Grant Request Number	GRN-000480
Funding Program Name	Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program
Funding Request Name	Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. - Middle Mile - GRN-000480
Applying Organization	Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Applicant Name	Michelle Owens

Primary Applicant Type

Identify the primary applicant type:

Partnership

Primary Entity Type

Type of entity: Primary entity type, (A) a State, political subdivision of a State, Tribal government, technology company, electric utility, utility cooperative, public utility district, telecommunications company, telecommunications cooperative, nonprofit foundation, nonprofit corporation, nonprofit institution, nonprofit association, regional planning council, Native entity, or economic development authority; or (B) a partnership of two (2) or more entities described in (A).

What is the primary applicant's entity type?

Telecommunications Cooperative

Partner Entity Type

Identify the other entities in the partnership:

Telecommunications Company

Is parent/owner of applicant a foreign entity?

No

Managerial Capability

Applicants shall submit to the Assistant Secretary one-page resumes for (a) all key management personnel and (b) all key personnel of subcontractors or other entities that will play substantial roles in building, managing, or operating the middle mile network built using Middle Mile Grant (MMG)

Program funding.

Key Personnel - Chad Olsen; Southern Montana Telephone Company; Engineer; colsen@heberlyeng.com
KeyPersonnel_Resume_Chad_Olsen

Managerial Capability

Applicants shall submit to the Assistant Secretary one-page resumes for (a) all key management personnel and (b) all key personnel of subcontractors or other entities that will play substantial roles in building, managing, or operating the middle mile network built using Middle Mile Grant (MMG) Program funding.

Key Personnel - Doran Fluckiger; Southern Montana Telephone Company; General Manager; doran@smtel.com
KeyPersonnel_Resume_Doran_Fluckiger

Managerial Capability

Applicants shall submit to the Assistant Secretary one-page resumes for (a) all key management personnel and (b) all key personnel of subcontractors or other entities that will play substantial roles in building, managing, or operating the middle mile network built using Middle Mile Grant (MMG) Program funding.

Key Personnel - Janice Wasser; Southern Montana Telephone Company; Customer Relations Supervisor; jwasser@smtel.com
KeyPersonnel_Resume_Janice_Wasser

Managerial Capability

Applicants shall submit to the Assistant Secretary one-page resumes for (a) all key management personnel and (b) all key personnel of subcontractors or other entities that will play substantial roles in building, managing, or operating the middle mile network built using Middle Mile Grant (MMG) Program funding.

Key Personnel - Jason Raymond; Southern Montana Telephone Company; Outside Plant Supervisor; jason@smtel.com
KeyPersonnel_Resume_Jason_Raymond

Managerial Capability

Applicants shall submit to the Assistant Secretary one-page resumes for (a) all key management

personnel and (b) all key personnel of subcontractors or other entities that will play substantial roles in building, managing, or operating the middle mile network built using Middle Mile Grant (MMG) Program funding.

Key Personnel - Jason Williams; Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; Chief Executive Officer; jwilliams@blackfoot.com
KeyPersonnel_Resume_Jason_Williams

Managerial Capability

Applicants shall submit to the Assistant Secretary one-page resumes for (a) all key management personnel and (b) all key personnel of subcontractors or other entities that will play substantial roles in building, managing, or operating the middle mile network built using Middle Mile Grant (MMG) Program funding.

Key Personnel - Joe Fanguy; Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; Vice President Network and Systems; jfanguy@blackfoot.com
KeyPersonnel_Resume_Joe_Fanguy

Managerial Capability

Applicants shall submit to the Assistant Secretary one-page resumes for (a) all key management personnel and (b) all key personnel of subcontractors or other entities that will play substantial roles in building, managing, or operating the middle mile network built using Middle Mile Grant (MMG) Program funding.

Key Personnel - Laura Marshall; Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; Vice President of Human Resources and Community Relations; lmarshall@blackfoot.com
KeyPersonnel_Resume_Laura_Marshall

Managerial Capability

Applicants shall submit to the Assistant Secretary one-page resumes for (a) all key management personnel and (b) all key personnel of subcontractors or other entities that will play substantial roles in building, managing, or operating the middle mile network built using Middle Mile Grant (MMG) Program funding.

Key Personnel - Mary Worden; Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; Director of Operations for Montana; mworden@blackfoot.com
KeyPersonnel_Resume_Mary_Worden

Managerial Capability

Applicants shall submit to the Assistant Secretary one-page resumes for (a) all key management personnel and (b) all key personnel of subcontractors or other entities that will play substantial roles in building, managing, or operating the middle mile network built using Middle Mile Grant (MMG) Program funding.

Key Personnel - Rob Feenstra; Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; Director of Network Engineering; rfeenstra@blackfoot.com
KeyPersonnel_Resume_Rob_Feenstra

Managerial Capability

Applicants shall submit to the Assistant Secretary one-page resumes for (a) all key management personnel and (b) all key personnel of subcontractors or other entities that will play substantial roles in building, managing, or operating the middle mile network built using Middle Mile Grant (MMG) Program funding.

Key Personnel - Robert Helming; Southern Montana Telephone; Owner/President; roberthelming@smtel.com
KeyPersonnel_Resume_Robert_Helming

Managerial Capability

Applicants shall submit to the Assistant Secretary one-page resumes for (a) all key management personnel and (b) all key personnel of subcontractors or other entities that will play substantial roles in building, managing, or operating the middle mile network built using Middle Mile Grant (MMG) Program funding.

Key Personnel - Stacey Mueller; Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; Chief Financial Officer; smueller@blackfoot.com
KeyPersonnel_Resume_Stacey_Mueller

Managerial Capability

Applicants shall submit to the Assistant Secretary one-page resumes for (a) all key management personnel and (b) all key personnel of subcontractors or other entities that will play substantial roles in building, managing, or operating the middle mile network built using Middle Mile Grant (MMG) Program funding.

Key Personnel - Todd Twete; Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.; the Vice President of Enterprise Business and Wholesale; ttwete@blackfoot.com

KeyPersonnel_Resume_Todd_Twete

Organizational Charts

Each applicant shall submit any necessary organizational chart(s) detailing all of its parent companies, subsidiaries, and affiliates.
This upload section should also be used for any letters of support from the organizations that will be involved in the project as a community stakeholder.

2-09-16-2022 09-45-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.5 Organizational Chart - Confidential.docx, 2-09-28-2022 06-03-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.5 Letters of Support.docx, 2-10-19-2022 11-10-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.5 Organizational Chart - Confidential.docx

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Organizational Details

Each applicant must also provide a narrative describing the applicant's readiness to manage a middle mile broadband network. This narrative should describe the experience and qualifications of key management set to undertake this project, the applicant's experience undertaking projects of similar size and scope, recent and upcoming organizational changes including mergers and acquisitions, relevant organizational policies, and ownership information consistent with 47 CFR § 1.2112.

This narrative shall denote who will own the assets at the end of award period. This response is limited to 6000 characters as an open field narrative.

Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. ("Blackfoot") has more than 65-years of proven experience building and operating communications networks. Blackfoot is five-years into a multi-decade fiber-to-the-premises ("FTTP") project where it has constructed more than a thousand miles of fiber optics connecting thousands of end user locations throughout western Montana and eastern Idaho.
Blackfoot currently owns and operates FTTP based broadband networks in Missoula, Bozeman, West Yellowstone, Thompson Falls, and St. Ignatius, Montana; and Island Park and Rexburg, Idaho. Blackfoot also owns and operates a vast fiber-copper hybrid distribution network that provides broadband and other telecom services to dozens of communities throughout western Montana and eastern Idaho.
Blackfoot owns and operates Montana's largest, independent competitive broadband provider serving many of Montana's largest business, including regional hospitals, banks, schools, and county/city governments. Blackfoot serves these customers through a combination of its own fiber, leased-fiber, and fixed wireless distribution facilities.
The same employees that have built and are building and operating this fiber network will be the same employees used to build and operate the Sapphire Ring Project.
Blackfoot provides an array of telecom services, including finished broadband at a variety of speeds up to 10 Gbps. None of Blackfoot's broadband service offerings have data usage caps. Beyond broadband,

Blackfoot provides voice, managed services, networking and other telecom related services to residential, business and wholesale/carrier customers. Blackfoot's customer base includes very rural, residential locations up to Fortune 500 business locations. Blackfoot currently provides broadband services to more than 15,000 customers. More than 12,000 of these customers are in western Montana, approximately 3,000 customers are in eastern Idaho, and others are located throughout the Western United States

Blackfoot's existing core network consists of its own fiber facilities as well as fiber connectivity leased from third parties and extends throughout the Pacific Northwest. Its network includes, but is not limited to, long-haul transport, middle-mile transport, Internet connectivity using established points-of-presence in Missoula and Helena; Seattle; Denver; and St. Anthony, Internet routing tables through existing direct interconnections with multiple Tier 1 Internet suppliers, a Class 5 voice switching platform (as well as VoIP and SIP voice platforms), a billing/provisioning/operational support system, network monitoring systems, customer service/trouble ticketing systems, outside plant records databases and all other systems necessary to provide fiber-based broadband, voice and other telecom related services.

Blackfoot has more than 180 employees that contribute to building, operating, and maintaining broadband networks throughout Montana and Idaho. These employees will provide the managerial, engineering, customer service, finance, installation and support and all the other services necessary to design, build, maintain, and operate a network that will provide broadband and other services relying on the proposed middle mile project.

