

Project Information

Company: Volt Broadband, LLC

Project Description

General Info

Project #: 162
Project Name: Richland and West Carroll Parish FTTH Project
Total Project Cost: 9,827,088.97
Total project cost per prospective broadband recipient: 5,049.89
Infrastructure cost per prospective broadband recipient: 5,049.89
Number of households to be served: 9350
Number of businesses to be served: 1650
GUMBO cost per prospective broadband recipient: 4,039.91
Number of GUMBO households to be served: 1502
Number of GUMBO businesses to be served: 444
General Location/Parishes: Richland
West Carroll
Base Speed (Minimum Download/Upload): 100Mbps/100 Mbps
Supported Scalability Speeds (Minimum Download/Upload): 1Gbps/1Gbps

Qualifications and Experience:

Provide the following details:

- Number of years the applicant has provided internet services;
- A history of the number of households and consumers, by year of service, to which the applicant has provided broadband internet access, as well as the current number of households to which broadband internet access (at least 25:3 Mbps) is offered;
- The number of completed internet service infrastructure projects funded, in part, through federal or state grant programs, prior to the date of application submittal;
- Whether the applicant has ever participated in an internet service infrastructure project funded, in part, through federal or state grant programs, and if so, for each project, the nature and impact of the project, the role of the applicant, the total cost of the project, and the dollar amount of federal or state grant funding;
- The number of penalties paid by the applicant, a subsidiary or affiliate of the applicant, or the holding company of the applicant, relative to internet service infrastructure projects funded, in part, through federal or state grant programs, prior to the date of application submittal; and
- The number of times the applicant, a subsidiary or affiliate of the applicant, or the holding company of the applicant has ever been a defendant in any federal or state criminal proceeding or civil litigation as a result of its participation in an internet service infrastructure project funded, in part, through federal or state grant programs, prior to the date of application submittal

- Volt Broadband, LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative created to establish and maintain affordable high-speed fiber internet service for the members of the Cooperative. - As a newly formed entity, Volt Broadband has not paid any penalties relative to an internet service infrastructure project. Volt Broadband has not been a defendant in any federal or state criminal proceedings. - Volt Broadband is partnering with Conexon, LLC to build this fiber network project across NELPCO's entire system. See attached on Conexon's qualifications and experience.

Financial Background:

- Provide five years of financial statements, pro forma statements, or financial audits to ensure financial and organizational strength regarding the ability of the applicant to successfully meet the terms of the grant requirements and the ability to meet the potential repayment of grant funds. If the applicant has been in business for less than five years, provide documentation for the number of years in business
- Indicate whether the applicant, a subsidiary or affiliate of the applicant, or the holding company of the applicant has ever filed for bankruptcy

- Volt Broadband, LLC is a start-up entity with no historical financial statements. - As a subsidiary of Northeast LA Power Cooperative, Inc. Attached are Audit Reports for years 2016-2020 - Volt Broadband, LLC nor Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative, Inc has never filed for bankruptcy.

Partnerships:

Provide the identity of any partners or affiliates if the applicant is proposing a project for which the applicant affirms that a formalized agreement or letter of support exists between the provider and one or more unaffiliated partners where the partner is one of the following:

- a separate private provider of broadband service, requiring a formalized agreement; or
- a nonprofit or not-for-profit, or a for-profit subsidiary of either, and the applicant is:
 - being allowed access and use of the partner's infrastructure, on special terms and conditions designed to facilitate the provision of broadband services in unserved areas, requiring a formalized agreement;
 - utilizing a matching financial and/or in-kind contribution provided by one or more partners, requiring a formalized agreement; or
 - a parish, municipality, or school board, or any instrumentality thereof, may qualify as a nonprofit for the purposes of the GUMBO grant program. Letters of support by a parish, municipality, or school board, or any instrumentality thereof, supporting an application may be submitted as part of an application. A letter of support does not require a formalized agreement.
- Provide a brief narrative explaining how the partnership or affiliation will facilitate deployment and reduce cost per prospective broadband recipient. For applications or project areas where the nonprofit or not-for-profit partner provides only matching financial support, that information can be documented in the budget section within the relevant application or project area.

The Volt Broadband team received a letter of support from the Richland Parish Chamber of Commerce.

For work being performed by Hudson Initiative or Veterans Initiative qualified applicants or contractors, provide documentation and/or a formalized agreement.

Volt Broadband with Conexon will strongly encourage contractors to seek out and hire qualified applicants affiliated with the Hudson and Veterans Initiative.

