

Aspire Networks 1 dba Highline: Upper Peninsula Region

Applicant

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Version # _____

APP # 230107

Applicant Information

- a. Applicant Name Aspire Networks 1, LLC. (DBA Highline)
- b. Does Business as
- c. Address 2222 N. Lincoln Rd. Suite B
- d. Address 2
- e. City Escanaba State MI Zip 49829
- f. Federal ID Number 85-4352123 DUNS Number Unique Entity Id. PFC8KX62L3K
3
- g. Agency Type
- Licensed under the Michigan Telecommunications Act (1991 PA 179, MCL484.2101 to 484.2603)
- Franchise holder under the Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Act(2006 PA 480, MCL 484.3301 to 484.3315)
- Broadband Service Provider currently providing service in Michigan
- Public private-partnership between a governmental entity and an internet service provider
- Private, Non-Profit

As an applicant to the ROBIN Program I certify that I have read and understand the ROBIN Program Guidance and any linked or accompanying information in its entirety and understand the program guidelines, restrictions, reporting, compliance, and regulations.

- Agree Disagree

Please provide additional details on how you are eligible for this program

Aspire Networks 1, LLC dba Highline is a current internet service provider in the State of Michigan.

Please provide evidence of eligibility [433_Aspire Networks 1 dba Highline Evidence of Eligibility.pdf](#)

Are you registered with the Michigan Public Service Commission's Intrastate Telecommunications Service Providers Registry (ITSP)?

- Yes No Unsure

Have you provided broadband availability data to the Federal Communications Commission within the last two years?

- Yes No Unsure

Applicant Identification Numbers: Please provide the following identification numbers for the applicant (if available):

Michigan Tax Identification Number: 85-4352123

Michigan Vendor Identification Number (SIGMA ID): VS0270786

Federal Communications Commission Registration Number (FRN): 0030311567

Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN): 143053074

Project Information

- a. Project Name Aspire Networks 1 dba Highline - Upper Peninsula Region
- b. Is implementing agency same As Applicant Yes No
- c. Implementing Agency Name
- d. Project Start Date Sep-01-2023 End Date Dec-31-2026
- e. Amount of Funds Requested \$29,996,736.00 Project Cost \$35,290,278.00

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Contacts

a. Primary Grant Contact

Name Mary Bowers
 Title
 Mailing Address 9 Cedarwood D. Unit 4
 City Bedford State NH Zip 03110
 Telephone Fax
 E-mail Address

b. Authorized Official

Name Bruce Moore
 Title
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 City Escanaba State MI Zip 49829
 Telephone Fax
 E-mail Address

c. Financial Officer

Name Wil Clowdus
 Title
 Mailing Address 1791 O G Skinner Dr.
 City West Point State GA Zip 31833
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 E-mail Address

d. Application Author

Name Jill Yoder
 Title
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 City Escanaba State MI Zip 49829
 Telephone Fax
 E-mail Address

Project Overview

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Project Overview

Please provide a Project Summary not exceeding 250 words

The project area encompasses 4,195 ROBIN locations throughout the Upper Peninsula including Delta, Menominee, Marquette, Dickinson, Schoolcraft, Luce, Chippewa, and Mackinac Counties. The project area is composed of 2,623 unserved locations and 1,572 underserved locations. Aspire Network1 dba Highline (Highline) has identified ROBIN locations that are within one mile of Highline's existing operational fiber network or future designed fiber network. These locations will be served with a robust broadband network by extending the existing network allowing for an effective and efficient use of grant funds. This project will utilize the same XGS technology currently serving Highline's Michigan customers and will provide up to 1Gbs x 1Gbs symmetrical broadband access with unlimited data and is scalable up to 10Gbs x 10Gbs per customer.

Highline is a fully operational Internet Service Provider (ISP), currently serving more than 1,000 customers throughout Michigan and is poised to successfully support additional customers as a result of ROBIN funding. Highline is ready to successfully build the adjacent network infrastructure and has an existing inventory of fiber cable, construction crews, splicer, and fulfillment teams.

Highline is experienced with the project's rural terrain and will continue to use a combination of drill, plow, and aerial construction methods to extend our current and future network for ROBIN locations. Existing permits will be used for construction to serve the identified ROBIN locations. The ROBIN grant is perfectly timed for Highline and the State of Michigan to connect unserved residents to reliable high-speed internet with the most efficient use of grant dollars. Highline's RDOF grant timeline is from 2022-2027. The required ROBIN timeline of 2023-2026 fits naturally into Highline's build plans in the UP and provides the funding to reach underserved and unserved locations that were excluded from RDOF.

Please briefly describe why this project needs funding from the ROBIN Grant Program and why the project could not proceed without this funding. (250 words max.):

The proposed project requires ROBIN funding to connect 4,195 identified locations omitted from prior broadband funding programs. With eighteen months of experience constructing Highline's RDOF UP and Thumb fiber networks, Highline has numerous households inquire why their address, so close to our network, is not being serviced. We answer that with future grant dollars, their address may one day have access to a fiber broadband connection.

The proposed project area contains identified locations that are adjacent to or within one mile of census block groups of Highline's RDOF grant award. Now is the time to connect these locations to reliable service, cost-effectively, as Highline leverages the in-place construction resources, including two thousand miles of fiber inventory. The awarded funding will serve 4,195 locations and 531 miles of fiber. This vital project has the support of various community members, State Representatives, Township Leaders, and County Leaders. Having reliable high-speed internet will improve the quality of life of the area's residents by increasing access to remote work opportunities, will provide residents with critical telehealth access, and will improve economic development for businesses within the project area's communities.

Without ROBIN grant funding it will be cost prohibitive to provide service to these homes, many of which are rural with difficult terrain to navigate. The completion of the project requires the requested amount of grant funds to meet the objective. Due to the current capital market environment, Highline only plans to invest in the census block group locations associated with the RDOF program. The ROBIN grant now allows us to extend our network to locations that would be excluded from our network design.

Is the proposed project a last-mile or middle-mile infrastructure proposal as defined in the ROBIN Grant Program Guidance?

