per month is requested to cover these needs. Request: \$600

***Equipment:***

The City of Berryville will need additional equipment (laptop computer, projection equipment, etc.) for its Taskforce meetings and public meetings. Request: \$3,400

***Contractual:***

Broadband Consultant & Feasibility Study: WISP Management, the proposed Broadband Consultant, will educate the taskforce members and larger community as merited on broadband basics and options that are available to them, will coach on future broadband grant and loan applications, and will act as liaison with Internet Service Providers to communicate the needs of our community.

The Broadband Consultant is vital to improve our broadband understanding, so we can ensure City of Berryville will be able to negotiate and communicate effectively with Internet Service Providers to ultimately achieve better community-wide access to high-speed Internet. The consultant will also conduct the feasibility study and make recommendations for expanding high speed Internet throughout the business park and the adjacent low-income housing areas. We are respectfully requesting \$65,000 to pay this consultant for six months of work. Request: \$65,000

Needs Assessment Author: The Chairman of the Task Force, Chris Claybaker, will work with the contractor to author the needs assessment. That contractor will assist in writing this document, offer coordination as needed in gathering insight on needs, and conducting surveys as merited for the needs assessment, all of which can be used for future grant and loan applications.

The Internet Consultant charged with coordinating the Engineers, designers and educating the leadership team will enter into an agreement with the city to provide consultant services and engage consultants and/or engineers for no more than \$65,000. He will also conduct a feasibility study of expanding the fiber project to the lower income housing development located North of the business park.

**Supporting Documents (up to 10 *bonus* points):**

Chamber Director  
Berryville Superintendent of Schools  
City Councilwoman  
Carroll County Judge  
Berryville Broadband (ISP)

**Rural Broadband I.D. Trust Fund Program  
Cover Sheet**

**Applicant Name:** , Phillips County, Arkansas

**Applicant: Address: 620 Cherry Street, Helena-West Helena, Ar 72342**

**Applicant Phone Number: 870-338-5500**

**Applicant Tax ID or EIN Number: 71-6005078**

**Key Contact Person:** Judge Clark Hall

**Total Amount Requested: \$73,826.46**

**Project Description:**

Phillips County, Arkansas has 17,782 residents, of which an estimated 40% lack reliable, affordable broadband access. With a growing reliance on broadband, Phillips County must implement a plan to bring broadband to our businesses and families. Through this proposal, Phillips County leaders respectfully request support in conducting a broadband due diligence study consisting of the following activities to be completed in six-months:

Contract with a broadband consultant to educate our leaders of broadband options and act as an intermediary in communicating with potential Internet Service Providers in our area.

Form the Phillips County Broadband Taskforce to prioritize broadband deployment throughout our businesses and communities.

Engage the 4 Internet Service Providers serving Phillips County to conduct a feasibility study to extend their broadband services to our area.

**Project Narrative**

**Proposed Service Area**

This proposal will serve: Phillips County, Arkansas.

Highlighted Sample Cities

**DIGITAL DIVIDE INDEX FOR PHILLIPS COUNTY, ARKANSAS**

**Lake View, Arkansas, is a town located on Highway 85 in Phillips County.** The town is 25 minutes south of Helena-West Helena, AR. K-12 students attend the Barton-Lexa Public Schools located in Barton a 16- minute drive or about 12 miles. We were unable to access census data for Lake View, possibly because there are two towns in Arkansas by the name of “Lake View,” one located in Baxter County.

Data for this town was taken from Wikipedia, which inexplicably was able to access records we were not. According to US Census Bureau Data from 2010, the population is 443.

The median income was \$15,536 in 2000. The poverty rate was 45% in 2000. In 2000, 92% of residents identified as Black or African American and 7% white. According to some sites, the population of Black or African Americans may have increased to 98%, making it one of a handful of towns in the U.S. with an African American population over 90%. It is one of three communities that was set aside specifically for Black farm families by the Resettlement Administration as part of the New Deal in 1935.

## DIGITAL DIVIDE INDEX FOR PHILLIPS COUNTY, ARKANSAS

Broadband in Phillips County has a median download of 18.0 Mbps (MBs per second), a median upload of 0.8 Mbps, and a population with no access to the minimum speed of 100/20 at 99.7%. Phillips County's Digital Divide Score is 53.1 out of 100. The socioeconomic score is 72.5, and the infrastructure score is 38.3/100. We chose to highlight Lake View because of its high poverty rate, unique demographic status and history, and because it has both a library and a city hall. We also feel that Lake View deserves to be counted.

With four times the population of the town of Fargo, the smallest city included in this application, and a mayor and city council, it is stunning that the town's demographics do not exist in the Census Bureau database. With the census moving toward self-reporting online, it seems bringing broadband to Lake View is more important now than ever.

