

Project Information

Company: US Wifi LLC

Project Description

General Info

Project #: 188
Project Name: USwifi NCWPCSLLC 1059302
Total Project Cost: 185,110.00
Total project cost per prospective broadband recipient: 3,856.00
Infrastructure cost per prospective broadband recipient: 3,856.00
Number of households to be served: 138
Number of businesses to be served: 15
GUMBO cost per prospective broadband recipient: 1,209.00
Number of GUMBO households to be served: 44
Number of GUMBO businesses to be served: 4
General Location/Parishes: Ouachita
Base Speed (Minimum Download/Upload): 100:20 Mbps
Supported Scalability Speeds (Minimum Download/Upload): 100:100 Mbps

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

Since 2018, USwifi has provided internet services to over ninety satisfied Louisiana business and residential customers. The majority owner of USwifi, Randy Bailey, is also the President and CEO of Vanguard Towers, Inc., a company that has been constructing communication towers for all the major carriers since 1999. Vanguard towers constructed count numbers in the thousands. In the words of USwifi CIO and partner, Edward Dunn, "As a long-time group of technology companies, we were continuously asked, 'Why can't I get decent, affordable internet where I live?' We knew there were many people living in rural Louisiana in areas that were simply being ignored by the big internet providers and we just didn't think that was fair. So, our engineering team rolled up its sleeves, got to work, and re-imagined what internet service for rural areas could be." "We then brought that vision to life. We believe that where you choose to live or do business shouldn't be an obstacle to having fast, reliable internet services. We saw a problem, so we solved it. It's what we here at USwifi do best – deliver solutions to the people and businesses of Louisiana that need it the most." The GUMBO Grant program is the first instance that USwifi has pursued a federal or state grant or loan program. When the state created the GUMBO Grant program, the USwifi team wanted on-board. They wanted to make a real difference in the rural parishes they served. An article on the November 8, 2021, Channel 12 News reported that according to the Federal Communication Commission there are nearly eight thousand unserved residents in Bossier Parish alone, with similar ratios in less populated parishes as well. Veeneeth Iyengar, the executive director of ConnectLA, stated, "Louisiana's goal is to have broadband service in all unserved areas of the state by 2029." USwifi is supremely confident that it can help meet that goal and deliver reliable, robust, high-speed internet services to multiple parishes years before the 2029 target. (Updated for view 1-27-22)

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

USwifi is providing three years of tax returns (all since its inception) and the most recent financial statement for 2021. Because the CEO of USwifi, Randy Bailey, is also the president and CEO of Vanguard Towers and Vanguard Towers is USwifi's financial partner, investor, and construction partner. We are providing an additional two years of tax returns from Vanguard Towers for a total of five years of financial information. The relationship between USwifi and Vanguard Towers is tightly coupled and symbiotic. USwifi enjoys the full financial support of Vanguard Towers. Neither USwifi nor Vanguard Towers has ever filed for bankruptcy, therefore, the state can be assured that USwifi can successfully meet the terms of the grant requirements and has the ability to satisfy the potential repayment of grant funds.

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 working relationship between USwifi and Vanguard Towers will facilitate rapid deployment of the project and reduce the costs per prospective broadband recipient. Vanguard Towers builds, leases, and sells communication towers. They maintain long-term relationships and standing agreements with virtually all of the major tower owning entities in the U.S., allowing them to lease tower space at exceptionally favorable rates - rates typically unavailable to most organizations. USwifi is subsequently able to then utilize Vanguard Tower's favorable position in the market to lease the required tower space at these same favorable rates. Updated 1-27-2022 * Ouachita Parish allows USwifi to utilize their Vertical Assets for their broadband projects. The associated "In-Kind Cost is \$600.00 per month (\$600.00 x 12 = \$7,200.00).

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

USwifi is a part of the Hudson Initiative We are working with PerfectVision and the Louisiana Community & Technical College System for locating any other Hudson or Veteran Small Business. USwifi is determined to hire Veterans or Hudson businesses and is actively reaching out to local Parishes, Businesses and the College. Part of the plan for future labor force is to create careers within USwifi not just jobs, and part of this plan will be fulfilled by utilizing Veteran owned and Hudson qualified small businesses. Updated: 2-7-22 for view please see the Workforce Section for attachments

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.

Provided in the mapping data is the FCC, Ookla, and DRA speed test data for the most current level of broadband access in our proposed GUMBO Grant program funded areas. Updated: 2/7/22: For additional clarification we are providing updated address maps of the parish and the addresses that are within our tower proposed deployment area. We did not allocate GUMBO funding for any addresses that were disqualified because of other programs per the GUMBO guidelines. We are also providing updated Heat Maps for an additional level of clarification our Proposed Deployment Area. 4-14-22 updated: added shape files and address maps

Services

Provide a description of service options to be provided:

Service Name	Upload/download speed	Date of 1st Availability	Data Cap	# of recipients	Price
NCWPCS 1059302	100:20mbps	June 23, 2022	0	48	77.00

Marketing

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

Blue Crab and USwifi have a strong partnership they are working together to end the Digital Divide in Louisiana by bring affordable and reliable broadband.

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.