Last-Mile

 Middle-Mile

Project Service Delivery

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Proposed Service Area Information

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY

ENTER INFORMATION IN THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOU SELECTED 'LAST-MILE' AS A PROJECT TYPE

Please provide a brief description of the proposed service area (250 words max.):

The proposed service area is throughout eight Upper Peninsula Counties. Highline's XGS optical network will offer 1Gbs x 1Gbps connectivity to 4,195 locations identified by the MIHI office. The project area contains 2,623 unserved locations and 1,572 underserved locations. With Eighteen months of last mile construction experience in the most rural areas of the Upper Peninsula, Highline is the ISP that can deliver results.

The identified locations were strategically selected to optimize for the most cost-effective use of the program's grant dollars. By leveraging Highline's existing and planned optical network design, the ROBIN locations can be incorporated into our construction design. Due to the current capital market environment, Highline only plans to invest in the census block group locations associated with the RDOF program. The ROBIN grant now allows us to extend our network to locations that would exclude from our network design.

Highline's significant advantage is having the inventory and construction resources in place to fulfill the ROBIN grant obligation. With 32 underground and aerial fiber construction crews under contract to build the RDOF optical network, Highline has the resources in place to support our ROBIN application.

The ROBIN grant is perfectly timed for Highline and the State of Michigan to connect unserved residents to reliable high-speed internet with the most efficient use of grant dollars. Highline's RDOF grant timeline is from 2022-2027. The required ROBIN timeline of 2023-2026 fits naturally into our build plans in the UP and provides the funding to reach under served and unserved locations that were excluded from RDOF.

Please upload a PDF overview map of proposed service area

[436_Proposed Service Area UP.pdf](#)

Proposed infrastructure to be deployed including route locations

Please upload a GIS-compatible file(s) of the proposed infrastructure to be deployed including route locations and other supportive infrastructure to be deployed as a result of the grant. This file(s) should contain the actual proposed locations of infrastructure to be deployed including, but not limited to: fiber transport, fiber to the premise, coaxial, or other similar network routes, cabinets, nodes, pedestals, splice enclosures, towers, huts, etc.

Acceptable file types: ESRI Geodatabase (.gdb), ESRI Shapefile (.shp, .shx, .dbf, .sbn or .sbx, .fbn or .fbx, .ain or .aih, .atx, .ixs, .mxs, .prj, and .xml), Google Earth files (.kml or .kmz).

Please refer to the Application guidance to view an example of the output from such a GIS-compatible file

Name	Attachment
Highline ROBIN Upper Peninsula KMZ	437_0_ROBIN Data Final UP.kmz

Spreadsheet of street addresses

Please upload a spreadsheet of street addresses/locations within the proposed service area. Spreadsheet should include full address string (number, street, city, state, zip), location type (residential, business, institution, other), latitude and longitude (if available), and whether the address is currently unserved at 25/3 Mbps or 100/20 Mbps or unknown.

[278_FINAL ROBIN ADDRESS UP.xlsx](#)

Locations by Type

Locations Passed: Please indicate the total number of locations by type that will be able to receive improved broadband services as a result of the proposed project:

Type	Locations
Households	4,157
Businesses	28
Community Anchor Institutions	10
Total Locations Passed	4,195

Please list the jurisdictions impacted by the proposed service area:

City(ies)/Village(s): Village of Garden, Village of Powers, Village of Daggett, City of Norway, Village of Detour, City of St. Ignace

Township(s): Wells Township Escanaba Township Ford River Township Bark River Township Cornell Township Baldwin Township Brampton Township Maple Ridge Township Ensign Township Nahma Township Masonville Township Garden Township Fairbanks Township Bay De Noc Township Village of Garden Harris Township Spalding Township Meyer Township Daggett Township Nadeau Township Mellen Township Menominee Township Holmes Township Lake Township Stephenson Township Cedarville Township Village of Powers Village of Daggett City of Stephenson Ewing Township Wells Township Breitung Township Waucedah Township Norway Township City of Norway Thompson Township Hiawatha Township Inwood Township Mueller Township (partial) Germfask Township Doyle Township Manistique Township Columbus Township Pentland Township McMillan Township Lakefield Township Trout Lake Township Pickford Township Rudyard Township Kinross Township Village of Detour Detour Township Raber Township Dafter Township Bruce Township Marquette Township Clark Township Portage Township City of St. Ignace Garfield Township Portage Township Hudson Township Hendricks Township Newton Township Moran Township Brevort Township St. Ignace Township

County(ies):

- Chippewa Delta Dickinson Luce Mackinac
- Marquette Menominee Schoolcraft

State House District(s):

- State House District 107 State House District 108 State House District 109
- State House District 110

State Senate District(s):

- State Senate District 37 State Senate District 38

Description of the broadband service to be provided

Does the proposed service area include (wholly or partially) a Qualified Opportunity Zone? Yes No

If yes, please list the Census Tract numbers for the impacted Qualified Opportunity Zones Census Tract 26109960200
 Menominee County

Census Tract 26095960100
 Luce County

Census Tract 26033970500
 Chippewa County

Census Tract 26153000300
 Schoolcraft County

Census Tract 26043950400
 Dickinson County

Please provide a brief description of the broadband service to be provided including, but not limited to, the technology to be used, will bandwidth be dedicated or shared, etc. (250 words max.):

Highline will provide 100 % of the project service area with reliable broadband service deployed by a state-of-the-art Calix XGS Fiber to the Premises network with a symmetrical internet speed of 1Gbs x 1Gbs. Highline's technology allows for 10 Gbs of dedicated bandwidth per splitter and a maximum of 64 customers per splitter. Highline's broadband service guarantees unlimited usage, no data caps, no throttling, and no long-term service agreements. Service includes a router/WiFi6. Most ISPs charge extra for a router or WiFi service(s), Highline does not. The monthly cost for 1Gbs x 1Gbs is \$99.00 and Highline participates in the FCC's ACP program that can lower eligible customers' costs by an additional amount:

The ACP offers several benefits for eligible households:

\$30/mo in savings on internet service.

\$75/mo in savings for households on qualifying Tribal lands.

A one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers when contributing more than \$10 and less than \$50 toward the purchase price.

Additional Service Info: Highline does not run "credit checks" or charge extra fees or taxes.

Highline offers a free app – the HighlineFast App to view connected devices, set parental controls and screen time for specific apps, and more.

Minimum Mbps

Are you able to provide the minimum 100/100 Mbps required service speed to all Yes No locations identified in the proposed service area?