Project Area

Assessment of the Current Level of Broadband Access in the Proposed Deployment Area

Describe the current level of service within the area and provide the data source or methodology used to capture this information. Raw data may be submitted as part of the assessment. If data is available to support differences between advertised and transmission speeds, applicants may also submit applications for areas where transmission speeds are less than 25:3 Mbps.

Open-sourced FCC 477 provider data from June 2020 was used to query for the blocks of eligible locations. The attached zip file of map graphics show the availability of various types of internet service – fiber, DSL, cable, satellite, & fixed wireless – color shaded by provider. The raw data utilized to make these map graphics is also provided. The broadband assessment includes what type of Internet service is available across all GUMBO eligible FCC blocks of the parish and what companies offer that service. Each map shows one type of service broken down by all the providers that offer that service. The assessment does not include service tier information due to the greatest resolution of pricing information we could attain is by zip code. Zip codes can include a large geographic area, including both rural and more densely populated areas; and service tier offerings can vary in these very different areas. Included in the mapping data is the speed test data supplied by ConnectLA for Morehouse Parish. The applicant wishes to apply for all residential and commercial meter locations outside of RDOF awarded blocks. The speed test data largely shows evidence of insufficient service offerings by incumbent providers, however the applicant is an electric cooperative and will not leave out any meter locations regardless of a qualifying speed test. If an incumbent provider chooses to challenge the blocks, the applicant is fully ready to either remove the block from the GUMBO request or facilitate more evidence to the contrary.

Services

Provide a description of service options to be provided:

Service Name	Upload/download speed	Date of 1st Availability	Data Cap	# of recipients	Price
Standard Service	100/100	contingent upon awarded GUMBO funds	none	110000	59.95
Gigabit Service	1000/1000	contingent upon awarded GUMBO funds	none	11000	79.95

Marketing

Provide documentation for applicant engagement to connect consumers with community education forums, multimedia advertising, and marketing programs.

See attached Marketing Strategy Document. Volt Broadband launched its website December 27 and has received 76 pre-registrations in Richland and West Carroll parishes in the last 48 hours.

Adoption

Provide documentation that shows low-income household service offerings, digital equity or literacy support, or programs or partnerships to provide these services. The applicant should also indicate current participation in, or plans to, accept the federal Lifeline subsidy.

Due to Volt Broadband being a recipient of Rural Digital Opportunity Funds, Volt Broadband has filed to be an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier. This status would allow for Volt Broadband to participate in programs such as Lifeline and the Affordable Connectivity Fund. These programs allow for low-income households to qualify for broadband cost assistance so as to not disrupt service.

Community Support

Evidence of support for the project from citizens, local government, businesses, and institutions in the community, including letters of correspondence from citizens, local government, businesses, and institutions in the community that supports the project

Volt Broadband received support from the Richland Parish Chamber of Commerce.

Local Workforce

Documentation of a workforce plan prioritizing the hiring of local, Louisiana resident workers, to include a signed letter of intent with a post-secondary educational institution that is a member of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, containing an obligation upon the applicant, and contractors or subcontractors of the applicant, to put forth a good-faith effort to hire, when possible, recent graduates of broadband-related programs.

NELPCO/Volt Broadband strives to establish relationships with local community members at all levels to ensure the adoption and deployment of the broadband infrastructure project is successful and reaches as many unserved members of the community as possible. One such partnership that was established for the GUMBO projects is with Louisiana's Community and Technical Colleges (LCTC). In the 2019/2020 school year alone, Louisiana's Community and Technical Colleges (LCTCS) graduated 33,428 students and managed 1,951 business partnerships. NELPCO/Volt Broadband is partnering with this highly capable education institute to create a pipeline from workforce programs and technical jobs skills training to meeting the construction needs of this broadband deployment. By coordinating and facilitating conversations with contractors and administrators/directors at the community college level, NELPCO/Volt Broadband is better able to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the manpower and technical skills required for deployment. LCTCS can use this information to tailor their workforce training and education programs to the current and the upcoming needs. Potential students will benefit from a better understanding of the job availability post-program completion. Through this partnership, local Louisiana labor is utilized as much as possible, benefiting the local economy, and keeping deployment costs down.

Technical Report

Reporting Requirements

Explain in technical detail the technologies to be used in the proposed project and the broadband transmission speeds offered to prospective broadband recipients as a result of the project. If it would be impracticable, because of geography, topography, or excessive cost to design a broadband infrastructure project that would deliver 100:100 Mbps, the applicant must provide an explanation. Transmission speeds of 100:20 Mbps are the minimum allowable under this grant program.

