Connecting Michigan Communities Grant
Application Requirements

1.1. Application Requirements: An applicant must include the following information in its application to be eligible for this grant and the application and accompanying attachments must demonstrate satisfaction of these requirements.

    1.1.1. Applicant and Project Identification, Contact Information, and Summary

        1.1.1.1.   Primary applicant name and DBA (if applicable) and mailing address. Applicants should also provide a single contact person that will be responsible for all communication for the grant. A telephone number and email address for this primary contact should also be provided. The primary applicant should be the responsible fiduciary entity for the grant if awarded.

        1.1.1.2.   Eligibility status. Indicate whether the applicant is; 1) licensed under the Michigan telecommunications act, 1991 PA 179, MCL 484.2101 to 484.2603; 2) holder of a franchise under the uniform video services local franchise act, 2006 PA 480, MCL 484.3301 to 484.3315; or 3) an entity currently providing broadband service in Michigan.

        1.1.1.3.   Identification numbers, including but not limited to, Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN), Michigan Tax Identification Number, Michigan Vendor Identification Number (if applicable), Federal Communications Commission (FCC) registration number (FRN), and Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN). These identification numbers will be used by grant reviewers to establish the experience and financial wherewithal of applicants.

        1.1.1.4.   Project name. Please provide a short yet descriptive name for the project.

        1.1.1.5.   Project summary. The project summary should include a brief description of the project, the impacted geographic area, the technology to be deployed, speeds offered, why the project would not happen without grant support, and the projected impact of the project in the community. This summary will be used to publicly promote the grant project on social media, press releases, and other similar media. The project summary should not exceed 250 words.

    1.1.2. Locations Passed and Proposed Service: The number of actual homes, businesses, and community anchor institutions to be passed by the resulting network and the connection speed offered to those locations.

        1.1.2.1.   For the last mile and middle mile components of the project, applicants should include a map and description of the area of the state that will be affected by the proposed project. Applicants should attach a PDF map of the proposed service area and a GIS-compatible file, (i.e. .shp or .kml/kmz file type), of the proposed service area. Each contiguous area of the map should be its own shape and be labeled as "Service Area #1, "Service Area #2", etc. The map of the proposed service area boundaries should also include place names, boundaries, buildings, road/street names, street addresses, or other features that clearly identify the project service

area. Applicants should also provide a brief written description of the proposed service area.

1.1.2.2.　　Applicants must also attach a spreadsheet file of the census blocks that are part of the proposed service area. The spreadsheet should contain the census block identification number, total number of households, number of unserved households, whether the applicant will provide service to the whole census block or only part, and whether the census block is wholly or partially contained within the proposed service area.

1.1.2.3.　　Proposed service areas are not required to be contiguous; however, census blocks in the proposed service area should fit within or touch a single circle drawn on a map with a radius of ten (10) miles. Projects that impact census blocks in areas of the state outside of this single circle should be submitted as separate and complete applications.

1.1.2.4.　　An accounting of the expected number of locations to be served by type. Applicants should include a list of; 1) the number of households to be served; 2) the number of businesses to be served; and 3) the number of community anchor institutions (CAIs) to be served, (more information on impacted CAIs is requested later in the application). If vacant lots are included as locations passed, applicants should indicate whether these locations are anticipated for growth in the next five years according to a local, county, or regional master plan or economic development plan. Units contained within a multiple dwelling unit (MDU) building or structure can be counted individually for the purposes of tabulating the total households or businesses passed by the proposed network, (e.g. the proposed network will pass an apartment building containing eight housing units; these eight units would count as eight households passed by the proposed network, not as a single business passed.).

1.1.2.5.　　A description of the broadband service to be provided including elements such as dedicated or shared bandwidth, the technology that will be used, etc.

1.1.2.6.　　The jurisdictions impacted by the proposed project. Applicants should include a list of the jurisdictions in which the proposed service area is located including city, village, township, and county names, as well as state house and senate districts.

1.1.3. Experience, Financial Wherewithal, and Long-Term Viability: Examples include identification of eligible costs, leveraging existing broadband, financing is secured, additional costs identified, need for funding clearly identified, financial plan, financial strength demonstrated, and a resolution/applicant affidavit. Applicants should also indicate whether they have outstanding broadband loans or grants from any other organization. Additionally, applications will be reviewed for the long-term sustainability of the network to provide service to the proposed unserved area.