If No, the ROBIN Program allows for a minimum service speed of 100/20 Mbps in cases of extreme geographical, topographical, or financial impracticability of delivering 100/100 Mbps. Such connections must be scalable to 100/100 Mbps. Applicants must provide substantial evidence as to the impracticability of delivering 100/100 Mbps and the justification for providing a connection speed of 100/20 Mbps instead.

Affordability and Service Limitations

Using the table, please indicate the download and upload speeds of the services to be offered in the proposed service area, the non-discounted or rack rate monthly pricing of unbundled internet-only service should be included for each service offered, as well as the monthly data allowance for customers (if applicable). Applicants must certify their commitment to providing the proposed level of service and cost for at least one (1) year after grant closeout. After this period, grantees are expected to maintain pricing and speed levels for the ROBIN project area consistent with those found in the grantee's non-ROBIN service areas elsewhere in the state.

Download Speed (Mbps)	Upload Speed (Mbps)	Monthly Cost \$	Monthly Data Allowance (GB)
1Gbs	1Gbs	99.00	9999999999999999 999999

Affidavit of commitment

[442__Affidavit of Commitment and Website screenshot.pdf](#)

FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

Do you participant in the FCC's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)? Yes No

If No, applicant must participate in ACP within 6 months of receiving a ROBIN grant award. Please attach evidence that they are pursuing ACP participation.

Do you provide a low-cost service offering in conjunction with the ACP that provides ACP eligible households with a net \$0 monthly cost of service? Yes No

If yes, please describe the low-cost service offering.

Project Costs and Budget

Project Costs and Budget

Please complete the following table with project cost information.

Total Project Cost:	35,290,278.00
Total Grant Request:	29,996,736.00
Total Match Amount:	5,293,542.00
Total Match Percentage:	15.00

Total matching funds: Please complete the table below summarizing the source, amount, and type of matching funds contributed to the project. Applicants should also indicate if the match is secured or not.

Source	Amount	Type	Secure
Aspire Networks 1, LLC dba Highline			

Match commitment letters or evidence

Name of Attachment	Match commitment letters or evidence
Match Commitment Letter - UP	319_0_Match Commitment Letter - UP.pdf

If matching funds or in-kind contributions listed above are not yet secured, please describe the process remaining to secure the funds and the anticipated timeline to do so. (250 words max.):

Budget Summary for Realizing Opportunities with Broadband Infrastructure Networks Grant - 2023
 Agency: Aspire Networks 1, LLC. (DBA Highline)
 Application: Aspire Networks 1 dba Highline: Upper Peninsula Region

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	Category	Total	Requested	Cash	Inkind	Narrative
1	Building and Labor					
2	Last Mile Construction Labor					
3	Middle Mile Construction Labor					
4	Last Mile Construction Material					
5	Middle Mile Construction Material					
6	Customer Premise Equipment					
7	Customer Premise Installation					
8	Electronics					
9	Permits					
10	Professional Services and Engineering					
11	Other					
TOTAL EXPENDITURES						

Budget Additional Information

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Budget Narrative

Please provide a brief narrative to accompany your project budget (max 400 words).

Attach additional information as necessary

Five-year stand-alone project financial plan/forecast.

Please use the table to complete a five-year stand-alone project financial plan/forecast.

Five-Year Stand-Alone Project Financial Plan

Project Name	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Anticipated Revenue					
Anticipated Expenses					
Anticipated Grant Funds					
Cash Flow					
Cummulative Cash Flow					

Please provide a brief narrative to accompany your five-year stand-alone project financial plan/forecast (400 words max.):

the state to build 531 miles of broadband in front of 4,195 locations.

Additional forecast information

Project Readiness

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Engineering designs, diagrams, and maps

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.

Name of Attachment:	Budgetary engineering designs
1. Highline ROBIN Network UP	353_0_New ROBIN Network - UP.pdf
2. Highline ROBIN Network with in Progress Network UP	353_1_New ROBIN Network with In Progress Network - UP.pdf
3. Highline ROBIN Networks with Address Targets UP	353_2_Networks with Address Targets - UP.pdf

Please provide a brief statement to accompany your attached engineering designs, diagrams, and maps indicating your readiness to build, manage, and operate the proposed network.

Attached are pdf maps provided by Atlantic Engineering Group (AEG) that illustrate the identified ROBIN locations with the proposed fiber construction, along with a map that illustrates how our existing or planned infrastructure will connect the project area's locations. All maps are certified by a professional engineer.

Highline’s readiness to accept that ROBIN grant responsibility is based on our current operation as a fiber to the home internet service provider. Established in May of 2021, Highline has successfully deployed the technology to deliver an IP address customers. The fully redundant network now serves over one thousand customers in the rural areas of the Upper Peninsula and Thumb markets. Highline has successfully built over 1,200 miles of fiber from July of 2021 to the present. Over this time period, Highline has formed relationships with MDOT, and all of the County Road Commissions identified in our grant locations to secure the required permits. Highline also as an existing agreement with USIC to provide dedicated locating resources to keep up with the Miss Dig tickets required for this volume of construction activity. Our ability to manage the project is derived from our existing team, including Operations, Technical and Outside plant leaders, installation and service technicians, local customer care representatives, local community relations/marketing representatives, and corporate marketing, customer service, technical, financial and human resources support. Highline is ready in all facets of the business to deliver on the proposed ROBIN locations in our design.

Evidence of network scalability

Evidence of network scalability

Name of Attachment	Evidence of network scalability
Network Scalability Map and Documents	357_0_Network Scalability Attachment.pdf

Please provide a description and evidence that the proposed infrastructure is scalable to meet the anticipated future connectivity demands of the proposed service area. Please indicate the end-user connection speed to which the proposed network is designed to scale. This information must be certified by the equipment manufacturer or a professional engineer. (250 words max.):

The currently deployed and proposed FTTP XGS network will serve 100% of the project area at 1 Gbs x 1Gbs and is scalable up to 10Gbs x 10Gbs per customer. The following supports the currently deployed and proposed infrastructure is scalable to meet anticipated future connectivity demands:

- The core network currently supports 100Gbs throughput with the ability to scale to 400Gbs throughput.
- Access network currently supports 100Gbs throughput with the ability to scale to 400Gbs throughput using DWDM.
- Splitter and MDU network is native XGS-PON supporting a maximum of 10Gbs/10Gbs to every customer.
- Each cabinet can support 32,000 homes delivering a maximum of 10Gbs/10Gbs connections to every customer.
- DWDM is used from the core to the edge on dedicated redundant fiber to each cabinet supporting 800Gbs/800Gbs to every point in the network.
- Dual Cisco 9903 core routers supporting 1.6Tbs throughput each.
- Dual Ciena 5164 edge routers in every cabinet supporting 800Gbs throughput each.