Southern Montana Telephone ("SMT") network lies within the borders of the Continental Divide in Southwest Montana. Despite the mountainous terrain, SMT provides transport services throughout the United States via interconnection agreements with Tier 1 Internet providers. SMT operates an all-fiber network assuring services that are fast, reliable, and affordable. Since the early 1900s, SMT has provided world-class telecommunications services to just over 1,000 subscribers within the communities of Divide, Grant, Jackson, Polaris, Wisdom, and Wise River, almost 2,000 square miles. SMT provides an array of telecom services, including finished broadband at a variety of speeds up to 1 Gbps. Services offered include but are not limited to network monitoring, local and long distance calling, internet communication services, and operational support. None of SMT's broadband service offerings feature data usage caps. SMT provides service to six rural schools throughout Southwestern Montana that rely on one or two teachers to teach all students from Kindergarten to the eighth grade. SMT provides free broadband and phone services to the five local fire departments and emergency service locations within the communities of Wisdom, Jackson, Wise River, Polaris, and Grant Montana. Forest Service offices in Wisdom and Wise River, Montana rely on SMT's reliable internet services to fight fires and operate day-to-day activities. SMT also serves the Big Hole Battlefield with phone and broadband services.

SMT's workforce consists of the Owner, General Manager, two technicians, and two Customer Service Relations Specialists. The company also has strong, longstanding partnerships with Aldrich Advisors, Calix, Heberly Engineering, National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC), and Vision Net who ensure that networking, financial data, and day-to-day operations are maintained. SMT's workforce and partnerships will be critical in deployment, implementation, installation, and ensuring the

proposed project is timely built, maintained and sustained.
At the conclusion of the project each company described above will own the assets associated with their portion of the construction. Applicant provides details responsive to 47 CFR 1.2112(a)(1) above in the file labeled "2-09-16-2022 09-45-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.5 Organizational Chart - Confidential.docx".

Form CD-511 (Certification Regarding Lobbying)

The applicant must upload a completed form that certifies that Federal funds have not and will not be used for lobbying in connection with this request for Federal financial assistance. A fillable Form CD-511 can be found in the MMG ZIP folder.

3-09-22-2022 11-04-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.1 CD511 Form.pdf, 3-10-18-2022 09-32-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.1 CD511 Form.pdf

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Standard Form-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities)

Standard Form-LLL must be completed and submitted for those applicants that need to disclose lobbying activities that have been secured to influence the outcome of a Federal action. A fillable Form SF-LLL can be found in the MMG ZIP folder.

3-09-22-2022 11-05-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.2 SFLLL Form.pdf

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SAM.gov Registration

Applicants are asked to upload a screenshot of their SAM.gov registration.

3-09-16-2022 05-51-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.3 SAM.gov Registration Evidence.PNG

Executive Summary

Please describe how the applicant's proposal will advance the objectives of the MMG Program, as well as the specific objectives of outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO);

An overview of the proposed route or service area(s), including information regarding rurality and socio-economic indicators in the area to be served by the proposed project.
This response is limited to 12000 characters as an open field narrative.

Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. ("Blackfoot"), a Montana non-profit cooperative, and its partner Southern Montana Telephone Company (SMT), a Montana family-owned company (collectively "Applicant"), respectfully submit this NTIA Middle Mile Grant (MMG) Application for the Sapphire Ring

Project (“Sapphire Ring Project” or “Project”). This Project will add 137 miles of new middle mile fiber in remote western Montana. Spread across six counties, covering more than 13,000 square miles, and impacting 42 communities (“Affected Areas”), the Project will enable affordable broadband to thousands of unserved and underserved locations. In addition, the Project will create a fiber-ring totaling roughly 365 miles, delivering network reliability, resiliency, and positively impacting the broadband experience of thousands of Montanans, including other ISPs.

Project Details

The Project is a fiber-based middle mile network that loops around the Sapphire Mountain range, connecting the Missoula, Bitterroot, and Big Hole Valleys. Blackfoot and SMT each own and operate existing middle mile fiber that they will contribute to the Project: Blackfoot 129 miles and SMT 99 miles. Blackfoot will construct 115 miles of new fiber and SMT will construct 22 miles (totaling 137 miles of new fiber) making the total size of the Project 365 miles. Blackfoot and SMT have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding detailing the arrangement.

The Project features four distinct phases. Phase 1 constructs from Hamilton to Sula, Phase 2 builds from Missoula to Hamilton, Phase 3 constructs Sula to Battlefield, and Phase 4 completes the route from Anaconda to Rocker. These phases will connect the proposed fiber builds to existing fiber optic cable assets owned by Applicant. Splice points along the fiber ring will ensure last mile network access to the Affected Areas along the entire 365 mile fiber route. The Applicant anticipates completing the project by the end of 2025, well within the NOFO’s five-year timeframe.

The Project’s geography is remote and prone to extreme climates. Bitter cold and deep snow are common in winter while wildfires burn thousands of acres of forest nearly every summer. The Bitterroot and Big Hole Rivers are prone to flooding with snow run-off in spring. Given the extreme geography and climate, it can take longer than normal to repair fiber cuts, leaving hundreds or thousands of customers without Internet access for extended periods. Notably, the Bitterroot Valley, which runs south of Missoula all the way to the Idaho border, is a “dead end” when it comes to broadband availability. The further south, the more unserved and underserved locations. Blackfoot was a successful bidder in the FCC’s Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction and plans to serve hundreds of customers in the southern Bitterroot Valley. In the event of a middle mile fiber cut or outage customers in this area can be isolated with no internet access for extended periods, having adverse impacts on national security, public safety and the economy for the Affected Areas.

The Project would mitigate this risk by offering not just Blackfoot but the mobile wireless providers and other ISPs an alternative geographic fiber path out of the Bitterroot Valley. The Applicant has considered climate and environmental factors in its planning. Applicant will deploy infrastructure rated to withstand extreme temperatures and earthquakes as it seeks to avoid or mitigate climate hazards such as extreme temperatures, wildfires, extreme snowfall, and seismic activity. The project is engineered with the goal of serving the Affected Areas for decades using the most efficient and environmentally sound practices.

The Project will facilitate deployment of broadband service to more than 9,600 locations that will be within 1,000 feet of the Project's middle mile fiber. Of these 9,600 locations, 5,810 are currently unserved and 3,822 are underserved. Included in these 9,600 locations are more than 70 anchor institutions, many of which are unserved. With this proximity to middle mile, Applicant and/or other ISPs will have an opportunity to serve these locations by building last mile facilities that connect to Applicant's middle mile as Applicant hereby commits to make its middle mile fiber available to others at commercially reasonably rates, terms and conditions. The Project will also provide new middle mile transport to support mobile wireless deployment in western Montana.

More specifically, other ISPs, including to T-Mobile, Verizon Wireless, AT&T Wireless, 3 Rivers Communications, and Vision Net have all expressed support for the Project. In addition, Applicant has communicated its plans to bring fiber connectivity to community stakeholders, including schools, libraries, rural fire departments, local and state governments, hospitals, medical clinics, economic development groups, National Parks, the US Forest Service, public health departments, federal congressional representatives, broadband associations, state broadband office, service providers, ranchers and ordinary citizens. Applicant has included letters from these stakeholders supporting the Project.

Financial and Budget Information

Applicant is financially qualified to meet the obligations associated with this Project. Applicant has the financial resources to meet the NOFO's matching requirements, including securing a Commitment for a Letter of Credit.

Total project costs are estimated at $16,795,000, including a federal grant request of $11,756,500 and Applicant's 30% match of $5,038,500.

The Applicant has made conservative assumptions in the included pro form financials. Because Applicant is an existing ISP in this area, these assumptions are based on Applicant's current experience in the market and should be viewed as legitimate. These assumptions demonstrate the financial viability of the Project. The Applicant commits to periodic financial, programmatic and performance reporting as set out in the NOFO as well as commits to use MMG funding for only approved costs as described in the NOFO.

Operational Details

Applicant has extensive experience building, owning and operating fiber networks in Montana.

Blackfoot has more than 65-years of proven experience building and operating communications networks. Blackfoot is five-years into a multi-decade FTTP project where it has constructed more than a thousand miles of fiber optics connecting thousands of end user locations throughout western Montana and eastern Idaho. Blackfoot currently owns and operates FTTP based broadband networks in Missoula, Bozeman, West Yellowstone, Thompson Falls, and St. Ignatius, Montana; and Island Park and Rexburg, Idaho. Blackfoot also owns and operates a vast fiber-copper hybrid distribution network that

provides broadband and other telecom services to dozens of communities throughout western Montana and eastern Idaho. Blackfoot owns and operates Montana's largest, independent competitive broadband provider serving many of Montana's largest business, including regional hospitals, banks, schools, and county/city governments. Blackfoot serves these customers through a combination of its own fiber, leased-fiber, and fixed wireless distribution facilities.

Blackfoot's existing core network consists of its own middle-mile fiber facilities as well as fiber connectivity leased from third parties and extends throughout the Pacific Northwest. Its network includes, but is not limited to, long-haul transport, middle-mile transport, Internet connectivity using established points-of-presence in Missoula and Helena; Seattle; Denver; and St. Anthony, Internet routing tables through existing direct interconnections with multiple Tier 1 Internet suppliers, a Class 5 voice switching platform (as well as VoIP and SIP voice platforms), a billing/provisioning/operational support system, network monitoring systems, customer service/trouble ticketing systems, outside plant records databases and all other systems necessary to provide fiber-based broadband, voice and other telecom related services.
Blackfoot has more than 180 employees that contribute to building, operating, and maintaining broadband networks throughout Montana and Idaho. These employees will provide the managerial, engineering, customer service, finance, installation and support and all the other services necessary to design, build, maintain, and operate a network that will provide broadband and other services relying on the Project.
SMT operates an all-fiber network assuring services that are fast, reliable, and affordable. Since the early 1900s, SMT has provided world-class telecommunications services to just over 1,000 subscribers within the communities of Divide, Grant, Jackson, Polaris, Wisdom, and Wise River, almost 2,000 square miles.

