

**BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

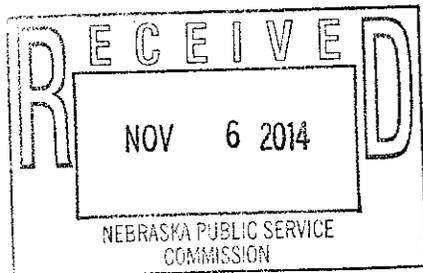
In the Matter of the Nebraska Public )  
Service Commission, on its Own )  
Motion, to Administer the Nebraska )  
Universal Service Fund Broadband )  
Program. )

APPLICATION NO. NUSF- 92.22

**COPY**

**PETITION OF COX NEBRASKA TELCOM, L.L.C. REQUESTING SUPPORT  
FROM THE NEBRASKA UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND FOR A PROJECT  
TO INCREASE BROADBAND ADOPTION**

**November 6, 2014**



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**I. Introduction**

Cox Nebraska Telcom, L.L.C. (hereinafter referred to as "Cox") by and through its counsel hereby submits this Petition to the Nebraska Public Service Commission ("Commission") seeking support to fund a project that will bring broadband service to low-income consumers in Omaha, Nebraska. This Petition is being submitted pursuant to Progression Orders No. 2 and No. 3, both entered in Application No. NUSF-92 on September 3, 2014. The Petitioner's name and address is Cox Nebraska Telcom, L.L.C., 11505 W. Dodge Road, Omaha, NE 68154.

**II. Supportive Information**

**1. ASSOCIATED ENTITIES**

The entities associated with this Petition are Cox and the Salvation Army, 10755 Burt Street, Omaha, NE 68114. The points of contacts are:

Rob Logsdon and Beth Weiss  
Cox Nebraska Telcom, LLC  
11505 W. Dodge Road  
Omaha, NE 68514  
(402) 934-0306 and (402) 934-0831  
rob.logsdon@cox.com and beth.weiss@cox.com

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE BROADBAND PROJECT**

Cox seeks support through this Petition to bring broadband to low-income consumers through a partnership with the Salvation Army of Omaha. Specifically, Cox requests support to construct and operate a public broadband kiosk at the Salvation Army Material Assistance and Seasonal Services (“MASS”) facility that is being built at 6101 NW Radial Highway in north Omaha. Broadband speeds of 28 Mbps on the downlink and 4 Mbps on the uplink will be provided.

The current MASS facility operates in Omaha in a former Walgreens store. The new facility will have ample parking, is a short walk from the city bus line and is located in an area where 30% of the residents live in poverty, according to [www.city-data.com](http://www.city-data.com). The new facility is expected to open in the spring of 2015.

This Petition requests funds to construct a broadband kiosk, and to purchase five (5) computers and their related hardware and software, a printer, a router, one (1) year of Internet service, as well as funds for an individual who would assist users individually and teach group Internet classes, and an individual who would provide three (3) hours a month of computer administrative support.

## **3. “UNSERVED” AND “UNDERSERVED” ANALYSIS**

It is well documented by the Pew Research Center and many others that low-income households lack access to broadband compared to higher-income households.<sup>1</sup> This Petition proposes to address that problem by offering a public broadband kiosk at a location where low-income people frequent to receive assistance and benefits. The MASS facility offers food pantry assistance, clothing assistance, household items,

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<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center Internet and American Life Project, Spring Tracking Survey, April 17-19, 2013. <http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/09/25/whos-not-online-and-why/>

prescription medications, utility assistance (Metropolitan Utility District Heat Aid, Black Hills Heat Share), fire victim's assistance, and referral services. Seasonal Services include the Summer Fan Program, the distribution of Back To School backpacks, and "Toyland" Christmas gift assistance. Eligibility requirements vary with the service requested and there may be income guidelines for specific programs. But, the broadband kiosk located at the MASS facility will be available for use to anyone, free of charge during normal business hours.

Most of the individuals who need support from the MASS facility have low-to-no income, with some being homeless or at-risk of being homeless. Often these people are in need of services because they have run into unexpected financial crises, related to car or home repairs, medical expenses and unforeseen unemployment.

Of key significance is the fact this Petition includes funds for the Salvation Army to employ an individual who will assist users at the broadband kiosk, and teach group Internet classes. A common deterrent for non-Internet users are concerns that it is too difficult and they don't know what to do. Thus, the Petition was created in partnership with the Salvation Army to not only make broadband available to low-income users at a convenient location, but to give users support and instruction. In Cox's experience, successful adoption programs involve more than just offering service at a reduced cost. Programs must also address the issue of literacy by providing assistance to those who may not have any prior experience working with computers. Without some level of assistance, new and inexperienced users may become frustrated and stop using the service, regardless that it is free and readily available.

#### **4. ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF POTENTIAL BROADBAND USERS**

In 2013, 27,486 individuals visited the Salvation's Army's MASS facility for food and pantry items, electric fans, backpacks and school supplies, energy and utility aid, as well as other benefits. This figure is a 36% increase from the attendance the facility experienced in 2012. The broadband kiosk will be available, free of charge to anyone who visits the MASS facility.

