

Project Information

Company: CenturyLink of Louisiana, LLC

Project Description

General Info

Project #: 169
Project Name: Amended Ville Platte
Total Project Cost: 522,150.00
Total project cost per prospective broadband recipient: 1,475.00
Infrastructure cost per prospective broadband recipient: 1,475.00
Number of households to be served: 354
Number of businesses to be served: 0
GUMBO cost per prospective broadband recipient: 177.00
Number of GUMBO households to be served: 354
Number of GUMBO businesses to be served: 0
General Location/Parishes: Evangeline
Base Speed (Minimum Download/Upload): 200Mbps/200Mbps to 2Gbps/2Gbps
Supported Scalability Speeds (Minimum Download/Upload): 2Gbps/2Gbps to 10Gbps/10Gbps

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

CenturyLink is a subsidiary of Lumen Technologies, Inc. (Lumen). Lumen is a Louisiana-based global communications and IT services company enabling millions of customers to transform their businesses and lives through innovative technology solutions. Lumen is the 2nd largest U.S. communications provider to global enterprise customers, offering network services and data systems management to customers in the U.S. and more than 60 countries. The company provides broadband, voice, video, data, and manages the services over its 450,000 global route miles of fiber, and has a total of over 4.5 million broadband subscribers. CenturyLink has provided internet services to customers for more than two decades. CenturyLink currently offers at least 25/3 Mbps service to more than 35,000 locations in Louisiana, and continually works to expand both the number of Louisianans that can receive broadband service and the speeds that CenturyLink offers. CenturyLink's commitment to bringing broadband service to rural portions of Louisiana is demonstrated by its acceptance of the FCC's Connect America Fund Phase 2 (CAF II), using that funding to connect broadband services to more than 24,000 Louisiana locations over the last seven years, and winning more than 7,600 Louisiana locations in the recent FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) auction. CenturyLink has completed hundreds of internet service infrastructure projects in Louisiana and thousands of projects nationwide through the FCC's CAF II program. CenturyLink has also completed dozens of state-funded internet service infrastructure projects across the country. CenturyLink has participated in the FCC's CAF II and won locations in the RDOF auction in states across the country, has completed state-funded broadband grant projects in several states, and continually builds internally funded broadband projects in 36 states where CenturyLink is an Incumbent Local Exchange Provider. CenturyLink has met its grant obligations and has not paid any penalties related to any internet service infrastructure project funded through federal or state grant programs. CenturyLink has not 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 through federal or state grant programs. On August 3, 2021, Apollo Global Management, Inc. and Lumen Technologies, Inc. announced a definitive agreement for Apollo to acquire the assets of Lumen's Incumbent Local Exchange Companies ("ILEC") currently operating under the CenturyLink brands. The new company, Connect Holding II LLC, will operate under the name, Brightspeed. After the transaction closes, Brightspeed will take over all CenturyLink ILEC operations in Louisiana (and 19 other states), including its buildout and other obligations under the GUMBO Grant Program. Brightspeed is committed to bringing advanced broadband services to consumers and businesses in Louisiana. The central premise behind the acquisition of Lumen's ILEC assets in Louisiana and elsewhere is the significant, multi-year upgrade of the CenturyLink network, including the expanded deployment of state-of-the-art 1G+ capable network equipment ("XGSPON") and the fiber necessary to deliver fiber-to-the-premises ("FTTP") service directly to customers' homes and businesses. This investment will provide for a more competitive set of broadband services, which will significantly improve customers' choice and service experience, and vastly improve access to the internet and the multitude of educational, healthcare, business, and entertainment opportunities that broadband services will offer. Brightspeed (Connect Holding) is well-funded by Apollo, and the business and operations teams have the managerial and technical ability to execute on its FTTP network deployment and operational plans. Brightspeed is committed to leveraging the latest technology and innovations as part of its commitment to build state-of-the-art fiber networks in Louisiana through the GUMBO Grant Program. A copy of the Letter Assurance of Intent to Comply with State Broadband Grant Project Commitments is attached below.

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

Copies of the last five years of Lumen Technologies, Inc. annual 10-K Report, pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, are attached below and are also available at <https://ir.lumen.com/financials/sec-filings/default.aspx>. Neither Lumen Technologies, Inc. nor a subsidiary, affiliate, etc. has 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.