SMT's workforce consists of the Owner, General Manager, two technicians, and two Customer Service Relations Specialists. The company also has strong, longstanding partnerships with Aldrich Advisors, Calix, Heberly Engineering, National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC), and Vision Net who ensure that networking, financial data, and day-to-day operations are maintained. SMT's workforce and partnerships will be critical in deployment, implementation, installation, and ensuring the proposed project is timely built, maintained and sustained.

Blackfoot and SMT have a long history of complying, and will continue to comply, with fair labor, skilled and equitable workforce, job quality objectives, civil rights and non-discrimination laws. Thus, both SMT and Blackfoot are technically qualified and capable of carrying out the Project in a competent manner, which will include utilizing appropriately skilled and credentialed workforce.

In summary, Project constructs new middle file fiber when connected to existing fiber facilities creates 365 mile fiber ring. Project facilitates deployment of affordable, reliable broadband services to more than 9,600 currently unserved and underserved areas enabling consumers to directly connect with Blackfoot and SMT networks, and provides carriers and other ISPs (including mobile wireless providers)

with new middle-mile capacity to serve their customers.

Level of Need

A description of the level of need in the proposed service area(s), including but not limited to communities considered unserved and/or underserved in the proposed service area(s), discussion of the competitive landscape in the area, variations among service areas if there are any, or the general economic conditions in the proposed funded service area.

This response is limited to 12000 characters as an open field narrative.

Blackfoot Communications and Southern Montana Telephone (collectively the "Applicant") are both Montana-based rural telephone companies that have been providing voice and broadband services to rural Western Montana for decades. As actively engaged service providers, they are uniquely positioned to understand the current state of broadband availability as well as broadband needs in the communities they serve as well as the surrounding areas.

The Sapphire Ring Project proposed by the companies will positively affect 42 communities covering six counties in Western Montana by creating a regional fiber ring. This ring will significantly increase reliability, redundancy and access for thousands of consumers living in Western Montana. The availability of additional middle-mile backhaul will also ensure that the Applicant's retail broadband pricing remains affordable.

Today, there are no redundant solutions to protect rural communities impacted by the proposed project from isolation in the event of an infrastructure cut or outage. The lack of route diversity and redundancy has national security, public safety and economic impacts on consumers, businesses, anchor institutions and competitive providers serving in the project area.

The Applicant is aware that Charter and Lumen have some network facilities serving portions of the proposed service area (in addition to the Applicants). However, no single provider or combination of providers has a fiber ring architecture that provides redundancy or resiliency in case of a fiber cut. As a result, the existing infrastructure leaves communities vulnerable and isolated from telecommunications and broadband services whenever there is a facilities interruption. Importantly, this region of Montana is vast, desolate and prone to extreme weather. Depending upon location and time of year, a fiber optic cable cut could take a significant amount of time to repair. The Sapphire Ring Project should significantly reduce outages by offering a ring network architecture.

In addition to redundancy concerns, existing infrastructure is unable to support increasing demands associated with broadband especially as demand increases over time. Upon award of a grant, the Applicant will make available middle-mile capacity on the Sapphire Ring to Charter, Lumen, fixed wireless ISPs, mobile wireless companies and any other requesting provider. This will afford those

providers a level of network redundancy and resiliency that does not exist today.
Further, the Applicant currently provides fiber-based backhaul to the three national mobile wireless providers. They have repeatedly expressed concern to the Applicant about the lack of fiber backhaul facilities in the affected areas.
Moreover, the National Institute of Health – Rocky Mountain Laboratory previously has expressed to the Applicant the need for a geographically diverse fiber route to its facility in Hamilton, MT. The Sapphire Ring Project would provide the NIH with a geographically diverse fiber route.

When reviewing the NTIA "Indicators of Broadband Need" map, the Applicant notes that most of the affected areas, apart from Missoula and portions of Hamilton, do not meet the definition of served under the NOFO. In fact, the NTIA map clearly indicates all areas along the proposed Sapphire Ring Project, except the two communities mentioned above, have high indicators of broadband need as demonstrated by median speed tests and broadband adoption. The Project will facilitate deployment of broadband service to more than 9,600 locations that will be within 1,000 feet of the Project's middle mile fiber. Of these 9,600 locations, 5,810 are currently unserved and 3,822 are underserved. Awarding a grant to fund the Sapphire Ring Project will increase access to unserved and underserved locations and others by improving service reliability, providing new wholesale options, supporting Fiber-to-the-Premises ("FTTP") projects that are currently underway, and future proofing access for decades to come. As indicated in the attached letters of support, there is significant support from stakeholders for the Applicant's plan to build a regional fiber ring bringing reliability and access to broadband.

Not only will the project improve resiliency, redundancy, and reliability, but it will support vulnerable populations. According to welfareinfo.org Montana's average poverty rate is 14.4%. The median poverty rate for the proposed project areas is 15.9%, which is greater than the United States official poverty rate of 11.4%. Significant portions of consumers affected by the Sapphire Ring Project are living in some level of poverty.

Publicschoolreview.com identifies 38% of Montana public school households qualify for free or reduced school lunch which is further informed by the Montana Office of Public Instruction data indicating that 42% of meals served qualify. The Applicant conservatively estimates 15.9% of consumers are eligible for Lifeline, and/or Affordable Connectivity Program benefits supporting low-income consumers consistent with the median poverty range. In addition, the proposed project will also benefit an area identified by the CDC as a socially vulnerable area.

If awarded, the project will improve broadband access for consumers and anchor institutions that serve them by providing access to Gigabit solutions once FTTP projects are complete. In addition, to supporting current FTTP projects the project will provide access to competitive providers by introducing a redundant, cost-effective, transport solution that supports their service offerings in the affected areas.
The competitive landscape is nonexistent in several of the affected areas. The most rural, unserved, and underserved, portions of the affected areas offer a single viable fixed broadband option. Other

affected areas have access to satellite, fixed wireless, cable and at least one wireline provider. With that said, no provider currently offers ubiquitous access to broadband at the levels required by NTIA to be considered served even in those areas with access to many competitive solutions.

Importantly, the Applicant was recently awarded Rural Digital Opportunity Funds ("RDOF") within some areas of the proposed service area. The Sapphire Ring Project will support the Applicant's RDOF projects by providing reliable, redundant, middle-mile fiber backhaul. Importantly, an NTIA middle-mile award for back-haul will reduce the Applicant's overall costs to provide service in its RDOF areas, ensuring affordable broadband prices for consumers.

The Applicant is working with all three national wireless companies to identify areas where transport and redundancy could be forthcoming to gauge their interest. At least two have verbally expressed interest in locations along the proposed Sapphire Ring Project route. In addition, the Applicant has a multi-decade relationship with a regional transport provider who is supportive of the project as evidenced in the attached letters of support.

The Sapphire Ring Project is the most cost-effective means to deliver redundant, resilient, and reliable service to rural Western Montana. Fiber-based solutions help future proof networks and will provide all stakeholders access to services they need for decades to come.

State Collaboration Acknowledgement

NTIA strongly encourages prospective non-state applicants to coordinate and consult with the State Broadband Office or other coordinating body located in the jurisdiction in which the eligible entity proposes to deploy middle mile infrastructure to ensure that the proposal is consistent with the state's broadband plan and priorities. Please confirm collaboration and consultation.

Do you confirm collaboration and consultation with the appropriate organization?

Yes

State and Local Collaboration Narrative

Please provide information on the applicant's coordination with applicable State, Territory, Tribal, and local governments, including their awareness of the proposed project and any potential impact to respective service areas; and

Information regarding the applicant's involvement and coordination with community organizations or other relevant partners in the proposed service area.

This response is limited to 6000 characters as an open field narrative.

The proposed Sapphire Ring Project will provide a resilient middle mile network supporting unserved and underserved communities, state and local governments, anchor institutions, first responders, other ISPs (including mobile wireless providers) and consumers (collectively referred to as "Stakeholders"). Today, large portions of the affected areas do not have access to affordable middle mile backhaul services. Those that do have access to middle mile, do not have it available on a fiber ring configuration, making them subject to outages and other network interruptions. The Sapphire Ring Project will ensure all Stakeholders have affordable, reliable and redundant access to broadband.

The Applicant is actively engaging and coordinating with Stakeholders to ensure they are aware of the proposed Sapphire Ring Project Applicant has worked with Montana's United State Senators, Jon Tester and Steve Daines, the State of Montana's Department of Administration (which encompasses Montana's state broadband office), Beaverhead, Ravalli, Missoula, and Granite County Commissioners, schools, hospitals, rural fire departments, EMT services, Chambers of Commerce, wireless providers, competitive carriers, and concerned citizens. Coordination and outreach has been done via in person meetings, over the phone, remote meetings, e-mail and regular updates are planned on the Applicants' public facing website. As a result of its outreach, the Applicant has more than 30 letters of support from Stakeholders expressing their enthusiastic support for its plans in the proposed project area. These letters are included in the application.