1.1.3.1.　　Project Costs and Budget

1.1.3.1.1.　　Total eligible project cost. The applicant should indicate the total project cost that includes the total grant request, matching funds or in-kind contributions, and other costs if applicable. "Broadband deployment costs" or "costs" means the cost of the acquisition and installation of middle-mile and last-mile infrastructure that support broadband service with a minimum speed of 10 Mbps downstream and 1 Mbps upstream. Eligible costs associated with the construction of broadband infrastructure may include any of the following: project planning; obtaining construction permits; construction of facilities, including construction of both "middle mile" and "last mile" infrastructure; equipment; and installation and testing of the broadband service. Eligible project costs also include those incurred by the applicant, or provided through match or in-kind contributions, that contribute to the applicant's proposed adoption strategy, (see Section 1.1.7 below).

1.1.3.1.2.   Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to: Indirect or operational expenses that exceed 10% of the total project cost or $250,000, whichever is less; Costs associated with completing or filing an application for the grant; Middle-mile infrastructure that is not directly connected to last-mile infrastructure serving an unserved area; and Expenses related to the provision of telephone or video services which are not necessary for the delivery of broadband services.

1.1.3.1.3.   Total grant request. The total amount requested from the CMIC Grant Program.

1.1.3.1.4.   Total matching funds. The applicant should provide a description of the matching funds or in-kind contributions to be invested in the project. For each element of matching funds, indicate the type of match and amount, (cash or in-kind contribution). All funding commitments from all project funding partners, including public, private, and non-profit or philanthropic sources should be included in writing and attached to the application. Examples of match commitments include, but are not limited to, a letter of credit, letter from a bank, board resolution committing funding, or loan documentation. Applicants should indicate if all of the matching funds or in-kind contributions are in place for the project and provide evidence of the match. If all of the matching funds or in-kind contributions are not in place, applicants should indicate the process remaining to secure the funds and the anticipated timeline to do so.

1.1.3.1.5.   Applicants should complete the provided project budget table in the application to indicate the sources, use, and amounts of all funds that will be used for eligible project costs as defined previously. Please use the following recommended Use of Funds categories where possible, creating other categories where anticipated expenses do not fall within one of the recommended categories: Buildings and labor; Last mile construction labor; Middle mile construction labor; Construction material; Customer premise equipment; Customer premise installation; Electronics; Permits; Adoption strategy implementation; and Professional service and engineering.

1.1.3.2.   Experience and Financial Wherewithal

1.1.3.2.1.   Applicants should provide an organizational chart, and a company history including experience relevant to the proposed project. Resumes of key officers and management personnel, as well as those of the proposed project management team should be included.

1.1.3.2.2.   Applicants should provide a demonstration of financial viability with audited financial statements. Confidential information may be submitted and should be so marked.

1.1.3.3.   Long-Term Viability and Scalability

1.1.3.3.1.   Applicants should demonstrate and provide evidence that the installed infrastructure is scalable to meet the anticipated future connectivity demands of the proposed service area. The applicant should indicate the end-user connection speed to which the proposed network can scale. This information must be certified by the equipment manufacturer or a Professional Engineer.

1.1.3.3.2.   Applicants should provide a five-year stand-alone financial plan/forecast for the project, including a description of how the costs and anticipated revenues will result in the financial viability of the project over time. A brief written narrative may be included along with the completed Project Financial Plan template provided in the appendix of this document.

1.1.3.3.3.   Applicants should provide documentation of a commitment to offer the proposed service in the proposed service area for a minimum of five years after the project is complete.

1.1.3.3.4.   Applicants should describe the need for funding from the CMIC Grant Program and why the project could not proceed without this funding. Applicants should refer to the five-year standalone financial plan/forecast provided and demonstrate the financial model with and without grant funding.

1.1.4. Readiness

1.1.4.1.   Readiness

1.1.4.1.1.   Applicants should provide a statement indicating their readiness to build, manage, and operate the proposed project.

1.1.4.1.2.   Applicants should attach budgetary engineering designs, diagrams, and maps that show the proposed project. Design documents must clearly demonstrate the applicant's complete understanding of the project and ability to provide the proposed solution. This information must be certified by a Professional Engineer registered in Michigan.

1.1.4.1.3.   Applicants should demonstrate how the proposed project will leverage existing broadband networks, where practical, or be built in conjunction with another broadband infrastructure project(s). Applicants should give specific examples of any leverage including, but not limited to, federal broadband expansion projects such as the Connect America Fund, E-rate, USDA RUS funding, or other local, state, or federal partnerships.