No partnerships for this application

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

Lumen recognizes that creating sustainable supplier diversity participation in the supply chain is critically important. As such, Lumen strives to actively identify, develop and use a diverse supplier base including minority-owned, women-owned, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, disabled, small business, small disadvantaged, veteran-owned, service disabled veteran-owned, HUBZone and 8(a) small business enterprises (collectively Diverse Suppliers) as the source for goods and services. Importantly, Lumen maintains agreements with more than 3,000 Diverse Suppliers. As a prime contractor to local, state and federal governments, Lumen is required to identify and provide whenever practicable the opportunity for Diverse Suppliers to compete for business. Any purchase in excess of \$100,000 annually that is being competitively bid is expected to include at least two (2) Diverse Supplier in all bid process. If the Diverse Supplier does not receive the award of business, justification of why they were not selected must be captured in writing. Every employee of Lumen and particularly those employees involved in the evaluation, selection, or approval of suppliers are responsible for the ongoing effectiveness and success of this initiative. All Lumen personnel will demonstrate good faith effort to involve Diverse vendors. Lumen's Tier II Supplier Diversity process has been established to encourage the use of small, minority, women, veteran, LGBT, Disabled and serviced-disabled veteran business owners by our strategic suppliers (Tier I). Tier II reporting is to ensure our prime suppliers are utilizing diverse suppliers to complete subcontracting plan requirements. On a quarterly basis, Lumen's strategic suppliers are requested to report their Tier II diverse spend electronically via our Tier II Reporting System. Lumen is proud of the awards we have won over the years for our ongoing commitment to diversity and small business development: • 2019 NaVOBA Best Corporation for Veteran's Business Enterprises • 2019 National Corporation of the Year Nomination-National Minority Supplier Development Council • 2017

National Corporation of the Year Nomination-National Minority Supplier Development Council • 2017 Nomination National Corporation of Year-Women's Business Enterprise National Council and National Minority Supplier Development Council • 2016 Indian Country Business Advocate – Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber • 2016 Circle of Excellence - Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce • 2015 Nomination National Corporation of Year – Women's Business Enterprise National Council and National Minority Supplier Development Council

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.

In the area we are proposing to build to, we have identified through a combination of (1) FCC 477 census block-level speed data and (2) Lumen's internal database of speeds provided to each home, that there exist 354 locations in our proposed area that (a) do not currently have download/upload speeds of 25/3 Mbps and (b) have not been recently been awarded broadband funding according to RDOF data. These 354 underserved locations are the locations that we intend to build to. Attached in Mapping and Descriptions is a kml and xlsx containing the individual address points of locations where service will be made available through the grant build. All addresses include a location ID along with latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates. The average distance in miles between prospective broadband recipients is 1.219 miles, which is calculated by measuring the average of the average distance from each address to every other address in the project area.

Services

Provide a description of service options to be provided:

Service Name	Upload/download speed	Date of 1st Availability	Data Cap	# of recipients	Price
200 Mbps	200Mbps/200Mbps	Estimated August 2023	None - Unlimited	354	72.00
1Gbps	940 Mbps (download)/880 Mbps (upload)	Estimated August 2023	None - Unlimited	354	92.00
500 Mbps	500 Mbps/500 Mbps	December 2023	None - Unlimited	354	120.00
2 Gbps	2 Gbps/2 Gbps	December 2023	None - Unlimited	354	0.00

Marketing

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

CenturyLink (or following the transaction close, Brightspeed) will utilize standard go-to-market plans for fiber-to-the-home launches. CenturyLink's local teams determine, based on the geography of the impacted households, the best method of marketing the launch. This could include direct mail, prelaunch website, dedicated website for Ville Platte and/or Evangeline Parish, yard signs, door hangers, press releases, and/or mobile marketing. Face to face marketing teams will be available to engage and educate prospects on Brightspeed internet product details and ordering processes. Community education forums may also be conducted through launch events where customers can ask questions and register for service. Customized joint marketing programs could be evaluated for applicability and mutual benefit.

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.

CenturyLink is a long-time provider of Lifeline services through the FCC Lifeline program and provides either the voice or the broadband credit to qualifying customers. CenturyLink also participates in the federal Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program and plans to participate in the new federal Affordable Connectivity Program, which will replace EBB during 2022.