#### **5. DEPLOYMENT SCHEDULE**

This is a new facility being built by the Salvation Army. It is expected the facility, including the broadband kiosk will open in the spring of 2015.

#### **6. BUDGET**

The budget is attached hereto as *Confidential Exhibit 1*. The budget itemizes the costs of construction, computer hardware, software, programming and installation, Internet service for one (1) year and the cost of an instructor and computer administrative support for one (1) year. The total amount being requested by this Petition is \$30,210. This exhibit is confidential.

#### **7. FINANCIAL QUALIFICATIONS**

To demonstrate its financial fitness, Cox directs the Commission to its Annual Report filed with the Commission on or about April 29, 2014. This report was filed confidentially.

## **8. FINANCIAL, TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL COMPETENCE**

Cox was one of the first companies to file an application in Nebraska to obtain a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to operate as a competitive local exchange carrier (Application C-1359; Order entered December 10, 1996). Cox's authority to operate as a competitive local exchange carrier was later supplemented with the designation of being named an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier allowing Cox to participate in the Nebraska Telecommunications Assistance Program and provide discounted voice services to low-income persons (Application C-1693, Order entered March 10, 1998).

For over 15 years, Cox has operated in the Omaha metropolitan area offering telephone service to residential and business customers, along with providing cable television and Internet services. Cox started off with no telephony customers and has grown to rival the size of the state's largest incumbent local exchange carriers, CenturyLink and Windstream.<sup>2</sup> Cox has offered consumers quality telecommunications products and excellent customer service since its inception, evidenced by the large number of subscribers Cox has acquired and sustained in the Omaha marketplace.

## **9. FINANCIAL MATCH**

Although a financial match is not required, Cox will provide the Salvation Army with a 10% discount off the price of Internet service for this project for one (1) year. The 10% discount is reflected in the cost in *Confidential Exhibit 1*.

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<sup>2</sup> See NE PSC 2014 Annual Report on Telecommunications, Sept. 30, 2014, pg. 97.

Furthermore, in evidence of its commitment to bring broadband service to low-income consumers in Omaha, Cox recently donated \$100,000 to the Salvation Army Lied Renaissance Center, a transitional housing facility for the homeless at 3612 Cuming Street. Cox's donation provided the facility with a computer communications center enabling low-income people to search online for work, permanent housing and other benefits and services. Cox hopes its involvement at the Lied Renaissance Center and the MASS facility will assist low-income persons by helping them find sustainable, permanent housing, employment opportunities and educational support through the improved accessibility of broadband.

#### **10. TRUTH AND ACCURACY AFFIDAVIT**

A Truth and Accuracy Affidavit attesting the truth and accuracy of the information contained in this Petition is attached hereto as *Exhibit 2*.

### **III. Further Commitments**

In further support of its Petition, Cox states as follows:

1. Cox commits to use support received only for the purposes described herein and which have been approved by the Commission;
2. Cox commits to fulfill all reporting and audit requirements by the Commission related to this grant; and
3. Cox commits to abide by all applicable Commission rules, regulations and orders.

### **IV. Conclusion**

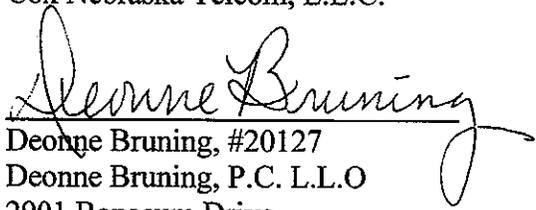
The construction and operation of a public broadband kiosk at the Salvation Army MASS facility at 6101 NW Radial Highway in Omaha would significantly improve the

ability for low-income consumers to access the Internet in the Omaha metropolitan area. The facility is located in a highly impoverished area and in a building that is providing other services to low-income persons, making it convenient and accessible to low-income citizens of all ages. And critical to the kiosk's success, is the inclusion in this Petition for an individual who will assist users individually and teach instructional classes. Use of the kiosk, one-on-one help and the instructional classes will be available free of charge. Cox's Petition meets the criteria and objectives of the broadband adoption program, and furthers the goal of deploying broadband service to all consumers statewide, including low-income consumers. Cox respectfully requests the Commission enter an Order approving its Petition.

Respectfully submitted this 6<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2014.

Cox Nebraska Telcom, L.L.C.

By:

  
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**AFFIDAVIT OF COX NEBRASKA TELCOM, L.L.C.**

**Nebraska Broadband Program**

**NUSF-92**

STATE OF NEBRASKA    )  
                                  )  
                                  )    ss.  
COUNTY OF DOUGLAS    )

I, the undersigned, being duly sworn, state as follows:

1. I am the Director of Regulatory Affairs for Cox Nebraska Telcom, L.L.C.
2. I have read the foregoing Petition seeking funding from the Nebraska Broadband Program and state the information provided herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

*Robert R. Logsdon*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert R. Logsdon

Subscribed and sworn to before me

this 3 day of November, 2014.

*Jean Ladenburger*, Notary Public

Douglas County, Nebraska

My Commission Expires 6/2/2016

