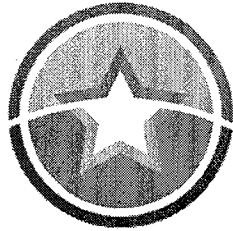OFFICIAL SUBMISSION TO
THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION
UNDER THE STATE BROADBAND DATA AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM
FOR THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

STATE BROADBAND DATA AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM
AMENDED AND SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION
-REVISED-

August 5, 2010

Minnesota State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program
Revision and Clarification

Summary Funding Request
Total Original Funding Request: $6,936,085
Total Revised Funding Request: $3,189,520
Sum Total Reduction: -$3,746,565

The state of Minnesota proposes revised funding for four SBDD projects.

State Broadband Capacity Building
Original Funding Request: $2,273,947
Revised Funding Request: $698,544
Total Reduction: -$1,575,403

Changes from initial proposal:
- Reduced travel costs
- Eliminated funding for office space/moved program office to a space provided in-kind by an agency of the state
- Reduced three full-time staff to one Program Manager, who will be responsible for program administration, project coordination, outreach and awareness, and overseeing Connected Corps
- Revised number of Task Force members from 25 to 15

State Broadband Capacity Building is fundamental to Minnesota's goal of becoming an international broadband leader. On April 26, 2010, an act passed by the state legislature of Minnesota was signed into law setting ambitious broadband goals for the state to achieve by 2015. With this legislation, the state of Minnesota took a bold step to achieve statewide broadband access by 2015. This legislation calls for an annual report by the Minnesota Department of Commerce to ensure the goals are met within the set timeframe. In accordance with the new law, the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Commerce ordered the creation of the Minnesota Broadband Task Force (MBTF). The *State Broadband Capacity Building* portion of the Connect Minnesota proposal is designed to provide the support and funding necessary to operate the Minnesota Broadband Task Force as well as create a centralized Connect Minnesota Program Office.

Outcomes and Benefits:
- Collaboration among members of MBTF to implement recommendations of the previous Minnesota Ultra High-Speed Internet Task Force
- Dedication of support staff for the MBTF
- Establishment of a program office epicenter for engaging and channeling in the broadband dialogue
- Connect Minnesota will support the MBTF in the production of its annual progress report for the 2015 goals

- Program manager will focus solely on state broadband initiatives that will aid in reaching 2015 goals
- Facilitation of dialogue and awareness of broadband availability and adoption through the publication of research indicators and availability findings

Technical Assistance Program

Original Funding Request: $1,743,323
Revised Funding Request: $777,889
Total Reduction: -$965,434

Changes from initial proposal:
- Reduced some services including equipment installation, travel, and analytics
- Reduced funds allocated for the GIS cataloguing of local broadband successes and best practices through the Connect Minnesota web portal
- Introduced Research Peer Review. Connect Minnesota, with the guidance of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, will partner with a university or research center to gather a peer review of the research. One partnership consideration is the Southwest Marketing Advisory Center (SMAC) at the Southwest Minnesota State University
- Revised the number of Task Force members expected to take part in the planning of the annual summit from 19 to 11 (75% of the 15 member Task Force)

The Technical Assistance Program plays an important role in helping the state meet its goal of universal access and 10-20Mbps to all residents and businesses by 2015. Empirical data gathered at the county level will guide the Task Force and local planners, partners, and stakeholders, in identifying the current barriers to broadband in the targeted communities. The detailed county level information can be used as a resource by other BIP/BTOP recipients such as the Blandin SBA grant program which is focused on 80 counties throughout rural Minnesota. Additionally, the Technical Assistance staff will be able to aid efforts in the rural counties where access is the primary barrier. Connect Minnesota's research shows that 13.5% of rural households in Minnesota do not have terrestrial fixed broadband access. Through the Technical Assistance portion of this grant, Connect Minnesota engineering and technical staff will.

Outcomes and Benefits:
- An Annual Broadband Summit comprised of the major broadband-focused sectors that will benchmark and leverage projects and programs to further Minnesota's initiatives of digital literacy and engagement for all its residents and businesses – present and future
- Cost modeling services to help communities, local partners, and stakeholders assess, study, and form a technical plan for increasing broadband capacity
- Publication of in-depth county level research results revealing the top barriers of home and business use of computers and broadband related technology

Local/Regional Technology Planning Teams

Total Original Funding Request: $1,242,656
Total Revised Funding Request: $101,916
Sum Total Reduction: -$1,140,740

Changes from initial proposal:
- Eliminated the Local/Regional Technology Planning Teams – keeping only the Connected Corps initiative to target community programs that would supplement and/or complement other funded BTOP programs
- Eliminated two positions of Community Program Director and Technology Extension Agent
- Eliminated the Local Regional Planning Coordinators (Management Consultants)
- Eliminated the Connected Community Local Champion Training for all 87 counties

Recognizing that the local technology planning effort can still be achieved through technology assistance that supports the Blandin grant program in the rural counties, this request for funding has been significantly reduced. While the Blandin SBA grant is focused on rural areas, Connect Minnesota will complement that work by targeting the Connected Corps program in the urban areas. The combined efforts of the Connect Minnesota initiative and other funded programs such as the Blandin project will ensure the state will be targeted with a technology planning approach. Therefore, the Local/Regional Technology Planning project will focus on creating jobs and providing digital training in the urban areas.

One of the target demographics that has been identified by Connect Minnesota is seniors. Minnesota's seniors are below the national average in computer adoption. Through the Connected Corps initiative, high school and college age students are given an opportunity to become community leaders and employ their technology skills to provide digital literacy training to fellow residents in their community.

Outcomes and Benefits:
- Synchronization with funded BTOP programs so as not to duplicate efforts, but instead to support a collaborative and comprehensive effort statewide
- Connected Corps will seek to complement existing efforts such as the One Economy Digital Connectors program and the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The extension service works to raise broadband awareness through its 4-H program
- Multi-generational collaboration through the Connected Corps program under the guidance of the Connect Minnesota program manager

Data Collection and Related Activities
Original Funding Request: $ 1,676,159
Revised Funding Request: $1,611,171
Total Reduction: -$64,988

Broadband data collection efforts will ensure datasets and broadband maps are updated during the remainder of the five-year program period by continuing to utilize proven data collection, processing, and verification methodologies. Maps will reflect lessons learned during aggressive validation of provider sourced data. As a result, leading practices will emphasize data validation to elevate broadband data confidence levels. Methodologies will include:
- In-field, engineering-directed validation and network testing
- Data validation via telephone surveys addressing broadband availability
- Crowd sourcing: outreach and awareness efforts driving consumer inquiries, planning team feedback, and task force engagement
- Statewide validation of provider network maps
- Speed Test provider and consumer data collection and analysis

Changes from initial proposal:
- Removed Leading Practices as a separate budget line item and incorporated them instead into personnel accountabilities
- Realigned personnel allocations based upon guidance from NTIA

Outcomes and Benefits:
- A comprehensive, publically available broadband dataset to enable stakeholders, businesses, and policymakers to track and benchmark broadband opportunities
- Ongoing provider engagement and public-private collaboration
- Ability to track and report the state's progress up to the target deadline of 2015