1.1.4.2.   Schedule

1.1.4.2.1.   Applicants should provide a detailed project schedule outlining the individual tasks and their timing for the project including broadband deployment tasks and activities necessary for project completion. A schedule form is provided for applicants to indicate the individual tasks involved in the project and the expected completion date (quarter and year) of the activity. The last task on the project schedule should indicate the date upon which service to the last location will be turned on.

1.1.4.2.2.   Any factors which would change or delay the proposed schedule should be listed.

1.1.4.3.   Approvals and Permits

1.1.4.3.1.   Applicants should indicate if all of the required local/city/county/state approvals necessary for this project to proceed have been obtained, (e.g. planning commission, zoning board of appeals, road commissions, railroad crossings, etc.). If not, applicants should indicate what remains to be done and what is required for completing the process of obtaining approvals. Applicants should also list the agency(ies) requiring such approvals.

1.1.4.3.2.   Applicants should indicate if all state environmental review requirements been met, if applicable. If not, applicants should indicate what remains to be done and what is required for completing the process of obtaining any necessary approvals. Applicants should also list the agency(ies) requiring such approvals.

1.1.4.3.3.   Applicants should indicate if the project affect/is the project located in or near local, state, or federal historic or potentially historic, architectural, or archeological resources. If so, applicants should indicate what remains to be done and what is required for completing the process of obtaining approvals. Applicants should also list the agency(ies) requiring such approvals.

1.1.5. Community and Economic Development

1.1.5.1. Applicants should provide evidence of community support for the project. Examples include, but are not limited to, letters endorsing the project from residents, businesses, legislators, congressional representatives, and local government resolutions.

1.1.5.2. Applicants, where possible, should demonstrate customer interest in the proposed grant project in one of the following ways. Letters of support by a mix of stakeholders are always welcome in the application. Regardless of your choice of method to gauge customer/citizen interest, demonstration of customer interest for the project will achieve greater weight in scoring.

1.1.5.2.1. Canvass. A canvass is the process of asking all of the residents and businesses in the proposed service area if they would buy broadband services from the proposed new or upgraded network. The results of a canvass of potential subscribers might be presented in several ways – with a signed petition, signed pledge cards, emails, or with sign-up sheets for improved services.

1.1.5.2.2. Random Survey. A properly conducted random survey of potential customers is the next best tool to quantify customer interest in the grant project.

1.1.5.2.3. A Non-random Survey. This is a survey conducted in some non-random manner such as posting the survey on-line or mailing surveys to households.

1.1.5.2.4. Anecdotal Evidence. This is submitting evidence from some sub-set of potential customers showing interest in the proposed service area. This might include any format showing customer interest such as letters of support, a signed petition, emails or any other evidence that some portion of the potential customers are interested in the grant project.

1.1.5.3. Applicants should also include a general description of how quality of life would improve as a result of the proposed project. This description may be used to publicly promote the grant project on social media, press releases, and other similar outlets.

1.1.5.4. Community Anchor Institutions

1.1.5.4.1. Applicants should include a list of the specific CAIs to be served including their name, address, and type (e.g. library, school, government office, public safety, etc.). The applicant should also include specific evidence of how the proposed connectivity solution will benefit the CAI and improve community services provided by the CAIs to be served. This evidence can be provided by submitting letters of support from impacted CAIs that describe the benefits gained from the proposed connectivity. The following provides examples of broadband's impact by CAI sector.

1.1.5.4.1.1. Examples of how the proposed service impacts public safety could include, but are not limited to; implementation of Next Generation 9-1-1 services; improved ability of public safety agencies to use data in real time for situational analysis; or greater data throughput that allows for the use of real-time data gathering and analysis of video or biometric data; or similar.

1.1.5.4.1.2. Examples of how the proposed service impacts healthcare could include, but are not limited to; the implementation and provision of telehealth services to residents; ability for real-time transfer and analysis of medical imagery; or the implementation of video consultation services to prevent hospitalizations and patient transfers; or similar.

1.1.5.4.1.3. Examples of how the proposed service impacts education could include, but are not limited to; demonstration of how the service will assist with closing the homework gap; ability of students to access online homework applications; continuing education and skills training opportunities; or similar.

1.1.5.4.1.4. Examples of how the proposed service impacts government entities could include, but are not limited to; increased ability of constituents to conduct government business online instead of via mail or in-person; increased connectivity allows municipalities to live-stream public meetings; improved digital citizen engagement through social media, online polling, 3-1-1 system, etc.; or similar.