Will the project connect middle mile infrastructure to last mile networks that provide or plan to provide broadband service to households in unserved areas?

Yes

Is the project connecting non-contiguous trust lands?

No

Do you commit to offering wholesale broadband service at reasonable rates on a carrier-neutral basis?

Yes

The eligible entity adopts fiscally sustainable middle mile strategies. This strategy should be described in the Budget Narrative.

Do you attest to this?

Yes

The eligible entity commits to offering non-discriminatory interconnect to terrestrial and wireless last mile broadband providers and any other party making a bona fide request. This policy will be described in the Interconnect Policy.

Do you attest to this?

Yes

_____

The eligible entity identifies specific terrestrial and wireless last mile broadband providers that have(i) expressed written interest in interconnecting with middle mile infrastructure planned to be deployed by the eligible entity; and ii) demonstrated sustainable business plans or adequate funding sources with respect to such interconnection. This may be demonstrated in the Level of Need narrative of the Exec Summary.

Do you attest to this?

Yes

_____

The eligible entity has identified supplemental investments or in-kind support (such as waived franchise or permitting fees) that will accelerate the completion of the planned project. Such acceleration may be described in the Project Timeline narrative.

Do you attest to this?

Yes

_____

The eligible entity has demonstrated that the middle mile infrastructure will benefit national security interests of the United States and the Department of Defense. The benefits may be explained in the Benefitting National Security Interests Narrative.

Do you attest to this?

Yes

_____

Please describe:

The Sapphire Ring Project will create a fiber ring circling the Sapphire Mountains connecting the Missoula, Bitterroot, and Big Hole valleys. The project will provide additional middle mile transport capacity in addition to redundancy, geographical diversity and resiliency of connected telecommunications networks providing critical broadband services, commercial telecommunications services, as well as offering protection of critical national infrastructure, public safety, and other physical infrastructure sensor and monitoring. The finished regional fiber ring will protect over 42

communities using a combination of existing fiber and newly constructed fiber. The affected area includes 70 anchor institutions, of which many are dedicated to national security and public safety. The anchor institutions will all benefit from the redundancy, diversity and resiliency provided by the proposed fiber ring. Many of the affected anchor institutions are within one-thousand feet of the planned fiber route, making physical connection to the Sapphire Ring relatively easy. The Applicant will offer affordable, gigabit-capable broadband services to all requesting anchor institutions. Importantly, Sapphire Ring Project could provide the National Institute of Health – Rocky Mountain Laboratory with a geographically diverse fiber route.

Project Duration

Number of Years

3

Project Timeline Narrative

The narrative requires the Applicant to describe a project with critical path, including key milestones for implementation of the project, preparations, and risk factors; and a capital investment schedule evidencing that the applicant will complete build-out and the initiation of service within five years of the date on which the entity receives the grant and will meet interim buildout requirements set forth herein and in any other binding document.
If the project is able to be accelerated with supplemental investments or in-kind support to meet a statutory purpose, this should be explained.

This response is limited to 6000 characters as an open field narrative.

The Sapphire Ring Project is a middle mile fiber project that will complete a regional fiber optic ring connecting the Missoula, Bitterroot, and Big Hole Valleys. The project will be split into four phases. Estimated completion of the entire project is year-end 2025.

Phase 1 - The first phase will install fiber infrastructure down Montana's Southern Bitterroot Valley from Hamilton, MT to Sula, MT. Phase 1 construction will be managed by Blackfoot. The goal of 2022 and early 2023 is to complete all preconstruction tasks and be ready to start construction in Spring 2023. Beginning in early summer of 2022 Blackfoot started to engineer, stake, and permit Phase 1 of the project. Necessary environmental permits will be applied for by the end of summer 2022 with hopeful receipt of the permits throughout 2023 and possibly extending to early 2024. Phase 1 plans for additional permitting time due to National Forest requirements regarding the environment and cultural sites of impact. Blackfoot has relationships with three regional contractors that can complete this phase on time. This project will be sent to bid during the winter of 2022/2023 and awarded within

one month of response submittal deadline. In addition, to planning for additional permitting time Blackfoot understands the supply chain constraints and is planning accordingly. Blackfoot will purchase OSP supplies and fiber as soon as the grant is awarded. Current lead times for fiber may be beyond 1 year. Electronics for DWDM and routed transport will be ordered in Spring of 2023. Expected lead times on electronic equipment are six to nine months. Spring of 2023, Blackfoot will start prepping for a full summer construction season. Construction will commence April 2023 and will be complete in Fall 2024. All aspects of the phase - Construction, Network Systems, and splicing are scheduled to be completed by end of the year 2024.

Phase 2 - The second phase will install fiber infrastructure down Montana's Northern Bitterroot Valley from Missoula, MT to Hamilton, MT. Phase 2 construction will be managed by Blackfoot. The goal of 2023 is to complete all preconstruction tasks and be ready to start construction in Spring 2024. Beginning in early summer of 2023 Blackfoot will start to engineer, stake, and permit Phase 2 of the project. Necessary environmental permits will be applied for early summer 2023 with hopeful receipt of the permits throughout 2023 and possibly early 2024. Blackfoot has relationships with three regional contractors that can complete this phase on time. This project will be sent to bid in fall 2023 and awarded within 1 month of response submittal deadline. Blackfoot understands the supply chain constraints and is planning accordingly. Blackfoot's plan is to purchase OSP supplies and fiber as soon as the grant is awarded. Current lead times for fiber may be beyond 1 year. Electronics for DWDM and routed transport will be ordered in fall of 2023. Expected lead times on electronic equipment is six to nine months. Construction will commence April 2024 and will be complete in Fall 2024. All aspects of the phase - Construction, Network Systems, and splicing are scheduled to be completed by end of the year 2024.

Phase 3 - The third phase will install fiber infrastructure from Sula, MT to Big Hole Battlefield near Wisdom, MT. Phase 3 construction will be managed by SMT. The goal of 2023 is to complete all preconstruction tasks and be ready to start construction in Spring 2024. Beginning in early summer of 2023 SMT will start to engineer, stake, and permit Phase 3 of the project. Necessary environmental permits will be applied for early summer 2023 with hopeful receipt of the permits throughout 2023 and possibly early 2024. SMT has relationships with regional contractors that can complete this phase on time. This project will be sent to bid in fall 2023 and awarded within one month of response submittal deadline. SMT understands the supply chain constraints and is planning accordingly. SMT's plan is to purchase OSP supplies and fiber as soon as the grant is awarded. Current lead times for fiber may be beyond 1 year. Electronics for the project will be ordered in fall of 2023. Expected lead times on electronic equipment is six to nine months. Construction will commence April 2024 and will be complete in Fall 2024. All aspects of the phase - Construction, Network Systems, and splicing are scheduled to be completed by end of the year 2024

Phase 4 - The fourth phase will install fiber infrastructure from Anaconda, MT to Rocker, MT. Phase 4 construction will be managed by Blackfoot. The goal of 2024 is to complete all preconstruction tasks and be ready to start construction in Spring 2025. Beginning in early summer of 2024 Blackfoot will

start to engineer, stake, and permit phase two of the project. Necessary environmental permits will be applied for early summer 2024 with hopeful receipt of the permits throughout 2024 and possibly early 2025. Blackfoot has relationships with three regional contractors that can complete this phase on time. This project will be sent to bid in fall 2024 and awarded within 1 month of response submittal deadline. Blackfoot understands the supply chain constraints and is planning accordingly. Blackfoot's plan is to purchase OSP supplies and fiber as soon as the grant is awarded. Current lead times for fiber may be beyond 1 year. Electronics for DWDM and routed transport will be ordered in fall of 2024. Expected lead times on electronic equipment is six to nine months. Construction will commence April 2025 and will be complete in Fall 2025. All aspects of the phase - Construction, Network Systems, and splicing are scheduled to be completed by end of the year 2025.

Project Timeline File

Applicants are asked to upload a timeline which will denote key milestones for implementation of the project, including but not limited to field survey, network design, equipment/material procurement, environmental assessment, permitting, construction, network testing, network activation and completion.

1-09-29-2022 12-47-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.8 Project Timeline.xlsx

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Is an extension being requested?

No

Special Rules for Tribal Governments and Native Entities

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act permits the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with Tribal governments and Native entities, to waive, or specify alternative requirements, in connection with most directives governing the MMG Program if the Assistant Secretary finds that waiver or modification of the requirement is necessary for (a) the effective delivery and administration of middle mile grants to Tribal governments or (b) the construction, improvement, or acquisition of middle mile infrastructure on trust land.

Is a waiver or alternative requirements requested?

No

Fair Labor Practices

Applicants must have a demonstrated record of and plans to be in compliance with federal labor and employment laws as described in III.H in the NOFO. This will help ensure that projects are carried out

in accordance with the law, assist NTIA in ensuring that a prospective awardee is capable of carrying out activities funded by an award in a competent manner in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws; and promote the effective and efficient completion of high-quality middle mile broadband infrastructure projects by ensuring a reliable supply of skilled workers and minimizing disruptive and costly delays.

This response is limited to 6000 characters as an open field narrative.

Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. ("Blackfoot") and its subrecipient Southern Montana Telephone Company ("SMT"), collectively referred to as "Applicant", have historically complied with applicable federal, state and local labor and employment laws. Additionally, Applicant ensures its contractors and subcontractors are compliant.