Project Schedule

28. Please use the table below to complete a project schedule outlining individual tasks and their timing by quarter and year. All projects must be complete by December 31, 2026. (If you need to add additional lines, click on 'Save' and the system will add an additional five lines each time.)

	2023			2024			2025			2026		
Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preliminary Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Constructability Rideout	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make-Ready	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Testing/Turnover	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Anticipated completion date

Please indicate the anticipated date upon which service to the last location in the proposed project area will be made available. 12/31/2026

Please list any factors that would change or delay the proposed schedule.

The proposed construction project requires obtaining the required permits from the utility pole owner to attach to the poles along the proposed route, plus, incur any make ready cost for any utility poles that may require replacement to support the additional cable (load). Although Highline pre-fielded the project location during the design phase and contacted the utility pole owners of the intent to attach to the poles, Highline is unable to forecast 100% of the make ready and Rights-of-Way (ROW) timeliness. In addition, Highline must obtain ROW from the State of Michigan and the project areas townships and counties to install the buried facilities. Highline sees no obstacles with the process and will work closely with both entities to minimize any delays with securing

on-time project completion. With this said, Highline has existing permits in much of the project area and sees no reason for the schedule to be delayed due to permitting.

Inclement weather is a factor in this region and may hinder productivity, thus, the project may require work to be performed during non-business hours to meet project timelines. In addition, the aftermath of the pandemic has resulted in congestion with the global supply chain, which may cause delays in receiving materiel and supplies in a timely manner. Highline does maintain a certain amount of inventory to overcome shortfalls in the supply chain, however, Highline is unable to predict the long-term impact regarding the availability of materials and supplies.

Have all the required local/city/county/state approvals and/or permits necessary for this project to proceed been obtained? Yes No

If No, what remains to be done and what is required for completing the process of obtaining approvals? Include any permitting timeline in the project schedule.

As Highline is already constructing RDOF infrastructure in much of the project area, Highline is in receipt of existing permits for much of the project areas. Permits may be amended to include additional project locations and households. Highline is familiar with the permitting process and sees no reason permits would be denied or prolonged.

Will this project require state or federal environmental review, approval, or permits? Yes No Unsure

If Yes, what remains to be done and what is required for completing the process of obtaining approvals? Include any permitting timeline in the project schedule.

Highline currently has existing permits for much of the project area. Permits may be amended to include additional project locations and households. Highline is familiar with the permitting process and sees no reason permits would be denied or prolonged.

Will this project require state or federal historic, architectural, or archeological review, approval, or permits? Yes No Unsure

If Yes, what remains to be done and what is required for completing the process of obtaining approvals? Include any permitting timeline in the project schedule.

Highline is in the process of obtaining approvals and permits and is familiar with the process of obtaining the required permits and approvals.

Project Readiness

Additional evidence of project readiness

Name of Attachment:	Evidence of project readiness
Metro Act Permits	390_0_List of Metro Act Permits.pdf
Highline Fiber Road Map	390_1_Highline Fiber Road Map.pdf

Please provide any additional evidence of your project's readiness. This evidence can include, but is not limited to, letters of intent, memorandums of understanding, land/tower lease agreements, right-of-way agreements, permits, etc. Provide a short narrative to accompany this additional evidence.

Highline's goal is to serve as many Michigan residents as possible with reliable, high-speed internet. Highline stands positioned to extend our network to serve the many homes excluded in the RDOF grant funding, and the backbone of our network infrastructure is currently being constructed. The extension of Highline's network infrastructure will provide broadband service to thousands of additional homes, many of which are rural with difficult terrain to navigate. Due the proposed project's location being in **close in proximity to current RDOF construction, Highline has previously obtained required permits. A list of locations with current permits and anticipated**

pending permits is attached.

Highline has support from several counties and townships in the proposed project area and is in contact with local governments to answer questions and work with the local road commission on permitting. Because of Highline's commitment to our State, we have several letters of support from the project area's residents and community members included in the Robin grant locations throughout the Upper Peninsula, Michigan.

Along with local governmental support, Highline is working with residents left out of the RDOF funding to make their voices heard. **Highline** has developed a petition that allows residents to sign in support of extending our network, in hopes they may receive broadband service through Highline with the upcoming ROBIN grant.

Applicant Capacity

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Brief history of your organization

Please provide a brief history of your organization including experience relevant to the proposed project and your technical, financial, and managerial capabilities to complete the project within the designated project period. (250 words max.):

Aspire Networks1, LLC, dba Highline, along with ITC Capital Partners, are proven entities to entrust ROBIN funding. ITC has a 126-year history of serving rural markets and has \$10B of shareholder value.

Aspire/ITC was awarded a \$188M RDOF grant in 2020 and has privately raised an additional capital to support our investment in Michigan. Highline started construction on 7/21, and investing capital prior to the RDOF notice of funding in October. Our first customer was installed on October 15, 2021. To date 1,022 miles of fiber network, passing 13,355 total homes in the UP and Thumb is complete. 9,690 RDOF households, fulfilling 20% of the 48,449 commitment households. In 2023, 12,247 RDOF households and 1,218 miles of fiber will be built surpassing the FCC 40% household passed benchmark due in 2024. Highline has 32 construction crews committed to our Michigan network build, and has over 11M feet of fiber inventory in Michigan.

In place is a world class, redundant service network, delivering symmetrical 1Gbs x 1Gbs service capable of serving 500,000 Michigan customers.

Highline’s Michigan team of 37 is led by Bruce Moore who has successfully created broadband networks since 1998. Operations, Network Engineering/OSP, Logistics, Customer Care, Installation/Service, Community Relations/Marketing are in place to support the ROBIN grant.

Highline is confident, due to the proximity of ROBIN addresses to our RDOF network, we will successfully complete the project by 12/31/26.

