Next Level Connections Challenge Process

Applicants for the Next Level Connections grant program must provide written location information and a map of the project area in their applications, by 4:00 p.m. on May 3, 2019. This information should include the geographical boundaries and list of census blocks and road segments if the census block is over two square miles. Applicants must also provide the number of unserved locations that would receive service under their project, and the speeds that will be made available.

OCRA will publish on its Broadband webpage by May 8, 2019:
- a list of all applications submitted
- the project areas of those applications

CHALLENGE DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

If a provider is already providing existing service at or above actual speeds of 10/1 or has the ability to verify and document plans to provide this service by July 2021, the provider may challenge all or a portion of a grant application. The challenge must include documentation that existing service is available at or above actual 10/1 speeds and be generally available to all residential customers in the defined area, or verify that the construction is planned or already underway with service becoming available before July 2021. The challenge must also identify the broadband speed(s) that will be available.

If the provider is only challenging a portion of the project area, the provider must identify the portion challenged at the same level of detail provided in the application, and provide the same documentation as for a full project challenge.

Challenges that contain detailed information (address level data with broadband speed identified) will be more likely to be found credible than challenges that rely on general information such as maps with percentages of households receiving service at or above the state speeds noted.

Any challenges must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on June 7, 2019 via the link listed below. Challenges can be submitted at any point between May 8, 2019 and June 7, 2019.

Steps to Complete a Challenge:
1. Review posted documentation from applicants to determine if challenge is appropriate
2. Collect / create documentation for challenge
3. Complete challenge form and upload required documentation (link to be published)

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR CHALLENGE

- Authorized Official Affidavit affirming service is available for at or above actual 10/1 or higher, in-progress or will be constructed in 24 months. Affidavit will also include, if in-progress or within 24, overall budget to be committed to project.
- Technical Certification – to include information that the installed infrastructure is a connection to the Internet that provides capacity for transmission at an actual speed of at least 10Mbps down and at least
1Mbps up. The information must be certified by the manufacturer or a Professional Engineer registered in Indiana.

- Map(s) of service area(s) being challenged:
  - Service already provided to include number of households
  - Installation in-progress for at least actual 10/1 speeds
  - Installation will take place within 24 months for at least 10/1 speeds
- Address Level data for areas that have service of at least actual 10/1 speeds

PLEASE NOTE: Information that contains trade secrets should be marked “Confidential” and submitted in a separate file. Pursuant to IC 5-14-3-4(a)(4) these records may not be disclosed by a public agency.

CREDIBLE CHALLENGES
Following evaluation of the information contained in the provider’s challenge:

1. The Next Level Connections Committee will determine whether a challenge is credible. If a challenge is found to be credible, no funding will be awarded to that project or portion of a project as an unserved area.

2. If a credible challenge was submitted for only a portion of a project, the applicant may be given the opportunity to submit an amended application based on the verified challenge.

3. Where a provider’s challenge has been found to be credible, the Committee will notify both the challenger and applicant.

4. OCRA will post on its website a list of challenges found to be credible, and the service areas within the project.

5. For each challenge found to be credible, the challenging provider must submit documentation to the Committee substantiating that it has fulfilled its commitment to deploy broadband service to the challenged area at the speeds identified in its challenge. The absence of demonstrable progress could return the census block(s) to eligibility for future funding.

6. In its review of whether the provider has met its commitment, the Committee may consult with the grant applicant.

7. Challenges determined to be incomplete will be denied and applicants will proceed through the review process for possible grant award.