Please see Blackfoot's Officer Certification attached below which includes detailed information demonstrating the Applicants' ability to comply with the laws as described in III.H of the NOFO and how it will carry out the activities funded by an award in a compliant, effective and efficient manner. Not only is Applicant compliant, it retains a highly trained and skilled workforce and maintains excellent relationships with a number of local contractors. Applicants' workforce and contractors have a demonstrated ability to build and maintain high-quality middle mile broadband infrastructure as discussed in detail in Applicants' Organizational Details Narrative above. The combination of Applicants' reliable highly skilled workforce, to include contractors, will ensure completion of the project without disruption or costly delays.

As mentioned above and in the Officer Certification, Applicant has historically been in compliance with federal, state and local labor laws. The Applicant will continue its track record of compliance by continuing to follow federal and state employment laws, as well as its own policies and procedures, while always staying abreast of changing and new employment laws. The Applicant's management team oversees the day-to-day compliance activity by following its written policies and procedures, which includes compliance policies directly related to federal and state employment and labor laws. Those same management teams ensure that any contractor complies with federal and state labor laws as well.

As described in its Highly Skilled Work Force narrative, Applicant ensures the use of an appropriately skilled workforce through apprenticeships/internships and/or training and development programs that serve all workers; and requires contactors to provide evidence that their work force is appropriately skilled at the time of the bidding process. Use of apprenticeships, internships, mentoring, and training are all ways Applicant creates successful and equitable on-ramps into broadband-related jobs and maintains job quality for new and incumbent workers. Applicant continually engages with employees and contractors to make sure employee voices are heard. Such engagement is done through the Applicant's intranet, staff meetings, the labor-management safety committee, regular check-ins, and all employee meetings. Important to note, the Applicant has a collective bargaining agreement with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Local 768, and takes pride in its strong relationship with the Union.

Applicant will not have non-union internal workforce engaged in the Sapphire Ring project. Applicant

is unable to provided detailed job titles, job descriptions, or exact workforce size until the bidding process for contractors and subcontractors are complete.

Officer Certification

In order for NTIA to evaluate an applicant's demonstrated record of and plans to be in compliance with federal labor and employment laws, each applicant must provide examples of items described in III.H in the NOFO. Applicants are asked to upload a Certification from an Officer/Director-level employee (or equivalent) of the applicant evidencing consistent past compliance with federal labor and employment laws by the applicant, as well as contractors and subcontractors.

1-09-22-2022 03-58-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.12.1.1 Fair Labor Certification.pdf

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Highly Skilled Workforce

To ensure that applicants have the technical and operational capacity to carry out the project, applicants must submit a plan for ensuring that the project workforce will be an appropriately skilled and credentialed workforce (including by the applicant and each of its contractors and subcontractors). The plan for a highly skilled workforce should include the information described in III.I in the NOFO.

This response is limited to 6
000 characters as an open field narrative.

Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc. ("Blackfoot") and its subrecipient Southern Montana Telephone Company ("SMT"), collectively referred to as "Applicant", have a highly skilled directly employed workforce, and utilize highly skilled subcontracted workforce as well.

Applicant ensures the use of an appropriately skilled workforce through apprenticeships/internships and/or training programs that serve all workers and requires contactors to provide evidence that their work force is appropriately skilled at the time of the bidding process. Applicant ensures that its directly employed workforce is appropriately skilled by making sure that all members working on a project have appropriate credentials, licenses, and occupational training prior to work. Applicant anticipates the workforce assigned to the NTIA Middle Mile Grant ("MMG") project may be made up of a combination of direct employed unionized, and contracted, workforce to complete the proposed MMG project. Tentatively, Applicant expects the contracted work force to come from the following companies Diversified Solutions, Inc., VECI, Rocky Mountain Contractors and JKL Associates, Inc.

Applicant has an established safety program to ensure its employees are properly trained in workplace safety techniques and to reinforce those safety rules at appropriate time intervals. Many fiber

construction contractors also have internal safety programs to help ensure the health and wellbeing of their employees. In addition to its existing safety program, Applicant will ensure that its current workplace labor/management safety committee remains active and authorized to raise health and safety concerns associated with the proposed project. This committee will continue to be accessible to employees of Applicant, the Contractor(s), and Subcontractor(s), and it will continue to have the authority to make recommendations to Applicant's management team regarding corrective actions pertaining to any health and safety concerns associated with the proposed NTIA MMG project.

To ensure that NTIA MMG project work is at a high standard onsite inspectors are responsible for reviewing the work for quality, and notifying Applicants of safety concerns. The onsite inspector follows crews and makes sure infrastructure is placed to standards. Inspector opens hand holes and vaults to visually inspect work. Fiber splicer finishes with OTDR reading to make sure fiber is not damaged and all splices meet minimum loss standards. Work is not considered complete until all standards are met. Any work quality or safety issues are reported to Applicant management and are addressed accordingly.

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Advancing Workforce Development

A skilled workforce is critical to meeting infrastructure buildout timelines under the Infrastructure Act and connecting households across the country to reliable, affordable, high-speed broadband. A well-trained workforce will also allow for the safe deployment of sustainable networks. To meet the workforce needs of the MMG Program, applicants must make appropriate investments to develop a skilled, diverse workforce. Each applicant must provide as part of its application examples of items described in III.J in the NOFO.

This response is limited to 6000 characters as an open field narrative.

Applicant is committed to ensuring its workforce is well trained. Applicant has more than 65-years of proven experience building and operating communications networks. A has over 180 employees that contribute to building, operating, and maintaining broadband networks throughout Montana and Idaho. These employees will provide the managerial, engineering, customer service, finance, installation and support and all the other services necessary to design, build, maintain, and operate a network that will provide broadband and other services relying on the proposed middle mile project.

Applicant has an existing highly skilled, diverse, workforce and access to a known pool of contractors with proven highly skilled workforces. Applicant plans to utilize existing and contract workforces to

complete the NTIA Middle Mile Grant ("MMG") program work if awarded. To maintain its highly skilled workforce Applicant offers access to industry led training, in house training, and tuition reimbursement for all employees seeking to advance their knowledge.

To create on ramps to broadband jobs, Applicant works collaboratively with local high schools and institutions of higher education. Applicant has a strong history of employing interns and apprentices to provide on ramps. Not only is the Applicant an active community partner, it also provides educational scholarships and opportunities for new generations to become educated and learn about broadband opportunities. Community events supported by Applicant tend to focus on education and those populations who are typically under represented.

Applicant offers "quality jobs" as defined in the NOFO and is committed to hiring local. Applicant's employees are similar to the faces of our region. Applicant employee population includes women in executive and leadership roles, individuals of color, individuals from the LGBTQI+ community, etc. Applicant is proud to be an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.

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Climate Resiliency

Please demonstrate that the applicant has sufficiently accounted for current and future weather- and climate-related risks to new MMG Program infrastructure projects. In particular, each applicant should clearly demonstrate how it is conducting the items listed in III.K in the NOFO.

This response is limited to 6000 characters as an open field narrative.

The Sapphire Ring Project affects 42 communities, portions of six counties, in Western Montana. The project features a buried regional fiber ring. The ring protected facilities will provide redundancy and mitigate climate risks/outages. The proposed project route areas are designated by FEMA's National Risk Index as being very low or relatively low risk. The entire project route should be subject to an initial and annual hazard screening for climate or weather-related risks.
Based on the FEMA National Risk Index weather and climate hazards that are most important to account for in the project area are extreme temperatures, wildfires, extreme snowfall, and earthquakes. Applicant believes the afore mentioned hazards represent weather and climate risks to infrastructure using Middle Mile Grant ("MMG") program funds for the 20 years following deployment. To avoid or mitigate the risks associated with weather and climate hazards the Applicant will deploy infrastructure that is rated to withstand extreme temperatures and earthquakes. Applicant will also deploy infrastructure in maintained easements along roadways minimizing the risk associated with

wildfires and in conduit to mitigate the risk associated with potential flooding caused by unseasonal melting of extreme snowfall.

Applicant will conduct annual hazard screenings by reviewing NOAA and FEMA tools to gain an understanding of evolving risks. Applicant intends to use the tools identified below, at a minimum, when conducting the annual hazard screenings. After reviewing the tools, the deployed infrastructure will then be evaluated against newly identified hazards to ensure infrastructure is rated to withstand identified hazards. In the event, that the infrastructure is not rated to withstand an identified hazard Applicant will identify potential solutions to avoid or mitigate the newly identified hazard and deploy as appropriate.

Initial Hazard Screening:

Climate Risks

- Extreme Heat
- No FEMA rating
  - Average Highest Temperature (Missoula)
    - 85F
  - Record High (Missoula)
    - 107F (2007)
- Extreme Cold
  - FEMA Cold Wave – Relatively High to Very High
  - Average Lowest Temperature (Missoula)
    - 18F
  - Record Low
    - -33F (1957)
- Wildfires
  - https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/wildfire
  - Relatively Moderate to Relatively High Risk
- Large Snow Events
  - Valleys and Mountains
  - No active electronics cabinets in inaccessible areas.
    - Active Cabinets are on year-round accessible County, State, or Federal highways
  - Splices are all contained in underground handholes while cable is running through hard-to-reach winter areas. For most other splices they are also underground
  - Average Snowfall
    - Missoula MT
      - 40 inches
    - Wisdom MT
      - 32 inches
    - Anaconda MT
      - 57 inches
- Earthquakes
  - Seismic Risk Category II

- o FEMA Risk – Relatively Low
- o Link From FEMA
- ☐ https://www.seismicmaps.org/

Infrastructure Review

- Fiber
- o 72, 144, 288, and 432 Count Fiber
- o ICEA S-87-640 and Telcordia GR-20 CORE Issue 4 Compliant
- o Rated for deployments in operating environments
- ☐ –40◦C to +75◦C
- Environmental Controlled Cabinets
- o Clearfield Fieldsmart Cabinets
- o Technical specifications compliant with
- ☐ GR-487
- o Temperature Controlled for Extreme Hot and Cold Weather
- ☐ Industrial Climate Heat Exchanger
- Working Outside Temperature Range
- –40◦C to +60◦C

The following equipment will be installed in the environmentally controlled cabinets specified above.