Organization Chart & Resumes

Applicant organizational chart

Name of Attachment	Organizational chart
Organizational Chart for Highline Entities	329_0_Organizational Chart for Highline Entities_1_.pdf

Resumes of key officers, management personnel, and proposed project management team

Personnel Name	Resume
Bruce Moore	332_0_Bruce Moore Resume.pdf
Layne Levine	332_1_Layne Levine Resume.pdf
Robert K. Mills	332_2_Robert K Mills Resume.pdf
Aaron Burbey	332_3_AaronBurbey Resume.pdf
Matt Dale	332_4_Matt Dale Resume.pdf
Bethany Leiter	332_5_BethanyLeiter Resume.pdf
Wil Clowdus	332_6_WC Resume for ROBIN.pdf

Audited Financial Statements

Three years of audited financial statements

Attachment Name	Audited Financial Statements
Highline Financial Package Submission: Audited Financial Statements	336_0_Highline Financial Package Submission.pdf

Please provide a brief statement to accompany your attached audited financial statements and documentation.

Please find the attached document that includes the following:

- The corporate organizational chart indicating the relationship of the subsidiaries of ITC Broadband Capital
- 2021 audited financial statements for ITC Broadband Capital
- 2021, 2020, and 2019 audited financial statements for USConnect Holdings

Partners, subcontractors, or vendors associated with the project's deliverables

Describe any partners, subcontractors, or vendors associated with the project's deliverables, including but not limited to adoption, deployment, and service delivery. Describe each party's role in the project. This should include a discussion of whether and to what extent the applicant, as well as its anticipated partners, subcontractors, or vendors are organizations incorporated, headquartered, or with a principal place of business in Michigan.

Highline is committed to utilizing local Michigan partners, subcontractors, and vendors to complete the proposed project. The following are Subcontractors and Vendors Highline anticipates being involved in the project's completion:

Construction and Engineering Contractors:

Atlantic Engineer Group (AEG): AEG is the prime engineering and construction contractor for Highline. AEG is a pioneer and innovator in broadband network deployments. AEG designs, constructs, and manages fiber optic networks solutions. They have completed 130+ fiber optic projects in 32 states and 11 countries. AEG has experience in all architectures: GPON, Active Ethernet, Distributed Split, Centralized Split, RfOG, Wireless add-ons, Smart Grid, and Middle Mile. AEG has opened two office and warehouse locations in Michigan. They are committed to hiring local and subcontracting MI based companies.

AEG Utilizes the following Michigan Subcontractors:

- Northern Utilities Contractors
- Earth Com
- B&B Electric
- Price & Price
- Vertical Underground
- Berman Contracting
- Down to Earth
- Vasi & Associates
- Citadel Services

Equipment and Vehicles:

- Vermeer
- Pro Towing
- Fox Motors
- Meier Signs

- Becks Trailer Store
- Guindon Moving & Storage
- Mr. Tire
- Allen Chevrolet
- Toys For Trucks
- Cycle City: Generators

Advertising and Marketing

- Radio Results Network
- WLUC TV6, Grey Media Group
- Action News
- Meier Signs

Building and Maintenance

- MT Residential Construction LLC
- MSP Construction

Michigan Vendors

- Ashley Furniture – Office
- CCI- Network
- Millennium of Romulus, MI- Network
- Ranger Security- Office
- USIC- Network

Anticipated Vendors Outside of MI

Channell Commercial Corp- Network

Ciena- Network

CMS IP Technologies- Network

Core Telecom Systems- Network

Fairchild Equipment- Equip and Vehicles

Fiber Store- Network

Genuine Cable Group- Network

Graybar- Network

Insight Direct USA, Network

NCTI, Inc- Training/Education

Noke Locks- Network

OOKLA, LLC- Network

Power + Tel- Network

Procom Consulting- Consulting

Utility Lifts & Equipment- Equip and Vehicles

Netsync- Network

Safety and training standards

Describe the safety and training standards in place for your employees, including professional certification, licensure, and/or robust in-house training opportunities.

Highline has a comprehensive Human Resource department and Safety officers that oversee a thorough set of safety standards and training. Highline trains and adheres to the standards of the following organizations/entities including, but not limited to: OSHA, NESC, MDOT traffic control and right of way safety guidelines, NCTI fiber optic/phone/field operations training. Also, Highline's

robust HR standards include employees to sign an acknowledgment of receipt pertaining to the Professional Code of Conduct, DOT Policy with ZERO Tolerance, and the Safety Manual. Highline currently has two Safety Officers that oversee training and compliance.

Violations of federal or state labor and employment laws

Have there been any recent violations of federal or state labor and employment laws by your organization? Yes No Unsure

If Yes, please describe in detail.

Labor standards

Does your company incorporate strong labor standards, including project labor agreements and community benefits agreements that offer wages at or above the prevailing rate? Yes No

If Yes, please describe.

Highline is in compliance with the regulations of 2CFR200 Subpart D and has a procurement policy in effect.

Highline pays all employees the compensation they are entitled to receive in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.

Hiring Policy

For this project, will additional labor force needs be met by hiring staff directly with your organization or contracted through another entity?

- Directly with company
 Contracted through another agency

If direct hire, please estimate the total number of new, directly hired staff needed to complete this project. 6

If this project will be completed using contracted labor, describe your policies and practices that ensure contractors and subcontractors meet high labor standards.

Prioritization efforts to hire local workers

Describe any prioritization efforts to hire local workers and/or workers from historically disadvantaged communities for this project.

Highline's UP ROBIN locations are in rural, historically disadvantaged communities. Highline hires local based employees, many of which will be hired to work in their own community. Highline is dedicated to hiring locally and does so through its staff, the subcontractors it hires, along with the vendors and partners it does business with.