### **Description of need**

#### **Staffing needs:**

Our staffing selection will enable us to adequately perform the task at hand, which is to provide the most thorough audit of Phillips County's state of broadband.

#### **Population needs:**

##### **Phillips County Population**

Sources: United States Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office. Web. 10 December 2020. | United States Census Bureau. Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. Web. May 2020. <http://www.census.gov/>.

## **Phillips County Demographics Summary**



## Population

With 18,606 people, Phillips County is the 37th most populated county in the state of Arkansas out of 75 counties.



## Race & Ethnicity

The largest Phillips County racial/ethnic groups are Black (63.2%) followed by White (34.5%) and Hispanic (1.9%).



## Median Income

In 2019, the median household income of Phillips County households was \$29,320. However, 27.4% of Phillips County families live in poverty.



## Median Age

The median age for Phillips County residents is 38.9 years young.

### **Broadband needs:**

Although the FCC indicates a portion of Phillips County has adequate broadband coverage, our experiences are quite different. For example, students from the various colleges who are home in Helena-West Helena struggles with their online class communications due to the slow and, at times, non-existent broadband connection in their facilities. During COVID-19, some of the schools office workers tried to work from home but slow or non-existent Internet made productivity difficult. Helena-West Helena is also home to small businesses which have struggled engaging in online sales and marketing because of poor bandwidth or lack of broadband. Our township also is home to the K-12 school system, and students and families were largely forced to use the neighboring communities' broadband "hotspots" to access online curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic school closures. With an aging population an only one primary care provider in our township, our residents need better access to healthcare in the home, as made possible by broadband connections to remote physicians, However, without adequate, affordable access to broadband in the home ,our residents cannot easily access tele-health care. Our businesses and residents stand to benefit from improved broadband. We feel these improvements will most specifically spur economic development our town and the ability for our resident to participate in online learning and healthcare. We have never received a broadband grant or loan in the past.

### **Internet Service Provider relationship needs:**

Helena-West Helena has talked to some of the Internet Service Providers in our region to

expand their broadband services to our area and/or increase bandwidth for existing services. The only Internet Service Provider who exhibited interest in this task was Global Technology Service Provider, which will provide a feasibility study through this grant request in order to determine the needs and business case for expanding their broadband services to our residents. The electric cooperative nearest our area has not been engaged to discuss broadband possibilities, but we intend to do that through the proposed Helena-West Helena Broadband Taskforce.

#### **Financial needs:**

Helena-West Helena operates on \$3,000,000 per year, which pays for our volunteer fire department, roads fund, and annual Christmas parade, along with a salary for 160 full time and 10 part-time employees. We do not know where to begin in bringing broadband to our area, and a grant like this could better define needs, identify options, and determine whether a nearby Internet Service Provider would have the business case to expand their services to our businesses and homes. If we ever will have improved broadband in Helena-West Helena, this is our best opportunity, as the grants available for broadband construction and expansion, and we feel this grant may strategically position us to compete for these funds.

#### **Community relationship needs:**

We hold a public hearing meeting once every month to invite business leaders and community leaders to present ideas, plans, and updates Helena-West Helena residents. We have a Facebook page that posts information about our Township, including updates from our leaders. Our local school holds a Parent Teacher Association meeting once every quarter to share updates from our education leaders and to collect insight from parents. This proposal embodies the needs and requests of these leaders, as all support the idea of improving broadband for the purpose of improving educational attainment, ecommerce, entertainment, and healthcare purposes.

#### **Description of plan**

Through this study, we plan to achieve the following:

- Contract with a broadband consultant to educate our leaders of broadband options and act as an intermediary in communicating with potential Internet Service Providers in our area.

- Form the Phillips County Broadband Taskforce to prioritize broadband deployment throughout our businesses and communities by creating a custom broadband needs assessment for Helena-West Helena.

- Engage the 4 Internet Service Provider serving in Phillips County to conduct a feasibility study to extend their broadband services to our area.

We have considered the following broadband consultants for this Grant:

Dr. Sharon L. Anthony

We have been in communication with the following Internet Service Provider to conduct a feasibility study. If this vendor is nonresponsive or is met with other issues, we will consider other ISP's and electric cooperatives near our area:

Global Technology Service Provider

Our objectives and timeline are as follows:

Month 1: Objective – Launch the Phillips County Broadband Due Diligence

Study *Month 1 Goals:*

1. Form the Broadband Taskforce
2. Hold the first meeting of the Broadband Taskforce
3. Assign a task force member or hire a contractor to author the custom broadband needs assessment based on the finding of the Taskforce
4. Meet with broadband consultants

Month 2: Objective – make Decisions Related to the Broadband Due Diligence

Study *Month 2 Goals:*

1. Hire the broadband consultant, require participation at Task Force meetings
2. Interview electric cooperatives and ISP's for feasibility study contract
3. Assign a Task Force member to create the custom broadband needs assessment based on the findings of the Taskforce
4. Continue holding meeting with the Broadband Taskforce