- DWDM
- o Nokia 1830 PSS
- ☐ DWDM Node
- o Technical specifications complaint with
- ☐ Telcordia GR-1089-CORE
- ☐ UL/CSA 60950 – 1
- Telcordia GR-63 Zone-4
- o Rated for deployments in operating environments
- ☐ 5◦C to 40◦C
- Router
- o Cisco NCS540 Large Density
- o Technical specifications complaint with
- ☐ Telcordia GR-63-CORE
- ☐ Telcordia GR-1089-CORE
- ☐ ETS/EN 300 119 Part 4
- ☐ ETS/EN 300 019 - Storage: Class 1.2, Transportation: Class 2.3, In-Use/Operational: Class 3.2
- ☐ ETS/EN 300 753
- ☐ UL 60950-1 Second Edition
- o Rated for deployments in operating environments
- ☐ –40◦C to +65◦C up to 300 m
- ☐ –40◦C to +60◦C up to 1800 m
- ☐ –40◦C to +50◦C up to 3900 m

Screening and Mitigation Plan:

Applicant's initial hazard screening formed the basis for its mitigation/avoidance plan. Applicant determined its biggest risk is associated with wildfires.
Screening frequency:
Annual hazard screenings starting on June 1st of each year over the life of the Sapphire Ring Project.
Geographic Scope of Screening:
The screenings will include the full geographic area covered by the proposed project because of the relatively diverse nature of the project area.
Tools used to identify weather/climate hazards:
Map | National Risk Index (fema.gov) – This index provides risk levels attributable to different categories such as drought, earthquake, wildfire, etc.
https://www.seismicmaps.org/ - This tool provides insight into risk associated with earthquakes.
https://hazards.fema.gov/nri/wildfire - This provides risk index associated with wildfires.
https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/seasonal.php?lead=2 – This is NOAA's long-range precipitation and temperature outlook.
https://www.drought.gov/ - Tool provides insight into possible wildfire risk.
https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/wcc/home/snowClimateMonitoring/snowpack - Tool provides insight into snowpack in the area providing insight into flood and fire risk.
Hazard Avoidance and/or Mitigation:
To avoid or mitigate the risks associated with weather and climate hazards the Applicant will deploy infrastructure that is rated to withstand extreme temperatures and earthquakes. Applicant will also deploy buried infrastructure in maintained easements along roadways minimizing the risk associated with wildfires and in conduit to mitigate the risk associated with potential flooding caused by unseasonal melting of extreme snowfall.

Civil Rights and Nondiscrimination Law Compliance

Prior to distributing any MMG Program funding to a prospective awardee, NTIA will require the prospective awardee to agree, by contract or other binding commitment, to abide by the non-discrimination requirements set forth in III.J in the NOFO.

Do you agree to abide by the non-discrimination requirements?

Yes

Certification of Technical Capability

Each applicant must supply a certification attesting that it is technically qualified to complete and operate the proposed project.

2-09-22-2022 04-05-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.1 Technical Capabilities Certification.pdf

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Interconnect Policy

The Applicant must describe in detail the nondiscrimination, interconnection, and network management practices that would be adopted for the project facilities. The Applicant should describe how it will comply with nondiscrimination and interconnection obligations, particularly with connectivity to the public Internet and physical interconnection for the exchange of traffic. In addition to describing network management practices, the Applicant should disclose any practices in place to block access to illegal or harmful content.

This response is limited to 6000 characters as an open field narrative.

Today, Applicant provides open access to wholesale services on its network at nondiscriminatory and commercially reasonable rates, terms and conditions to dozens of wholesale and carrier customers. Applicant will continue to make available its network built with any NTIA MMG award to wholesale and carrier customers on nondiscriminatory commercially reasonable rates, terms and conditions. Applicants' nondiscriminatory open access includes interconnection for the exchange of traffic, transport, and connectivity to the public internet.

Applicant does not block access or otherwise prevent access to lawful content, applications, service, or non-harmful devices. Applicant does not degrade or impair access to lawful traffic based on content, application, service, user, or use of a non-harmful device. Applicant does not engage in any practice that directly or indirectly favors some traffic over other traffic, including through use of techniques such as traffic shaping, prioritization, or resource reservation, to benefit an affiliate. Applicant does not engage in any practice that directly or indirectly favors some traffic over other traffic, including through use of techniques such as traffic shaping, prioritization, or resource reservation, in exchange for consideration, monetary or otherwise. Applicant does not block or rate control specific protocols or protocol ports, modify protocol fields in ways not prescribed by the protocol standard or otherwise inhibit or favor certain applications or classes of applications. Applicant does not restrict the types of devices that connect to the network. If a device creates issues on Applicant's network, Applicant will request its removal or disconnect service to protect the rest of the network. Applicant uses the latest generally accepted best practices to protect content, service, and reliability, including but not limited to the deployment of software and hardware that blocks harmful content and notifies Applicant of security incidents.

Applicant engineers its network, and undersubscribes its network, so the network very rarely experiences congestion. In the unlikely event of congestion, Applicant utilizes standards-based, best practice methodologies. Such methodologies include QoS, queuing, buffering and traffic engineering. Applicant engineers its network so that, in the event of congestion, network management traffic is the last to go down. This practice minimizes the impact on the end user's experience and enables Applicant in the event of congestion-to communicate with network elements, troubleshoot, and maintain its

network. To minimize the impact on the end-user's experience, Applicant also engineers its network so traffic that supports a service that is sensitive to delay-e.g. voice, MPLS, and emulated circuits-is some of the last traffic impacted by congestion. Despite not imposing usage limits on end-users, Applicant's network very rarely experiences congestion.

Technical Overview

Please describe targeted last mile service objectives, including last mile service provider letters of commitment, agreements, or contracts; and a description of the proposed service offerings, including the pricing of the services to be offered over the proposed facility.

This response is limited to 6000 characters as an open field narrative.

Targeted last mile service objectives that will be supported by the proposed project include Fiber-to-the-Premise ("FTTP")-based, affordable broadband access for retail consumers as well as wholesale middle mile transport services for other ISPs.

Blackfoot currently plans to offer the following broadband services to residential customers throughout a large portion of the affected area: 1) "Smart Fiber" at 100 Mbps download/100 Mbps upload for $52.00/month; 2) "Smart Fiber +" at 500 Mbps download/100 Mbps upload for $72.00/month; and 3) "Smart Fiber Gig" at 1000 Mbps download/500 Mbps upload for $122.00/month.

Blackfoot plans to offer business customers the following offerings: 1) "Business Internet Essential" 200 Mbps download/100 Mbps upload for $70.00/month; 2) "Business Internet Enhanced" 500 Mbps download/100 Mbps upload for $100.00/month; and 3) "Business Internet Ultra" at 1000 Mbps download/500 Mbps upload for $125.00.

None of Blackfoot's broadband product offerings will be subject to usage or data caps. Qualifying residential consumers will also be eligible to receive Lifeline (up to -$9.25) and Affordable Connectivity Program (up to -$30.00) credits to reduce the cost of their broadband services.

SMT offers competitive prices for both residential and business customers. SMT plans to offer the following rates for both business and residential customers throughout portions of the affected area: 1) 5 Mbps download/ 1.5 Mbps upload for $60.00/month; 2) 10 Mbps download/ 10 Mbps upload for $75.00/month; 3) 50 Mbps download / 50 Mbps upload for $95.00/month; 3) 100 Mbps download/100 Mbps upload for $110.00/month; 4) 250 Mbps download / 250 Mbps upload for $125.00/month; and 1000 Mbps download/ 1000 Mbps upload for $150.00/month. SMT includes the router and all equipment for the prices listed and no installation charges apply if the customer installs service during initial construction.

None of SMT's broadband product offerings will be subject to usage or data caps. Qualifying

residential consumers will also be eligible to receive Lifeline (up to -$9.25) and Affordable Connectivity Program (up to -$30.00) credits to reduce the cost of their broadband services.

In addition to these retail offerings, the Applicant plans to offer middle mile transport services to wholesale customers on commercially reasonable rates, terms and conditions. The Applicant currently sells wholesale transport services up to 100 GBPs and will make similar services available across the Sapphire Ring. The Applicant has had conversations with the three, national mobile wireless carriers and they have all expressed interest in purchasing middle mile transport within the affected areas. The Applicant has also had conversations with other ISPs that have expressed interest in purchasing middle mile transport as well as wholesale ISP services from the Applicant in the affected areas.

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Competitive Landscape

The Applicant should describe existing middle mile offerings in the area, if any, including competitor data if applicable. This should include a description of the proposed service offerings, including the pricing and technology of the services to be offered over the proposed facility. Where possible, Applicant's project should be able to demonstrate a decline in middle mile costs that are likely to flow through to consumer broadband prices.