See Technical Report

Explain the scalability of the broadband infrastructure to be deployed to meet future bandwidth needs.

See Technical Report

Provide a proposed construction timeline and duration of the deployment project period. The deployment project period is the time from award of the grant agreement to the time that service is available to the targeted prospective broadband recipients under the grant. Describe estimated timeline, deployment roll-out and number of end-users to be served in each phase (10 percent, 35 percent, 60 percent, 85 percent, 100 percent).

See Project Plan_Timeline_Richland_W_Carroll

X **Wired Infrastructure** **Fixed Wireless**

Wired Infrastructure Deployment Reporting Requirements

Describe the general design of the project and deployment plan and include the following:

- Explanation of the existing networks and equipment to be used for the project. If assets are owned by another entity, explain how they will be used for this project and, if applicable, provide a copy of the agreement between the applicant and the owner.
- Total number of miles of project infrastructure deployment, and the number of miles of project infrastructure deployment accounted for by preexisting infrastructure
- Detailed explanation of how the new or upgraded infrastructure will serve the prospective broadband recipients. In the case of the installation or upgrade of a specific site infrastructure, such as a point of presence or fiber hut (fiber), pedestal (cable), or a remote exchange/DSLAM (DSL), the applicant must include:
 - The number of prospective broadband recipients that will be served by that site infrastructure
 - The distance from the specific site infrastructure such as a POP, pedestal, or DSLAM to the end user(s) and the expected broadband speed that will be effectively delivered
- Detailed description of the design work needed for deployment, such as, but not limited to, pole work, acquiring or updating easements, and/or property acquisition.

• Explanation of the existing networks and equipment to be used for the project. If assets are owned by another entity, explain how they will be used for this project and, if applicable, provide a copy of the agreement between the applicant and the owner. – The existing electrical network that the fiber network will follow and utilize is owned and operated by the applicant’s parent company. • Total number of miles of project infrastructure deployment, and the number of miles of project infrastructure deployment accounted for by preexisting infrastructure – 2,300 miles • Detailed explanation of how the new or upgraded infrastructure will serve the prospective broadband recipients. In the case of the installation or upgrade of a specific site infrastructure, such as a point of presence or fiber hut (fiber), pedestal (cable), or a remote exchange/DSLAM (DSL), the applicant must include: • The number of prospective broadband recipients that will be served by that site infrastructure – every “point of presence” – in this case, it is a fiber hut – number of subscribers largely depends on the electric feeder networks. That number varies depending on the substation/feeder network as the fiber will follow those networks. • The distance from the specific site infrastructure such as a POP, pedestal, or DSLAM to the end user(s) and the expected broadband speed that will be effectively delivered – there will be no change in broadband speeds in terms of distance from the hut. Conexon designs up to 55,000 feet before using long-range optics to alleviate optical light levels greater than -24 dB. • Detailed description of the design work needed for deployment, such as, but not limited to, pole work, acquiring or updating easements, and/or property acquisition. - See Budget Narrative for details on Make-Ready Engineering and Construction. See “ROW_Easement_Acquisition” for acquiring and updating easements. • Detailed Business Continuity or Disaster Recovery Plan – See attached “Detailed Business Continuity or Disaster Recovery Plan”

Wired Assets

Existing Network	Existing Equipment	New/Upgraded Infrastructure	Installation Type	Num of Recipients	Avg Distance in Miles Between Prospective Recipients	Expected Speed
0	0	0	FTTH	1931	6.200	1000

Budget

Budget

The project budget should reflect all eligible project costs to be funded through the GUMBO Grant Program. Additionally, the project budget should include the minimum provider funding match of at least 20%, any local government funding match from a parish, municipality, and/or school board, or any instrumentality thereof, and the requested GUMBO Grant Program funding.

- See attached Detailed Budget Breakdown - See attached 10-year pro forma document

Proof of Funding Availability

Provide a signed letter of funding availability from each source of funds committed for the project. If loan or other grant funds are pledged, a loan/grant commitment letter from each source of funds must be included. Should an applicant be an awardee of Universal Service, Connect American Phase II, Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, or other federal or non-federal funds for the deployment of broadband service, the applicant shall attest as to whether or not the applicant's GUMBO application and associated project's buildout is dependent upon such awarded funds.

Since Volt Broadband, LLC is a subsidiary of Northeast LA Power Cooperative, Inc, the Louisiana Public Service Commission granted a letter of non-opposition to NELPCO in reference to the funding of the project. The funding will be provided through CoBank, the letter from CoBank is attached.