Community and Economic Impact

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Community Support for this project

Demonstration of interest/impact/support from communities **(If you need to upload additional support letters, click on 'Save' and the system will add an additional five lines.)**

Name of Community / Organization	Support Letters
US Congressman Bergman Support Letter	414_0_Congressman Burgman.pdf
Delta County Commissioners Support Letter	414_1_Delta County Commissioners Letter of Support.pdf
Iron County Commissioners Support Letter	414_2_Iron County Commissioners Letter of Support.pdf
Menominee County Support Letter	414_3_Menominee County Letter of Support.pdf
Bark River Township Support Letter	414_4_Bark River Township - Delta Co. - Letter of Support 2023.pdf
Brampton Township Support Letter	414_5_Brampton Township - Delta Co. - Letter of Support.pdf
Ensign Township Support Letter	414_6_Ensign Township - Delta Co. - Letter of Support.pdf
Escanaba Township Support Letter	414_7_Escanaba Township - Delta Co. - Letter of Support.pdf
Garden Township Support Letter	414_8_1Garden Township - Delta Co. - Letter of Support.pdf
Wells Township Support Letter	414_9_Wells Township - Delta Co. - Letter of Support.pdf
Hudson Township Support Letter	414_10_Hudson Township - Charlevoix Co. - Letter of Support.pdf
Trout Lake Township Support Letter	414_11_Trout Lake Township - Chippewa Co. - Letter of Support.pdf
Ewing Township Support Letter	414_12_Ewing Township - Marquette Co. - Letter of Support.pdf
Humboldt Township Support Letter	414_13_Humboldt Township - Marquette Co. - Letter of Support.pdf
Tilden Township Support Letter	414_14_Tilden Township - Marquette Co. - Letter of Support.pdf
Wells Township Support Letter	414_15_Wells Township - Marquette Co. - Letter of Support.pdf

	Support.pdf
Moran Township Support Letter	414_16_Moran Twp Letter of Support.pdf
St. Ignace Township Support Letter	414_17_St. Ignace Township - Mackinac Co. - Letter of Support.pdf
Menominee County Board of Commissioners Support Letter	414_18_Menominee County Board of Commissioners.pdf
Delta County Economic Development Alliance Support Letter	414_19_Delta County Economic Development Alliance Letter of Support.pdf
Dickinson Economic Development Alliance Support Letter	414_20_Dickinson Economic Development Alliance Letter of Support.pdf
Invest UP Support Letter	414_21_InvestUP Letter of Support - Highline-Midwest - MIHI ROBIN Program.pdf
Central UP Planning and Development Support Letter	414_22_CUPPAD Highline Support Letter 1 .pdf
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association Support Letter	414_23_NTCA Support Letter .pdf
US Senator Gary Peters Highline Support Letter	414_24_US Senator Gary Peters Highline Support Letter.pdf
UP Center For Change Support Letter	414_25_UP Center for Change 2023 ROBIN Funding Support Letter Highline 1 .pdf
Les Cheneaux Community Foundation Support Letter	414_26_UP LCCF letter of support for High Speed Internet.pdf
Rep. Prestin Support Letter	414_27_Rep. Prestin.pdf
Sen. Damoose Support Letter	414_28_Sen. Damoose.pdf
Sen. Hoitenga Support Letter	414_29_Sen. Hoitenga.pdf
Sen. Markkanen Support Letter	414_30_Sen. Markkanen.pdf

Please provide a description of the community support for this project to accompany relevant attachments. Community support can be expressed through public-private partnerships, letters of support, memorandums of understanding, community broadband plans, or other relevant and appropriate documents.

Community support is outstanding for Highline's project to connect additional homes with ROBIN funding by extending from our RDOF network.

Highline has received support letters from Economic Development Organizations, Township Representatives, County Commissioners, Planning and Development Organizations, Community Anchor Institutions, State Representatives, Broadband Organizations, and local residents.

One Community Anchor Institution, Sault Area Public Schools indicated, "this infrastructure is such a critical need throughout the Sault Ste. Marie Area Public Schools service area. Our School District population is greater than 50% socioeconomically disadvantaged, an economic condition being perpetuated by the digital divide (see attached support letter)." Funding for Highline's project will mean an additional 4,195 locations across eight

counties will have access to life changing high-speed internet. The excitement among all communities is illustrated in the outpouring of support Highline has currently received.

Highline has also received more than a hundred petition signatures and numerous household letters of support stating that residents are still in need of reliable internet service. Along with the overwhelming support from the county, townships, and state representatives, Highline has also received many letters of support from Community Anchor Institutions that see the benefit of fiber to increase economic development and stability within our small cities and towns.

Community Interest

Demonstration of customer interest

Name of Attachment	Customer Interest
Berg Letter of Support	394_0_Berg Letter of Support Delta Co.pdf
Charbonneau Letter of Support	394_1_Charbonneau Letter of Support - Delta Co.pdf
Erikson Letter of Support	394_2_Erikson Letter of Support - Delta Co. .pdf
Lawrence Letter of Support	394_3_Lawrence Letter of Support - Delta Co.pdf
Mosier Letter of Support	394_4_Mosier Letter of Support - Delta Co.pdf
Ross Letter of Support	394_5_Ross Letter of Support - Delta Co.pdf
Highline Service Petition with residents signatures UP region	394_6_Petition Cover page and Signatures.pdf
Jeager Carter Letter of Support	394_7_Carter Jaeger Letter of Support Delta Co. .pdf

Please provide a brief statement to accompany the demonstration of customer interest you have attached to this application. This description should include the method used for gauging customer interest and the results.

Included in this application is a customer interest petition with signatures from 121 UP residents stating, **"we, the undersigned UP residents, fully support Highline in its efforts to bring high-speed internet to more neighborhoods and more homes in the UP. We ask that you approve Highline's grant applications for broadband funds, enabling them to serve more residences."** See attached petition.

Highline is in receipt of letters from residents supporting this project. A majority of residents stated the poor quality of their current internet situation impedes their ability to work from home, download and stream reliably, and affects their life daily. Also, residents stated their poor internet impedes with their family's ability to have access to education and critical services via the internet, and their ability to have remote healthcare services is unreliable. Each support letter indicates a speed test result and who their current provider is.

A significant number of residents expressed interest by signing up for potential service on Highline's website. Potential customers enter their information providing Highline with the ability to contact potential customers if service becomes available. Highline generates a Prospect Sheet to sort out residents that are eligible and those that are not currently in an eligible location. Many residents are

underserved or unserved and many expressed the need to have a better option for service than their current provider.

