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)
  o The NLC/Steuben County/Lakeland Internet LLC project will expand Lakeland’s existing LTE network utilizing ZipSpider’s existing vertical assets in Steuben County. Project will include 9 existing towers and 2 new towers utilizing both fiber optic and P2P wireless backhaul. Telrad will be the platform supporting the delivery of direct internet services to 2200 homes and 297 businesses with standard speeds of up to 25Mbps down and 3Mbps up. This application will identify an additional 450 homes that are locally considered unserved as well as 297 businesses considered unserved. This infrastructure build will also allow Lakeland Internet LLC the ability to offer businesses dedicated speeds up to 1gig on an individual case basis.

• 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
  o Project will encompass all twelve townships and cover approximately 42% or 134 of the 322 square miles that make up Steuben County.
  o Passings – 2200 Homes, 297 Businesses

• 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
  o Lakeland Internet LLC has been actively building network and adding broadband customers for the past 18 months. Lakeland Internet LLC is majority owned by Sweetwater Sound in Fort Wayne, IN. Lakeland Internet and its parent have been actively reviewing and pursuing opportunities to accelerate the pace of network expansion and customer growth.
  o In early May, Lakeland Internet LLC and parent Sweetwater is expected to acquire ZipSpider and its approximate 1450 broadband customers in Steuben and Lagrange County. ZipSpider has been providing broadband services since 2013.
• A statement on how broadband improvements will advance the quality of life and strengthen economic development opportunities in the communities in the project area
  
  - There have been numerous studies and reports on the benefits of a robust broadband service serving rural areas. Consistent with those findings it is fully expected that Steuben County will be poised to take advantage of emerging technologies in areas including education/E-learning, medical, agriculture, economic/workforce development, e-commerce, consumer online savings. Broadband proliferation has been identified by the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership as a key driver of both population and economic growth in the region.