KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
KANSAS OFFICE OF
BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT
BROADBAND ACCELERATION GRANT YEAR 2

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2022 @ NOON

APPLICANT: USCELLULAR

ATTN:

Stanley Adams, Director,
Office of Broadband Development

Melinda Stanley,
Broadband Program Manager

Submitted by:

UScellular

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PROPOSAL RESPONSE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

1.1 Needs addressed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the technology industry causing businesses, schools and a host of organizations scrambling to maintain operations while scaling up telecommunication needs. The world itself has been struggling and relying on internet/broadband services as the sole source of business continuity, education and the overall means of communication/interfacing.

UScellular (USCC) has an expansive footprint in broadband technology and provides unmatched services to clients and customers who represent the underserved population. We are very familiar with the goal of this effort and have proactively established ourselves as a leading broadband solution in the industry. Our solution is 5G technology, which is intended to deliver increased throughputs, ultra-low latency, increased reliability, additional network capacity and support of use case applications including mobile voice and data services, fixed wireless access, and increased connectivity of machines, objects and devices. As we continue to support addressing the achievement gap for underserved and unserved areas, we also offer products certified on our network ensuring connectivity when and where you need it, including hotspots, tablets, and laptops.

1.2 Goals of project.

With the support of the Kansas Office of Broadband Deployment, USCC will provide broadband access and promote adoption in Chautauqua and Cowley Counties including the communities of Peru, Sedan and Cedar Vale. USCC's 5G broadband solution will enable the members of these communities to participate in the digital economy, including in Education, Telehealth and Remote Work.

Education. USCC's project will provide reliable high speed and low latency internet service that is suitable for conducting video learning, meetings, appointments, etc., through mediums such as Zoom. The service provides higher throughputs than alternative satellite services commonly found in rural areas, which will allow teachers, doctors and businesses to offer real-time interactive sessions.

Wireless broadband greatly enhances user convenience. For example, it allows students and teachers to interact through highly visual mediums across broad areas and allows for continued learning both in and outside of the classroom. Imagine a teacher taking a class outside to learn about local plant life and students having the ability to research what they are seeing on a wireless device. USCC offers products that have been certified on our network to ensure connectivity when and where you need it, from hotspots to tablets to connected laptops. Wireless broadband also helps to address the achievement gap by providing schools and family an option to get internet into the student's home without having to rely on wired internet service.

Telehealth. The widespread need reliable broadband provides the foundational connectivity layer to drive telemedicine adoption. Today's broadband networks are too spotty and patchwork for providers to invest in telemedicine capabilities due to a limited customer base capable of taking advantage of key features such as video calling and high-resolution imagery sharing. By establishing a large base of addressable customers, providers will feel more confident in developing and deploying telemedicine in their districts. On the user side, the mobile nature of this program greatly enhances convenience and allows for family members to facilitate virtual visits even outside of their homes. Coupled with our reliable network, USC offers a number of products certified on our network to make it easier to facilitate telehealth and telemedicine services such as in-home visits.

Remote Work. As working remotely continues to become the norm for many businesses, reliable, high-performance internet is essential to maintaining productivity and employment. For example, USC's modernization efforts supported by the Empower Rural Iowa grant program extended and enhanced connectivity to approximately 37,000 Iowa households in 2021.

For employers, this will maintain confidence in remote working arrangements, reducing the need for premature return-to-work decisions. For employees, the USC's project will provide the security and assurance that they can perform their responsibilities and continue to contribute to the workplace irrespective of distance.

1.3 Description of proposed service area.

Service area encompasses most of south Chautauqua County including Peru, Sedan and Cedar Vale. Our solution will bring vital service to large area of unserved and underserved households.

1.4 Community partners.

USCC highly values community partners and realizes that the overall success of any project or investment is amplified by local participation. While the narrow application window hasn't allowed USCC to secure partnerships yet, it is our hope that upon receipt of award we would be able to work with local partners to ensure the success of this project is maximized.

1.5 Stakeholders involved.

This project will impact all residents and communities within the project area including Cedar Vale, Sedan and Peru.

Commented [MBS1]: @Frakes, Justin C were these sites deployed in 2021? I think if we want to use the IA grant as an example we need to add more detail

Commented [MBS2R1]:

Commented [FC3R1]: yes to 2021, it was the same type of program modenrizing 47 sites across iowa

2. PUBLIC PROPOSED SERVICE AREA MAP:

2.1 A shaded service area of the proposed area to be served.

2.2 The hardline routing and proposed service locations identified with a legend defining content. (INSERT MAP)

2.3 Wireless projects: RF prediction map depicting the location of the transmitter, its footprint, and proposed service locations identified. A legend defining the content of the map. (INSERT MAP) OrgName_GeographicIdentifier_MobileWirelessMap for file submission

## 3. COMMUNITY PARTNERS, ROLES & LETTERS OF COMMITMENT/SUPPORT

USCC is a large proponent of establishing a presence in the areas that it serves. We are fully engaged with our community partners and have a proven track record of established community partnerships. In the state of Kansas, UScellular operates over 210 macro towers, 75% of which are company-owned. We look forward to future participation in both the 10-year KOBD program and Kansas's IIJA BEAD grant program, including the engagement of our community partners for letters of commitment/support.

4. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROJECT - EVIDENCE OF COMPELLING NEED & THE ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY IMPACT

Based on FCC Form 477 data, Chautauqua County residents represent a combination of under and unserved communities with approximately 18% of residents with no 25/3 service and over half of residents only having one provider.