Community Anchor Institutions (CAI) served

Please list the specific community anchor institutions (CAIs) to be served by the proposed project. Attach evidence of support for the project from impacted CAIs (if applicable). **(If you need to upload additional support letters, click on 'Save' and the system will add an additional five lines.)**

CAI Name	Address	Type of CAI	Letter of Support
Gladstone Area Schools Support Letter	400 South Tenth Street, Gladstone, MI 49837	School	458_0_UP-DeltaCounty-GladstoneSchool-LOS.pdf
Delta Chamber of Commerce Support Letter	1001 North Lincoln Road, Escanaba, MI 49829	Other (Community Org.)	458_1_UP-DeltaCounty-ChamberLetterOfSupportHighline.pdf
Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission Support Letter	2345 Meridian Street, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783	Other (Planning and Development Commission)	458_2_UP-EUPRPDC-Highline ROBIN Support Letter.pdf
Eastern Upper Peninsula MiSTEM Network Support Letter	315 Armory Place, Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783	Other (MiSTEM)	458_3_UP-EUPSTEM Region Highline ROBIN Support Letter.pdf
Rudyard Area Schools Support Letter	11185 W. Second Street, Rudyard, MI 49780	School	458_4_UP-Rudyard Area Schools - Highline ROBIN Support Letter.pdf
Sault Area Public Schools Support Letter	876 Marquette Ave., Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783	School	458_5_UP-Sault Area Public Schools - Highline ROBIN Support Letter.pdf
Tahquamenon Area School Support Letter	700 Newberry Ave., Newberry, MI 49868	School	458_6_UP-Tahquamenon Area Schools - Highline ROBIN Support Letter.pdf
Brimley Area Schools Support Letter	7134 S. N-221, Brimley, MI 49715	School	458_7_Brimley Area Schools - LOS Highline ROBIN Grant Application.pdf
De Tour Area Schools Support Letter	202 S. Division St., De Tour Village, MI 49725	School	458_8_Detour Area Schools Highline Robin Grant LOS.pdf
Cloverland Electric Cooperative Support Letter	2916W.M-28, Dafter, MI 49724-9761	Other (Electric Co.)	458_9_Letter of Support from Cloverland Electric Cooperative Highline.pdf

SPIN Information

Evidence of application for a SPIN (if applicable) **If the proposed project includes connections to schools or libraries, please ensure you have entered your SPIN at the beginning of this application. For applicants without a SPIN please provide evidence of your application for a SPIN.**

Name of Evidence	Evidence of Application for SPIN

If the proposed project includes connections to schools or libraries, please provide your SPIN or evidence of application for a SPIN from the FCC Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) and demonstration of your knowledge of E-rate and working with the FCC/USAC.

Need for improved broadband service for businesses

Evidence of interest, impact, or support from businesses. **(If you need to upload additional Evidence of Interest, click on 'Save' and the system will add an additional five lines.)**

Name of Attachment	Evidence of interest
Invest UP Support Letter	398_0_InvestUP Letter of Support - Highline-Midwest - MIHI ROBIN Program.pdf
CUPPAD Highline Support Letter	398_1_CUPPAD Highline Support Letter_1_.pdf

Please provide a brief description of the businesses needing improved broadband service in the proposed project area and the level of improvement needed. Attach statements or evidence regarding the benefits from the proposed connectivity solution and how it will impact those businesses.

The proposed project is located in an overwhelmingly residential area. The positive economic impact will be felt throughout the project area as 4,195 additional locations, many of which are households, will have access to reliable high-speed internet. E-commerce will be supported for businesses and individuals alike. New businesses will be confident on the reliability of internet in the project locations, enhancing economic development in rural Michigan.

Direct job creation

Evidence of job creation

Describe and account for any direct job creation in the proposed service area related to this project, if funded. Provide supplemental evidence if available. Job creation here means those jobs created in the community as a result of new internet connectivity being deployed, not any jobs created to deploy the proposed network.

Training and Awareness

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Proposed digital literacy training events, materials

Please describe any proposed digital literacy training events, materials, and/or resources that will be provided to residents or businesses impacted by the proposed connectivity. Include the number and type of events, including commitments from any partners included in the digital literacy training and the anticipated outcomes from related activities. The description must provide clear detail and contain measurable metrics for the proposed programs or partnerships.

Highline will establish **Highline Academy** – a team of Highline management and staff, along with local community advocates and trusted partners to develop resources, educate residents and businesses to promote digital literacy, digital equity, and Highline training programs.

Highline Academy will focus on developing unique curriculum, curate digital literacy resources, engage local advocates, and conduct approximately 42 training sessions (in person and/or online) over the 42 months of the project. A Highline Academy website will provide resources and training materials focused on digital literacy and the promotion of digital equity for all. Highline Academy will also engage Plus One Strategic Communications, LLC, a firm specializing in assisting small and/or rural or regional internet service providers and who have a 15-year proven track record of creating training content, conducting trainings, engaging local community leaders, marketing and promoting services at the local level.

This year, Highline celebrated the naming of eight townships (Bark River, Cornell, Ford River, Lynn, Moore, Snover, Watertown and Wells) as Smart Rural Communities (SRC). Highline Academy will leverage Highline's SRC status by identifying students who will become Highline Academy sponsored digital literacy advocates and trainers in their schools and communities. To keep students engaged each year, Highline Academy will award/provide up to four computers each year for post-secondary education and/or offer students a summer internship at Highline. This approach will ensure that the programs remain fresh, relevant and have young ambassadors built into the success of local digital literacy education and training.

Highline Academy will initially develop and curate resources for, and training on, the following:

1. Basic Computer Skills
2. Career Search Skills
3. Google Docs
4. Information Literacy
5. Internet Basics
6. Mac OS
7. Microsoft Excel
8. Microsoft PowerPoint
9. Microsoft Word
10. Mobile and Online Payments/Financial Services
11. Passwords
12. Social Media
13. Supporting K-12 Distance Learning
14. Using Email
15. Windows
16. Your Digital Footprint

Highline will purchase approximately 50 devices (tablets and laptops) for use at training sessions

and Highline Academy will give away up to 250 devices each year over the first three years for a total of 750 devices (tablets and laptops) to those successfully completing Highline Academy certified or proctored training program(s).

To promote digital equity and inclusion, Highline Academy will ensure that the majority of donated devices are awarded or provided to those residing in its three qualified opportunity zones.

Please upload evidence of training partnership, materials, etc.

[508_Highline Academy Flyer and LOI Plus One Combined.pdf](#)

Materials and Method(s) to be used

Please 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., in the proposed service area. 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. This description must provide clear detail and contain measurable metrics.