1.1.5.4.1.5. Examples of how the proposed service impacts libraries could include, but are not limited to; digitization of library resources for access online; greater access to public computers; expansion or implementation of digital literacy or cybersecurity training, etc.; increased availability of resources and technology facilities to the public and local businesses; or similar.

1.1.5.4.2. Evidence of experience and/or knowledge of the Federal Communications Commission/Universal Service Administrative Company E-rate program (including the applicants SPIN), or evidence of application for SPIN, should be provided if the applicant intends to provide connectivity to schools or libraries as part of the proposed project.

1.1.5.5. Economic Development Impact

1.1.5.5.1. If part of the proposed project, applicants should provide the number and a short description of businesses needing improved broadband including the level of broadband improvement they need to become and/or remain competitive, expand markets, etc. Descriptions of any work-at-home or telecommuter opportunities that would be increased and/or improved should also be included. If available, applicants should attach specific statements of need/impact from affected businesses in the project area.

1.1.5.5.2. If the proposed project includes an area of the state with a significant agricultural presence, applications should include a short description of how the proposed improvements will positively impact farmers and related agricultural operations. Examples of these benefits include, but are not limited to; increased ability to improve water, fertilizer, pesticide, and seed efficiency using smart meters, sensors, and other connected equipment; improved ability for agriculture producers to sell their products or commodities online to a wider market;

1.1.5.5.3. Applicants should provide evidence that shows that broadband is included in a local, county, or regional economic development plan, master plan, or similar up-to-date planning document, or that the community in which the proposed service is to be deployed has a specific broadband or technology plan in place. The proposed project, if awarded, should further the community's economic development objectives.

1.1.6. Affordability and Service Limitations

1.1.6.1. Applicants should provide the service packages offered to customers in the proposed service area and include the download speed, upload speed, monthly cost, and monthly data caps (if applicable), for each service tier to be offered. Grant reviewers will compare the proposed monthly cost of service for the grant's minimum required connection speed of 10/1 Mbps to the monthly cost returned by the FCC's Reasonable Comparability Benchmark Calculator. Applications will be awarded points based on the proposed monthly cost of service compared to the FCC's Reasonable Comparability Benchmark Calculator (https://www.fcc.gov/reasonable-comparability-benchmark-calculator).

1.1.6.2. If the proposed service will limit the monthly data of users, applicants should indicate what the cap will be and any additional costs or service impacts if a user reaches the monthly data cap.

1.1.6.3. Applicants should indicate if they participate in the federal Lifeline program that provides a discount on broadband service for qualifying households. Additionally, some internet service providers offer discounted internet service for low-income or other qualifying homes passed by their network. Applicants should indicate whether the currently provide or plan to provide a lower cost monthly subscription plan to qualifying households. Applicants proposing to implement a low-cost service offering must provide eligible customers with a similar level of service to that which is provided to non-eligible customers. The monthly cost of service for qualifying households should be included in the application. Additionally, if applicants plan to offer a low-cost program for qualifying households, a description of how the applicant will qualify eligible households should also be included.

1.1.6.4. Applicants should indicate if the project wholly or partially includes a distressed area as defined by MSHDA. The Michigan State Housing Development Authority maintains a list of eligible distressed areas/communities that can be found at: https://www.michigan.gov/mshda/0,4641,7-141-48987_75951-181277--,00.html.

1.1.7. Adoption Strategy

1.1.7.1. Applicants should describe any proposed digital literacy training events, materials, and resources that will be provided to residents and businesses impacted by the proposed connectivity. Partnerships with local training organizations (e.g. libraries, non-profit organizations, etc.) are highly encouraged and evidence of those partnerships and commitments should be included with the application.

1.1.7.2. Applicants should describe the materials and method(s) to be used for providing residents and businesses with information promoting the use of an internet connection for improving quality of life, access to resources, economic opportunity, etc. Partnerships with local CAIs that build awareness for enriching online opportunities for residents and businesses are highly encouraged. Examples of these opportunities include, but are not limited to, telehealth applications, access to government services, e-learning, job and career readiness programs, public safety information, cybersecurity training, etc.

1.1.8. Equal Opportunities in State Grant Programs

1.1.8.1. A person or entity and any contractor of the person or entity, subcontractor of the contractor, or sub-recipient of the grant, shall not discriminate against an employee or an applicant for employment in hiring, any terms and conditions of employment, or matters related to employment because of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, marital status, partisan considerations, or a disability or genetic information that is unrelated to the person's ability to perform the duties of a particular job or position, (see Executive Directive 2019-09).