This response is limited to 6000 characters as an open field narrative.

The Sapphire Ring Project creates a new regional fiber ring offering additional middle mile capacity as well as geographical diversity for the Missoula, Bitterroot, and Big Hole Valleys. The geographic scope of the project means there can be vastly different competitive landscapes when considering the affected region. While some providers have limited middle-mile transport facilities in some of the more densely populated areas in the affected areas, no provider offers geographical route diversity nor ring protection that will be offered by this project. The project will be constructed in four distinct phases, so Applicant addresses the competitive landscape for each of the phases separately as follows.

See response to Section 2.2. for detailed retail broadband service offerings and prices.

Phase 1 - The first phase will install fiber infrastructure down Montana's Southern Bitterroot Valley from Hamilton, MT to Sula, MT. Portions of the Phase 1 area do not currently have access to middle mile facilities. Some portions of the Phase 1 area have very limited middle mile services provided by Lumen (formerly CenturyLink). Lumen does not have available middle mile capacity to provide access to service providers wishing to offer broadband requested by consumers in this area. In fact, the facilities are so constrained in the area that Lumen has even had to request temporary use of a failover middle mile circuit purchased from it, by Blackfoot, in order to deploy services supporting wildfire response. Middle mile services provided by Lumen in this area are not protected so if there are cut facilities customers beyond the cut are left without service. In fact, earlier this summer, Lumen's facilities between Hamilton, MT and Darby, MT experienced a cut leaving consumers in Darby through

Alta without service for over two days. That means consumers and businesses in that area were isolated and unable to access emergency services or conduct business for the duration of the outage.

Currently, Applicant is able to purchase some limited TDM services from Lumen in this area. Lumen may have some fiber in this area but if it does, it has not made fiber-based transport available to Applicant. If this grant application is approved, the Applicant will make all manner of fiber-based transport services available to any requesting provider upon reasonable terms and conditions.

Phase 2 - The second phase will install fiber infrastructure throughout the northern portion of the Bitterroot Valley from Missoula, MT to Hamilton, MT. The Phase 2 area has some limited middle mile services available from Lumen and Charter. Similar to the phase 1 area, Lumen's facilities are very constrained making access options limited for middle mile services. As for Charter, Applicant's experience with their middle mile facilities is inconsistent at best. Sometimes they will indicate they have capacity available but only at high prices. Neither Lumen nor Charter offer a fiber-ring configuration for this area. That said, Lumen and Charter may have some geographical diversity on some of the routes in this area. Middle Mile technology available in this area ranges from copper-based TDM to WAVE fiber-based services to the extent offered and available. If this grant application is approved, the Applicant will make all manner of fiber-based transport services available to any requesting provider upon reasonable terms and conditions.

Phase 3 - The third phase will install fiber infrastructure from Sula, MT to Wisdom, MT. There are large portions of this area that do not currently have any fiber-based services. SMT has some limited middle mile facilities in this area. Importantly, the middle mile facilities SMT does have are not ring-protected, making their network susceptible to prolonged outages in the event of a fiber cut.

Current technology available in the portions of Phase 3 that have middle mile facilities are a combination of fiber and copper-based TDM and Ethernet. If this grant application is approved, the Applicant will make all manner of fiber-based transport services available to any requesting provider upon reasonable terms and conditions.

Phase 4 - The fourth phase will install fiber infrastructure from Anaconda, MT to Rocker, MT. The Phase 4 area has very limited middle mile services provided by Lumen and Charter. Neither Lumen nor Charter offer a ring-protected solution in this area, but with two providers available there is some limited redundancy available to those parties taking advantage of a provider redundancy approach. Middle Mile technology available in this area ranges from copper-based TDM to WAVE fiber-based services to the extent offered and available. If this grant application is approved, the Applicant will make all manner of fiber-based transport services available to any requesting provider upon reasonable terms and conditions.

Since Applicant will provide a competitive middle mile offering in the areas where only one or two providers have limited fiber assets today, Applicant expects there will be more middle mile services

available at prices that are less than they are today. In addition, Applicant believes cost savings will come in the form of reduced out of service time, which will ultimately reduce human costs and economic losses. As a result, retail customers will experience a service quality improvement, providing more value for the services than what they are receiving today.

Applicant provides a supplemental attachment providing insight into competitive last mile offerings in the project region.

Applicants are encouraged to upload supplemental documentation.

2-09-28-2022 06-38-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.3.2 Competitive Landscape Supplemental Information - DRAFT Not Loaded.docx

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Type of technology to be used in proposal:
Fiber Optic Technology

Each applicant of an award to build middle mile infrastructure using fiber optic technology shall certify that the proposed project, upon completion, will include direct interconnection facilities that will facilitate the provision of lit broadband service, at speeds not less than 1 Gigabit per second for downloads and 1 Gigabit per second for uploads to anchor institutions located within 1,000 feet of the middle mile infrastructure, as detailed in the Template CAI below.

Do you agree to certify to the above?

Yes

Upload Template CAI. Required for Fiber Optic Technology, optional for Wireless or Other.

2-09-28-2022 06-40-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.5.2.1 Community Anchor Institution.xlsx, 2-04-05-2023 01-35-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.5.2.1 Community Anchor Institution 2023.03.24.xlsx

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An eligible entity applying for a middle mile grant may seek, and the Assistant Secretary may grant, a waiver of the requirements set out in the previous paragraph, in full or in part, to the extent the eligible entity demonstrates that the requirement is not technically or economically feasible.

Do you plan to apply for a waiver? If yes, please attach the waiver application in the Application Workspace, the Application Information section, Required Documents under Required Document Question 4 "Additional Waiver Upload".

No

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Network Route Maps

Applicants should provide a physical network map that includes the following (if applicable):

The Project Area and those unserved and underserved areas which it will enable.
Applicant‘s pre-existing service area that demonstrates current service levels.
The physical path of the network‘s transmission medium (e.g., backbone and lateral cable routes, microwave links), transmission type, technology, operating bandwidth, capacity (e.g., dark vs. lit strand count), and cable placement (e.g., aerial, burial) should be displayed.
Points of interconnection (purely passive and non-environmentally controlled nodes, e.g., splice points are optional):Provider Facilities
Collocation Facilities
Private Interconnection Points with partnering service provider/private network

Wireless towers and associated coverage areas.
Anchor institutions within 1,000 feet, if desired.
Additionally, the maps should delineate between network and facilities that are:Part of the Applicant's/key partners' existing network;
Proposed as part of this project;
Leased from a third party;
Utilized under some alternative arrangement; or
Relevant to interconnection with either Last Mile or Middle Mile service providers.

PLEASE NOTE: Only ESRI Shapefiles will be accepted and uploaded.

2-09-28-2022 06-41-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.6 Project Shapefile.zip

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Data Submission Specification

There is a template “Upload Template Data Submission Specification” which shall be uploaded. Applicants must complete the table with information for all interconnection points proposed for the network. This table has three required fields: Point Name, Latitude and Longitude. This should accommodate all of the points of interconnection (passive, non-environmentally controlled points of interconnection, e.g., splice points, may be excluded), collocation facilities, central offices, head ends, and other centralized facilities, network access points to Last Mile service providers, Internet peering points, and towers.

2-09-28-2022 06-42-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.7 Data Submission Specification.xlsx

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Network Diagram

The Applicant must provide a high-level network diagram to be uploaded for the project that is a representation of the network, capacities, and facilities. The diagram must clearly denote which of the network elements already exist. The diagram should show:

The links between the network nodes. The types of facilities used in connecting the network elements (fiber, wireless microwave, etc.).

The points of interconnection and collocation facilities, including Internet peering points, access to local exchange carriers, central offices, or cable head ends.

The proposed aggregation node facilities that will provide the egress point(s) from the broadband backbone to the networks of the selected service provider(s), named Last Mile service providers, and the selected named Internet Service Provider(s) in the new infrastructure.

The Applicant should show which technologies are used and include bandwidth capacity constraints.

2-09-22-2022 04-07-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.8 Network Logical Diagram.pdf, 2-04-05-2023 01-35-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.8 Network Logical Diagram 2023.03.24.pdf

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Environmental Narrative

Any project-related activity that may adversely affect the environment must not be undertaken prior to the completion of the environmental review process prescribed by NTIA. Doing so may jeopardize consideration of the application.

All Applicants for MMG projects must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Endangered Species Act, and other applicable environmental regulations.

Please provide a service-area environmental description that describes the physical project area and its surroundings (e.g., disturbed or developed land vs. open space; adjacent natural resources, such as rivers, wetlands, or forestlands; and any protected lands or resources in or near the project area), including site photographs and aerial photographs (e.g., Google Earth or Google Maps images), if the project includes construction and/or ground disturbing activities.

This response is limited to 12000 characters as an open field narrative with image files to be uploaded.

The Sapphire Ring Project consists of existing, buried fiber optic cable and includes the construction of three new, separate routes that primarily consist of buried fiber optic cable be placed within the road right of way in Western Montana for a total of approximately 137 miles. Upon grant award, Applicant will commence with the detailed field engineering to finalize the routing of fiber optic cable, determine construction methodology, and determine locations for splice points along each of the proposed routes. This field engineering will be conducted to maximize the time efficiency and cost effectiveness of the project, while also minimizing the ecological impact.