Month 3: Objective – Contract with the Broadband Vendor for the Feasibility Study

*Month 3 Goals:*

1. Determine which electric cooperative or ISP will conduct feasibility study
2. Add content and findings to the custom broadband needs' assessment
3. Continue holding meetings with the Broadband Taskforce

Month 4: Objective – Continuing Documenting Needs

*Month 4 Goals:*

1. Add content and findings to the custom broadband needs' assessment
2. Continue holding meetings with the Broadband Taskforce

3. Receive monthly updates about feasibility study

Month 5: Objective – Sharing Documented Needs

*Month 5 Goals:*

1. Share the first draft of the Phillips County Broadband Needs Assessment with Taskforce members and UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation
2. Make revisions on needs' assessment as needed
3. Continue holding meetings with Broadband Taskforce
4. Receive monthly update about feasibility study

Month 6: Objective – Receive Findings of the Feasibility Study

*Month 6 Goals:*

1. Share the final draft of the Phillips County Broadband Needs Assessment with Taskforce members and UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation
2. Feasibility Study findings will be shared at the Taskforce Meeting
3. Determine next steps for further broadband grants and loans – or – other steps necessary to act upon the identified needs

Finals Products:

Phillips County Broadband Needs' Assessment

Phillips County Broadband Feasibility Study

While we are not familiar with broadband grants and loans we may pursue, we understand the Global Technology Service Provider is skilled at pursuing broadband grants, and we have studied the list of grants and loans provided on the Rural Broadband I.D. Trust Fund grants NODO. It seems the USDA Rural Utilities grants, and loans may be our best option for future funding, due to our rural nature. We will lean heavily on our ISP partner to make certain we take this plan as far as possible through future federal grants and loans. While we were preparing this application, we also learned of the USDA Rural Development Loan Grant Program. If our Taskforce sees fit, we may relocate some of this request to pay the Needs Assessment Author to help write that grant/loan application.

**Budget**

**Object / Category Cost Total Cost**

Personnel		8,626.46			8,626.46
Fringe Benefit		4500			4500
Travel		0			0
Supplies		1500			1500
Contractual includes all consultant fees		59200			59200
Total Cost		73,826.46			73,826.46

**Budget Justification**

*Personnel:*

Project Director – Annual Salary \$53, 000. Rae King will act as Project Director, serving as key liaison to the funders and media. He will identify taskforce members and coordinate meetings, making final decisions on all contractors. Mrs. King will spend an estimated half a day a week on this project for six months, accounting for 5% of her annual salary. Request \$2,650

Financial Director - Annual Salary \$59, 764.56. Our Township Administrator will act as the Financial Director to this project, securing the surety bond and making financial arrangements for all contractors. He will ensure timelines, objectives, and goals are met, providing troubleshooting as necessary to solve problems while working alongside our Project Director. The Township Administrator will spend an estimated one day weekly on the project for six months, accounting for 10% of this annual salary. Request: \$ 5,976.46

***Fringe Benefits:***

Phillips County pays 100% of the salary request for its health, dental, and other insurance.  
County Clerk: \$2500 fringe

Financial Director: \$2000 fringe

**Supplies:** Phillips County will need office supplies (printing paper, printer ink, folders, postage, etc.), month is requested to cover these needs. Request \$1500

**Contractual:** Phillips County respectfully requests \$59,200 total to allocate to contractual and consultant fees to carry out this six-month project. This request is inclusive of the following costs:

We believe that Global Technology Service Provider will be the Feasibility Study Contractor to expand these services to our area; however, our task force will decide on the best contractor no later than Month 3. This contractor will conduct market research, engage partners, model design the network, and conduct a cost analysis and business plan. Global Technology Service Provider has informed us that to conduct this study, they need at least three months and \$35,200 of the contractual request to complete this work. We feel this amount will compensate another ISP or electric cooperative should we decide to pursue another feasibility study contractor.

A Broadband Consultant will educate Taskforce members and the larger community as merited on broadband basics and options that are available to them, will coach on future broadband grant and loan applications, and will act as liaison with Internet Service Providers or electric cooperatives to communicate the needs of our community. The Broadband Consultant is vital to improve our broadband understanding, so we can ensure Phillips County will be able to negotiate and communicate effectively with Internet Service Providers to ultimately achieve better community-wide access high-speed Internet. We will allocate \$15,000 of the contractual request to pay this consultant for six months of work.

The Project Director will identify two Contractual Needs Assessment Authors from members of the Taskforce or writing contractors to author the needs assessment. The authors will receive a sum of \$4,500 each / \$9,000 total of the contractual request to author this document, offering coordination as needed in gathering insight on future grant and loan applications.

These items comprise the \$59,200 contractual request.