Highline will use the following methods:

- Utilize its four **Community Relations team** members serving **Chippewa, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Mackinac, Menominee and Iron counties** to work with local leadership in promoting internet connections and service(s) availability.
- Promote and distribute information via **Highline Academy** – Highline’s in-person and on-line training program comprised of staff, local leadership, Plus One Strategic Communications, LLC and students.
- Send out **monthly Emailed Newsletter(s) and specific emails** to both upcoming and newly acquired customers so they are aware of resources and economic opportunities available online and locally.
- Share news and resources online via Highline’s **social media channels**.
- Send out at least **ten postcards, brochures, and/or printed newsletters** per year to promote resources and opportunities via the USPS Every Door Direct Mail program.
- Sponsor and exhibit at local events such as the **Delta County Home and Garden Show**, the **Upper Peninsula State Fair** and township meetings with residents.
- Utilize its **Fiber Internet Services Ambassadors** through Highline Academy and its **Smart Rural Community** designations.

Highline will use the following **materials** and **resources** for trainings:

- **Uniquely created content** promoting positive outcomes from the use of internet through the Highline Academy and through its training partner, Plus One Strategic Communications.
- Materials and resources **made available to Chamber of Commerce’s, economic development offices, senior centers and medical facilities** throughout our service areas.
- Materials and resources from (1) **county and township offices**, (2) local **tribal/American Indian authorities**, and (3) from local **school districts and post-secondary educational institutions including community colleges, universities, and trade schools**.

Highline’s partnerships and ongoing relationships with community anchor institutions is continuing to expand. The following have given their support and we expect more to follow:

- **Garden Township** (letter of support dated 2/16/23 and promising meeting space); and
- **Menominee County Board of Commissioners** (letter of support dated 2/28/23 and promising meeting space).

Highline will seek to partner with and promote **The UP Telehealth Network (UPTN)** based out of the **UP Health System – Marquette**. The **UPTN** operates from 28 sites out of 21 townships in the UP. The partnership will increase telehealth participation which leads to better health outcomes for those unable to travel to a hospital or health provider.

Highline will seek to engage and partner with UP-based community mental health service programs including:

Evidence of awareness activities

[511__CUPPAD Highline Support Letter.pdf](#)

Commitment to improving the adoption rate of broadband services

Describe how the project commits to improving the adoption rate of broadband services, including, but not limited to, special service rates, internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user, and digital skills training.

Highline is committed to improving the adoption rate of broadband services through a number of strategies and resources.

1. Highline does **not require contracts** which are often required by ISPs (normally 12-month commitments). Highline's no-contract internet service makes it easier for customers, particularly low-income households to sign up for service and ultimately adopt broadband service(s).
2. Highline does **not run "credit checks" or charge extra fees or taxes**. When Highline promotes or advertises its price point – that price point is the actual price the customer pays. Most ISPs advertise a price but the final price paid by the customer is much higher due to fees, taxes and other charges.
3. Highline offers **unlimited data** which increases adoption of broadband services.
4. Highline offers a free app – **the HighlineFast App** to view connected devices, set parental controls and screen time for specific apps, and more.
5. Highline's internet service **includes a router/WiFi 6**. Most ISPs charge extra for a router or WiFi service(s). Highline service includes state-of-the-art WiFi hardware with WiFi 6 which provides for better range and faster speeds along with better device battery life.
6. To improve broadband adoption, Highline participates in and promotes the FCC's **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)**. For more information, visit: <https://highlinefast.com/affordable-connectivity-program>
7. Highline has partnered with **MyBundle.TV** to simplify streaming TV. Video (and streaming) is a major factor in bandwidth and consumers spend a lot of money and time streaming. With this service, customers answer a few questions to receive personalized live TV recommendations with the channels they actually want—saving them time and money.
8. In early 2022, Highline was named a **Smart Rural CommunitySM (SRC)** provider by NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association. SRC is a national network of communities powered by innovative rural broadband providers that are building a brighter future for small-town America. The program promotes rural broadband and its role in supporting innovative economic development, effective education, efficient energy distribution and use, state-of-the-art health care, and other important issues for rural America.
9. Through the **Highline Academy** – Highline will use **50 internet enabled devices** to train and teach residents on how to use, access and take advantage of online opportunities and resources.
10. The Highline Academy will also **award up to 750 internet enabled devices** over the first three years to participants successfully completing a Highline Academy digital literacy certified or proctored program.

11. The Highline Academy is committed to conducting or creating **42 digital literacy training sessions** (in person and/or online) through 2026.

Promotion of customer take rate

Explain how you plan to promote customer take rate, including marketing activities, outreach plan, and other actions to reach the identified serviceable units within the project area. Provide the anticipated take rate and describe the basis for the estimate.

Highline is not only investing in infrastructure to improve rural communities access to reliable and robust broadband services, but also investing in Outreach and Marketing to potential customers and community members about the services offered in their area and the importance of lessening the digital divide.

Highline's customer take rate goal over the next 5 year is 60% based on total locations passed.

Highline will Promote and Increase the Customer Take Rate in various ways, including, but not limited to:

- Social Media paid advertising/organic advertising.
- Sign-up events throughout the local communities.
- Newspapers Ads and Radio Advertising.
- Direct Mail, including post cards announcing construction is starting soon, construction completion soon, and post construction announcements.
- A team of Highline staff goes door to door with door hangers to promote upcoming service and completion of construction, service ready.

Digital inclusion awareness efforts that include sponsorships of local nonprofits and community organizations, involvement in local schools (including scholarships, teach of the month, backpack programs, and sponsorships), community give-back events, and presentations to each township that we will serve. Examples of how Highline is already doing this:

Honor a Deserving Teacher

- Our teachers should be recognized more often for their hard work and commitment to making a difference in their students' lives. Highline invites you to nominate someone you feel deserves to be recognized as a Teacher of the Month. Winning teachers will receive a \$200 gift card.

Nominate a First Responder

- Our first responders should be recognized for their dedication and commitment to public safety in our communities. Highline invites you to nominate someone you feel deserves to be recognized as a First Responder of the Month. Winning nominees will receive a \$200 gift card.

Addressing the affordability gap: Promote affordability through a promotional campaign of ACP.

Highline will utilize the NTCA's Smart Rural Community recognition that provides road signs that townships will display to inform residents fiber internet is offered through Highline.

Highline maintains consistent communication with local governments/tribal councils and has created a marketing toolkit that local representatives can market to residents as well. The Highline Toolkit includes website banner templates, customizable posters, a map and address list of roads we can service, a tax bill insert, and more.