Phase 1 of the overall project will involve construction from Hamilton to Sula, Phase 2 includes a route from Missoula to Hamilton, Phase 3 contains fiber construction from Sula to Battlefield, and Phase 4 will complete the route from Anaconda to Rocker. These various phases will connect the proposed fiber routes to existing fiber optic cable assets owned by Blackfoot and Southern Montana Telephone ("SMT"), a sub-recipient of the grant, to complete a diverse and survivable middle mile fiber ring. Blackfoot anticipates that the proposed fiber optic cable along each of these routes will be constructed in previously disturbed road rights-of-way.

The majority of the underground cable will be installed at a three-foot depth with a static plow. As the plow works, it raises the soil on the ground surface which later settles back into place. If the cable cannot be plowed into the ground for cultural, environmental, or other reasons, a directional bored will typically be used to install the cable from 36 to 48 inches deep. Directional bores will be used to install the cable beneath existing roads. Bores have the capability of installing cable deeper than four feet to avoid cultural resources, if necessary. Drill machinery follows a predetermined bore path that can range anywhere in depth from 3 ft. to 4 ft., then the hole is made larger for a pipe or conduit to be placed, and the cable can be guided through. This method has no impact on soils or ground surface above the cable.

All effects from this project will be temporary/minor. The direct area of potential effect (APE) includes a 50 ft. wide buffer from the center of the proposed buried cable line, for a total of 100 ft. wide inventory area. A one-mile record search around the project areas with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) needs to be completed prior to survey activities to review any known cultural resources within the direct APE.

The surrounding land is generally undeveloped aside from towns along the State Highway 93 corridor. The terrain is mountainous and hilly with forested areas, wetlands, and farmland. The route could cross sections of the Bitterroot National Forest, Deerlodge National Forest, and various state properties. The routes cross multiple waterways including; Andrews, Bass, Camp, Dick, Fern, Lost Horse, Mill, Rock, Rye, Skalkaho, Sweeney, and Warm Springs Creeks. Most notably, the route along State Route 93

crosses the Bitterroot River multiple times. The proposed construction route for crossing the river and creeks will depend on existing lines and bridge statuses. Boring underneath waterways is preferred, as it will avoid impacts to the creeks and river.

The project will not cross tribal lands. A right-of-way utility permit will be obtained from the Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT), which is required for any highway construction, including utility installation. The USDA Forest Service needs to be contacted to obtain a Special-use Permit. The Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC) requires a Joint Application to obtain a 310 permit for any stream or river crossing. In addition, Applicant will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, National Historic Preservation Act, and Endangered Species Act as required by this program. Any additional required state and national permits would be obtained prior to construction.

Applicant has included file uploads containing supplementary information for the Environmental Narrative, such as maps and pictures of the proposed route.

Upload Map Images:

2-09-28-2022 06-43-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.9.1 - Supplemental Upload for Environmental Narrative SMT.pdf, 2-09-28-2022 06-44-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.9.1 - Supplemental Upload for Environmental Narrative.pdf

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Template Table of Funded Partners and Unfunded Collaborators

List all funded and unfunded project collaborators, including partners, subrecipients, match providers, major contractors/supplies, details on role/scope of work for project. A fillable Template of Funded Partners and Unfunded Collaborators can be found in found in the MMG ZIP folder.

3-09-28-2022 06-56-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.2 Table of Funded Part. and Unfunded Collaborators.xlsx, 3-04-05-2023 01-36-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.2 Table of Funded Part. and Unfunded Collaborators 2023.3.24.xlsx

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Certificate of Operational Capability

Each applicant must supply a certification from an officer-level employee (or individual of comparable rank) attesting to the applicant's operational capability to complete and operate the proposed project.

If the applicant has provided a voice and/or broadband internet access service, it must supply a certification from an officer-level employee (or individual of comparable rank) attesting that it has filed FCC Form 477s and the Broadband DATA Act submission, if applicable, to the extent required

during this time period and otherwise complied with the Commission's rules and regulations. Alternatively, the applicant must explain any pending or completed enforcement action, civil litigation, or other matter in which it was alleged to have failed to comply with Commission rules or regulations.

If the applicant has operated only an electric transmission or distribution service, it must submit qualified operating or financial reports that it has filed with the relevant financial institution for the relevant time period along with a certification that the submission is a true and accurate copy of the reports that were provided to the relevant financial institution.

If applicable, the applicant must submit a certification from an officer-level employee (or individual of comparable rank) that is has operated a middle mile broadband network for at least two years or that it is a wholly owned subsidiary of such an entity and must specify the number of years the applicant or its parent company has been operating.

3-09-22-2022 04-10-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.3 Certificate of Operational Capability.pdf

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Certification of Financial Capability

Each applicant must supply a certification from an officer-level employee (or individual of comparable rank) attesting that it is financially qualified to meet the obligations associated with a project, that they will have available funds for all project costs that exceed the amount of the grant, and that they will comply with all MMG Program requirements, including service milestones.

1-09-22-2022 04-11-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.1 Certification of Financial Capabilities.pdf

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Letter of Credit

During the application process, each applicant must submit a letter from a bank meeting eligibility requirements consistent with those set forth in 47 C.F.R. § 54.804(c)(2) committing to issue an irrevocable stand-by letter of credit, in the required form, to the applicant. The letter shall at a minimum provide the dollar amount of credit offered and the issuing bank's agreement to follow the terms and conditions of NTIA's model letter of credit. NTIA shall publish on its website a model letter of credit substantially similar to the model letter of credit established by the Federal Communications Commission in connection with the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF - Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Order, 35 FCC Rcd at 773-77, Appx. C.).

NTIA will ensure, prior to issuing a middle mile grant award, that each eligible entity obtains an acceptable, irrevocable standby letter of credit in a value of no less than 25 percent of the award

amount.

Each eligible entity shall provide with its letter of credit an opinion letter from its legal counsel clearly stating, subject only to customary assumptions, limitations, and qualifications, that in a proceeding under Title 11 of the United States Code, 11 U.S.C. § 101 et seq. (the "Bankruptcy Code"), the bankruptcy court would not treat the letter of credit or proceeds of the letter of credit as property of the winning bidder's bankruptcy estate under Section 541 of the Bankruptcy Code.

1-09-29-2022 12-23-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.2 Letter of Commitment.pdf

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Audited Financial Statement (Previous 3 Years)

Each applicant shall submit financial statements from the most recent fiscal year that are audited by an independent certified public accountant. If the applicant is not audited in the ordinary course of business, in lieu of submitting audited financial statements it must submit unaudited financial statements from the three prior fiscal years and certify that it will provide financial statements from the three prior fiscal years that are audited by an independent certified public accountant by an NTIA specified deadline.

***You must provide 3 years of audited financial statements.**

1-09-30-2022 01-38-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.3 Audited Financials 12.31.2021and20 - Confidential Blackfoot.pdf, 1-09-30-2022 01-37-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.3 Audited Financials 12.31.20and19 - Confidential Blackfoot.pdf, 1-09-30-2022 01-37-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.3 Audited Financials 12.31.20and19 - Confidential SMT.pdf, 1-09-30-2022 01-38-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.3 Audited Financials 12.31.2021and20 - Confidential SMT.pdf

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Historical Financial Statements (Previous 3 Years)

Each applicant shall submit financial statements from the three prior fiscal years that are audited by an independent certified public accountant. If the applicant is not audited in the ordinary course of business, in lieu of submitting audited financial statements it must submit unaudited financial statements from the three prior fiscal years and certify that it will provide financial statements from the three prior fiscal years that are audited by an independent certified public accountant by an NTIA specified deadline.

***You must provide 3 years of historical financial statements.**

1-09-30-2022 01-38-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.3 Audited Financials 12.31.20and19 - Confidential Blackfoot.pdf, 1-09-30-2022 01-38-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.3 Audited Financials 12.31.20and19 - Confidential SMT.pdf, 1-09-30-2022 01-38-

Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.3 Audited Financials 12.31.2021and20 - Confidential Blackfoot.pdf, 1-09-30-2022 01-38-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.3 Audited Financials 12.31.2021and20 - Confidential SMT.pdf

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Budget Narrative

Applicants will create and submit a budget narrative that adequately describes all proposed activities and costs for their grant-funded project. Applicants must complete the file template, fill in all required information, and upload the file
. The file must be uploaded as a Word file, and not converted to a PDF. You can find additional guidance in the MMG Application Guidance.

3-09-28-2022 06-59-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.1 - Budget Narrative.docx, 3-10-18-2022 09-34-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.1 - Budget Narrative.docx, 3-10-19-2022 11-15-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.1 - Budget Narrative.docx, 3-04-05-2023 01-37-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.1 - Budget Narrative 2023.03.24.docx

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Template Detailed Budget Justification

The Detailed Budget Justification spreadsheet must reflect the cost categories that appear on the SF-424 and SF-424C and include itemized calculations for each cost placed under those categories. A fillable Template Detailed Budget Justification can be found in found in the MMG ZIP folder.

3-09-28-2022 06-59-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.2 - Detailed Budget Justification.xlsx, 3-04-05-2023 01-11-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.2 - Detailed Budget Justification 2023.03.24.xlsx

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Any other funding provided for this project?

No

Template Pro Forma

Pro forma financial projection and analysis related to the project's sustainability, inclusive of subscriber (e.g., last mile network connections, other wholesale services), across an eight-year forecast period. A fillable Template Pro Forms can be found in the MMG ZIP folder.

3-09-30-2022 11-43-Blackfoot Telephone Cooperative, Inc.-GRN-000480.3 Pro Forma.xlsx

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