★ UScellular Tower

This broadband gap presents an opportunity for USCC to provide services that will impact:

Education. USCC's project will provide reliable high speed and low latency internet service that is suitable for conducting video learning, meetings, appointments, etc., through mediums such as Zoom. **Telehealth.** The widespread need reliable broadband provides the foundational connectivity layer to drive telemedicine adoption. **Remote Work.** As working remotely continues to become the norm for many businesses, reliable, high-performance internet is essential to maintaining productivity and employment.
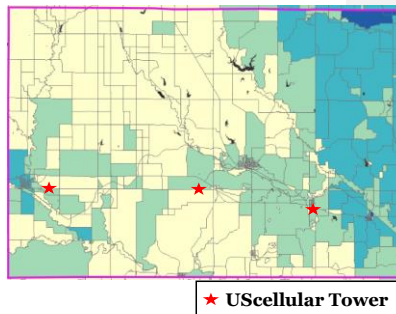
5. ADOPTION EFFORTS

USCC participates in the Lifeline program which provides affordable telecommunications services to qualifying customers in markets in which UScellular is designated as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier, including in Kansas. The Low-Income program provides discounts on wireless activation and monthly wireless service to qualifying customers and is one component of the Federal Communication Commission's Universal Service Fund.

In addition, UScellular participates in the new Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which replaces the Emergency Broadband Benefit. ACP is an FCC program designed to help households struggling to pay for internet. The program provides support for broadband services to help low-income households stay connected through an ACP discount. This discount can be applied to fixed wireless plans or smartphone plans.

6. TECHNICAL PROJECT PLAN

The Technical Project Plan details the technical elements of the proposed build including:

6.1 TECHNICAL PROJECT SUMMARY

To include:

1. An overview of the proposed improvements and scope of the project that clearly demonstrates preliminary plan completion, outlines a comprehensive understanding of the project and a solution capable of addressing the need.

2. In terms of infrastructure installation, explain why this area was chosen for the project and is unlikely to be served without grant funding.

3. Include an explanation of terrain, population density or other factors contributing to the overall cost of the project.

4. Include the service level options, including latency the project is intended to provide. NAMING CONVENTION: OrgName_GeographicIdentifier_TechProjectSummary

6.2 NETWORK ARCHITECTURE

6.3 GIS maps for the proposed network in .kmz, .shp, or. kml format. Maps should be explicit for each proposed technology (fiber, fixed wireless or both) and include required annotations per submission requirements as outlined in the Technical Planning Guide.
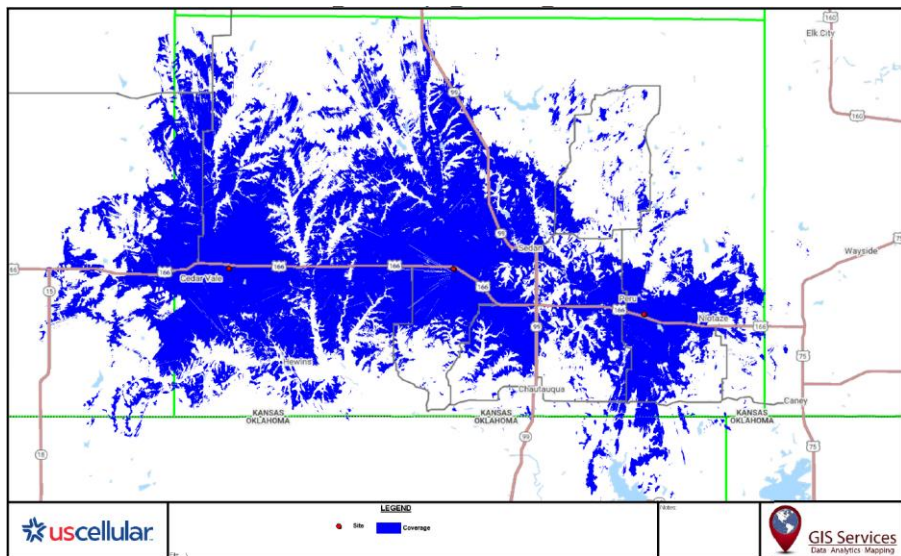
6.3.1 A list of Census Block Identifiers in a spreadsheet (.xls) for the proposed service area. (2010 Census geographic identifiers should be used for this and any provided sublocation data)

7. PROJECT PLAN AND MILESTONES

Please see the attached Project Plan and Milestones template.

8. LONG TERM INVESTMENT VIABILITY: Scalability, Future Proofing

UScellular macro towers are long-term investments, scalable and future-proof. UScellular will cover the operational expenses for the lifetime of the equipment as well as future capex expenses, such as adding additional or replacing equipment. Adding additional and replacing equipment allows UScellular to scale their solution by deploying new technology, including new 5G spectrum, to improve performance to the service area.

9. BUDGET FINANCIALS & ATTESTATIONS

Project budget and financial submission requirements include:

9.1 BUDGET NARRATIVE

9.2 PROJECT BUDGET SPREADSHEET (Attached as separate document)

9.3 FINANCIAL PROFIT/LOSS STATEMENT

UScellular is a publicly traded company and does not have any financial liabilities or losses that would negatively impact the award or use of funds through this grant. Furthermore, UScellular attests to the following:

- UScellular is in good financial standing with the State of Kansas
- UScellular is not currently involved in pending litigation in association with broadband infrastructure project.
- UScellular is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participating in covered transactions by any federal department or agency;
- UScellular has not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
- UScellular is not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state or local)
- UScellular has not within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default.