Executive Summary & Grant Rationale

Your response to the outline below should be no longer than two pages. This information may be made public.

After you’ve completed the preceding application and reviewed the AWARDING GRANTS – Selection Criteria & Weights pages that follow this page, please reflect on your application responses and provide a brief executive summary and grant rationale that includes:

▪ Brief project description/summary (less than 150 words)

The Greene County Remote Fiber-to-the-Cabinet Project will primarily focus on increasing speeds for rural residential customers, serving 70 unserved households in rural northeastern Greene County, northeast of the Town of Bloomfield. The project includes building fiber to three remote cabinets that are currently part of a copper network. The project will be completed by October 21, 2020. The total eligible project cost is $575,765. Applicant match is $432,765.

▪ A general geographic location of the project (not census blocks) and total number of passings estimated to be made as a result of the grant project

The three cabinets are located in Highland and Center Townships in northeastern Greene County. In addition to the 70 homes that are currently unserved, this project will improve speeds for an additional 200 residences that already are experiencing speeds above 10/1 Mbps, for a total impact of 270 homes.

▪ A brief description of the applicant’s involvement in the project to date and how the applicant (and/or partners) intends to manage and sustain the project

Smithville has been a service provider in Greene County since the 1950s. As such, we have become known as a trusted community partner, participating in many organizations and supporting initiatives within the County. For this project, we have engaged with the Greene County Economic Development Corporation, the Southern Indiana Economic Development Commission, local elected officials including County Commissioners, State Legislators, members of Congress, local school corporations, WestGate Authority Board, and the Greene County Foundation. Smithville also has established a relationship with Utilities District of Western Indiana (UDWI) REMC to partner on better serving shared customers within the project area.

Our long-term commitment to the community and our customers includes a focus on continually improving services and increasing speeds. In rural areas such as eastern Greene County, this takes time and significant investment, but we plan to sustain this path forward for the foreseeable future. The Next
Level Connections Broadband Grant provides an opportunity to move that timeframe forward and upgrade services much sooner than we would be able to do otherwise.

A statement on how broadband improvements will advance the quality of life and strengthen economic development opportunities in the communities in the project area

This project encompasses some of the most rural and geographically challenging areas of the County. Homes are sparse and businesses are virtually nonexistent within the project area. By improving broadband for these residents, the ability to start a home-based business or work from home becomes possible. Residents wishing to access telehealth applications and students needing to access online educational resources are helped significantly through this project. Due to the proximity of Crane and Cook, the demand for homes within the region continues to grow, and those individuals prefer homes with broadband access. This project will expand the number of available homes for those employees and improve the quality of life for all residents in the project area while contributing to the economic vitality of Greene County and region.

Building fiber to the cabinet is necessary first step in any fiber-to-the-home project and will boost speeds for those customers significantly. Because speeds will diminish the further those homes are from the cabinet, it is impossible to identify a specific speed that the entire project area will receive. Some residents should expect to experience speeds as high as 25/3 Mbps or more, and all homes within the project area will receive speeds above 10/1 Mbps. The speed increases will allow teleworkers, rural entrepreneurs and home-based businesses to do their work more effectively. Without these improvements, home-based businesses and teleworkers would have difficulty conducting business out of their homes.