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

See attached for a letter of support from Commissioner Mike Francis, an elected member of the Louisiana Public Service Commission representing District 4.

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.

CenturyLink is a Louisiana-based company with thousands of employees in the state. CenturyLink supports many secondary schools in Louisiana with its Technology for Teachers program. CenturyLink also has the number one rated Internship program (by Wayup) and recruits local post-secondary students in Louisiana as part of this program (see here for more details: <https://jobs.lumen.com/global/en/university-relations>). See attached for a letter from W. Dennis Epps (Special Advisor to the President, Louisiana Community & Technical College System) documenting Lumen Technologies and Brightspeed's active discussion, planning, and partnership with the Louisiana Community & Technical College System and Louisiana Delta Community College in developing workforce training programs.

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.

The technology that will be used is XGSPON fiber-to-the-premise. XGSPON is a 10 gigabit per second (GBPS or G) symmetrical Passive Optical Network delivered via a dedicated fiber loop to the customers' premises. This grant award will allow CenturyLink to provide high-speed symmetrical (upload and download) data up to 2 Gig (2 Gbps) transported on a single fiber from the ILEC central office (CO) to the customer's home or business. The XGSPON infrastructure eliminates the need for active electronics (and the associated power, real estate and maintenance costs) in the distribution plant.

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

The capabilities of a fiber or Optical Distribution Network (ODN) are essentially limitless, offering customers an extremely reliable medium that is resilient in the face of bad weather - there is no service fade. XGSPON is a state-of-the-art Passive Optical Network (PON) technology that could scale up to 10 gigabits per second (GBPS) for both upload and download (i.e., symmetrical) data speeds. Together these products will easily serve customers' needs for decades to come.

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).

Estimated start: Internal planning processes regarding network design are underway. Local Louisiana engineering and network planning will begin upon contract execution (if a grant is awarded). Dates of construction: Upon execution of the contract, CenturyLink's network planning team will create the project narrative for the Company's network implementation teams and that will be completed within 30 days. Once the project narrative is released CenturyLink's detailed engineering will begin, which includes design engineering and any other required permits. CenturyLink (or following the transaction close, Brightspeed) will make a best effort to complete the project 18 to 24 months after receiving the signed contract award. This schedule is subject to change and is dependent on many factors, including Acts of God, ROW/permitting, and/or procurement issues. Nonetheless, CenturyLink and Brightspeed leadership believe they have sufficient supplier and vendor diversity and purchasing power such that procurement delays should not arise.

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.

CenturyLink owns and operates the VLPLLAXA wire center which covers the extent of our proposed project area in Ville Platte, LA. The project would deploy a new Optical Distribution Network (ODN) consisting of an estimated 15.1 miles of new fiber. In addition, new Passive Optical Network (PON) equipment, including an Optical Line Terminal (OLT) and Fiber Distribution Frame (FDF), will also be installed. This new ODN and PON equipment will leverage existing assets (i.e., poles and wire center space) that are already serving an estimated 8.8k homes in the VLPLLAXA service area. With this new fiber-to-the-home infrastructure, high-speed symmetrical data up to 2 Gbps would be transported on a single fiber from the office/remote electronics to the home or premises. This infrastructure eliminates the need for active electronics (and the associated power, real estate and maintenance costs) in the distribution plant, depending on the distance from the Central Office/Remote and available feeder fibers. The site infrastructure will serve an estimated 354 prospective broadband recipients. This project will be connected to the internet via an existing CenturyLink fiber route from Ville Platte to Shreveport where it will connect to the Lumen national network that connects to national internet serving points.

Wired Assets

Existing Network	Existing Equipment	New/Upgraded Infrastructure	Installation Type	Num of Recipients	Avg Distance in Miles Between Prospective Recipients	Expected Speed
VLPLLAXA Wire Center	None	Fiber	Aerial / Buried	354	1.219	2Gbps/2Gbps

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.

An excel spreadsheet of the project budget is attached. The project is estimated to cost \$522,150.00, and we are requesting \$62,658.00 of those project costs to be funded through the GUMBO Grant Program. Thus, CenturyLink would be providing a funding match of 88%.

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.

Internally funded