During the Coronavirus Pandemic we realized the need for a system that will help our clients with telehealth, work from home and education from home opportunities. USwifi has an approved application from the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program wherein the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) has completed its review and has approved USwifi for participation as a broadband provider in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB Program). USwifi is currently working with USAC to become a Lifeline service provider to make communication services more affordable for our low-income clients who are within our service area in Louisiana. EBB and Lifeline provides our qualifying clients with a discount to help them afford 21st century broadband internet services. The discounts that are given to our low-income clients will assist them in purchasing the internet service they need specific to their households

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

USwifi has been an internet service provider delivering better coverage, faster speeds, and reliable service to businesses and residents in rural Louisiana. They have an invaluable relationship with Vanguard Towers who has also been building broadband backbone throughout Louisiana and other parts of the country. USwifi's hard work and reliability has garnered support for this project from citizens, government entities, businesses, and other community institutions.

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.

USwifi will hire local Louisiana resident workers for construction, deployment and maintenance of the broadband infrastructure and equipment. Attached is a signed letter of intent with the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LTCTCS) and a company bio for PerfectVision – an additional staffing partner. We will work with LCTCS for training opportunities, and upon receipt of the grant, Uswifi has agreed to hire three technicians trained through PerfectVision to help with the G1 infrastructure deployment

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.

Technology Overview Please see our response in the document attachment shown below as Supporting Documentation Disaster Recovery Redundancy Fault Tolerance and Failover Please see our plan under Supporting Documentation Updated: 2 /7/22: We are also providing updated Heat Maps for an additional level of clarification our Proposed Deployment Area. 4-14-22 updated: shape files and addresses per protest Updated: 2/14/2022 Speed test of active Tarana Equipment with a current USwifi customer

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

Scalability Updated to 1/27/22 Scalable to 100x100 The Tarana G1 platform allows for 1024 users per / site (256 users per / sector). Additionally, our long-term relationships with major tower owning organization in the state of Louisiana (resulting from 30 years of tower construction on their behalf) uniquely qualifies USwifi to lease existing tower space at favorable rates thus providing unique opportunities for coverage expansion as required. Updated 2-7-22 Please see the attached documents pertaining to Scalability for USwifi equipment. Titles: Scalable Network Solutions and Tarana - Introducing a Broadband Revolution. We are also providing updated Heat Maps for an additional level of clarification our Proposed Deployment Area. Updated: 2/14/2022 Speed test of active Tarana Equipment with a current USwifi customer

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).

This is a dynamic schedule: New Cingular Wireless PCS, LLC 1059302 Site acquisition 52 days 3/1/22 5/11/22 Fiber Backhaul 74 Days 3/1/22 6/10/22 Material procurement 15 days 4/12/22 5/2/22 Civil construction 20 days 4/12/22 5/9/22 Tower construction 14 days 4/26/22 5/13/22 System Turnup 13 days 6/6/22 6/22/22 End user installation begins 75 days 6/23/22 10/5/22 Updated 1/27/22

☐ Wired Infrastructure

☒ Fixed Wireless

Fixed Wireless 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 vertical asset, the applicant must include:
 - Description and specific location of the vertical asset;
 - Owner of the vertical asset;
 - Number of prospective broadband recipients that will be served by that site infrastructure
 - The distance from the vertical asset 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, acquiring access to existing vertical assets, acquiring or updating easements, and/or property acquisition;
- Description and specific type of the equipment used for deployment and the capable speed of the equipment;
- Explanation of the frequency/frequencies to be utilized for the deployment, whether the deployment will use licensed or unlicensed technologies, as well as mitigation of line-of-sight challenges (which should correspond to the number of recipients to be served).

USwifi is attaching the documentation for Tarana equipment and the breakdown for the equipment is shown in the budget summary Updated: 2 /7/22: We are also providing updated Heat Maps for an additional level of clarification our Proposed Deployment Area. Updated: 2/14/2022 Speed test of active Tarana Equipment with a current USwifi customer Updated: 2-22-2022 Provided Updated Airfiber data and updated GUMBO Project Report showing backhaul and tower information

Fixed Wireless Assets

Existing Network	Existing Equipment	New/Upgraded Infrastructure	Installation Type	Num of Recipients	Avg Distance in Miles Between Prospective Recipients	Expected Speed
existing	NCWPSC 1059302	NCSPSC 1059302 and Tarana Equipment	Fixed Wireless	48	1.984	100:20mbps

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.

USwifi Summary and Budget attachments show all allocated costs for this individual project. The 20% will be provided by a third party, not a Parish since the Parishes were using their ARPA funds for other projects. Several of the Parishes did provide us with MOU's of support for the projects and we feel this is such a great opportunity for USwifi to be a part of "It's Time to Connect Louisiana". Updated: 2-7-2022 the budget was calculated with a percentage on the CPE it miscalculated our Project Total, and the CPE calculation was from another spreadsheet we have corrected this calculation. Project Total x 80% divided by GUMBO cost per prospective broadband recipient = the GUMBO Households and Businesses to be served Updated: 2-14-22 Match increase: if allowed to utilize the additional customers from non-GUMBO funding is allowed. 4-14-22 updated budget and budget narrative per protest validation

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.

Please find attached the signed letter of funding availability from AJ Equity for the 20% required match for the GUMBO grant