

**NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC**  
**and**  
**Lincoln City Libraries**  
**Nebraska Universal Service Fund**  
**Broadband Program**  
**2015 Broadband Adoption Grant Application**

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**Submitted to the Nebraska Public Service Commission**  
**November 26, 2014**

NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC and Lincoln City Libraries  
Nebraska Universal Service Fund Broadband Program  
2015 Broadband Adoption Grant Application

**Applicant Information**

**NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC**

As a recipient of a Broadband Technology Opportunities Program grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC, formed in 2010, is a collaboration of seven Nebraska rural, independent telephone companies. NebraskaLink has deployed a high-speed, state of the art fiber network throughout the State of Nebraska, connecting Nebraska's communities and integral community anchor institutions such as state and local governmental agencies, educational networks, colleges, schools, healthcare providers and financial institutions. NebraskaLink has the managerial, technical and financial competence necessary to accomplish the proposed project.

**Lincoln City Libraries**

Lincoln City Libraries serves the community of Lincoln, Nebraska. In 2013, the population of the legal service area for the Lincoln City Libraries was 285,407. Lincoln City Libraries has eight locations, 470 public service hours per week, 217,516 registered borrowers with approximately 1.5 million annual library visits, 144 public computers with Internet access and approximately 230,800 annual computer reservations.

Contact Information:

NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC	Lincoln City Libraries
3900 NW 12 <sup>th</sup> Street	136 So. 14 <sup>th</sup> Street
Suite 100	Lincoln, NE 68508
Lincoln, NE 68521	

The main point of contact for this project is:

Jason Axthelm  
Vice President of Business Development  
Office Telephone Number: (402) 817-1839  
Email: [Jason.axthelm@nebraskalink.com](mailto:Jason.axthelm@nebraskalink.com)

**Project Information**

Recognizing that substantial barriers to broadband adoption persist in the State of Nebraska and that those barriers continue to increase the digital divide that pervades through many underserved populations, including the low income, minorities, disabled, elderly and those living in rural areas, the progressive approach of the Nebraska Public Service Commission (“Commission”) has made grant funding available through the Nebraska Broadband Adoption Grant Program to provide specific and targeted support to foster innovative programs geared toward increasing broadband adoption rates and closing the digital divide in the State of Nebraska.

Research identifies the major barriers to broadband adoption as access, affordability, relevancy and usefulness.<sup>1</sup> The proposed project serves an important function in overcoming those barriers to the City of Lincoln, the Lincoln City Libraries, current and future library users, and students of Lincoln Public Schools.

For broadband adoption programs, partnerships between multiple entities can maximize limited funding, foster the sharing of information and resources and encourage stakeholders with the same goal, in this case, connectivity to underserved populations, to work together. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] to connect each of the eight library locations: Dan A. Williams Branch Library, Bennett Martin Public Library, Victor E. Anderson Branch Library, Bethany Branch Library, Loren Corey Eiseley Branch Library, Charles H. Gere Branch Library, South Branch Library, and the Bess Dodson Walt Library (collectively, the “Lincoln Library Network”). The proposed project plan will also connect the Lincoln Library Network to Network Nebraska, a collaborative multipurpose telecommunications backbone network throughout the state serving a partnership of K-12 schools, higher education institutions and public and private entities. NebraskaLink has included two maps in this application illustrating the eight Lincoln City Libraries locations and the proposed fiber routes.

The Lincoln City Libraries is currently underserved in regard to their connectivity, capacity and service speeds. In order to meet the considerable demand and needs of the community, library patrons and students, the Lincoln City Libraries requires broadband speeds and capacities significant enough to meet current and future service needs.

[REDACTED]

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<sup>1</sup> *Internet Connectivity and Use in Nebraska: A Follow-Up Study* (April 2014), Vogt et al, pages 6-10.

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The connectivity to the Network Nebraska location will be invaluable to the students of Lincoln Public Schools. Connecting the Lincoln Library Network to Network Nebraska provides the Lincoln City Libraries with connectivity to Lincoln Public Schools. This will allow for students of Lincoln Public Schools to access the Lincoln Public Schools’ digital curriculum content and network resources at all Lincoln library sites. As the Lincoln Public Schools move forward with their CLASS technology plan which will provide learners with computing devices they will take home, these learners will require Internet access to complete assignments, engage other learners and teachers in collaborative efforts, and access course content. This connectivity will be a boon to those students without Internet access at home, or to those students attempting to get by with a much lesser-grade Internet connection. For students and low-income families with school-age children without a broadband connection at home, the broadband access provided by the Lincoln Library Network may be the only source of broadband Internet access available to the student.

In addition to the considerable educational benefits to Lincoln students, the connectivity available through the Lincoln Library Network will provide significant value to the City of Lincoln. As a major community anchor institution for the City of Lincoln, the community access to free Internet service provided by the Lincoln City Libraries assists in promoting the relevance and usefulness of broadband Internet service to those currently not subscribing. For those residents without broadband service, the Internet access provided by the library may be the only access they have to conduct employment searches, complete online job applications, upload resumes and apply for government services. With adequate facilities in place, community anchor institutions can serve as a gateway to broadband adoption to increase use through digital literacy programs which can emphasize the relevance and usefulness of broadband service in everyday life.<sup>2</sup>

**Financial Information**



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<sup>2</sup> “Thirty-two percent of the households without Internet access use the computer resources at public use facilities.”  
*Id.* at 14.



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7. Charles H. Gere Branch Library  
2400 South 56<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cost to Build: [REDACTED]  
NebraskaLink's In-Kind Contribution: [REDACTED]
  
8. Bess Dodson Walt Library  
6701 South 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Cost to Build: [REDACTED]  
NebraskaLink's In-Kind Contribution: [REDACTED]

**Verifications**

NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC commits to abide by all applicable Commission rules, regulations and orders.

NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC commits to using the 2015 Broadband Adoption Grant Program funding for the purposes intended and which have been approved by the Commission through the application process.

NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC commits to fulfilling all reporting and audit requirements adopted by the Commission for oversight of the Broadband Adoption Grant Program funds.

**Supporting Documentation**

Included with this application is an Affidavit of Jason Axthelm, Vice President of Business Development at NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC attesting to the truth and accuracy of all information included in this application.

Also included with this application and provided electronically are the following:

1. Budget and Financial Information in Excel Format
2. Letter of Support from Mayor Beutler of the City of Lincoln
3. Letter of Support from the Lincoln Public Schools
4. Letter of Support from the Office of the Chief Information Officer for the State of Nebraska
5. Confidential Proposed Fiber Route Map
6. Lincoln Library Location Map

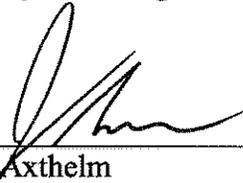


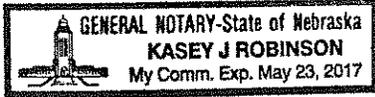
Fund Broadband Adoption Grant Program and filed with the Nebraska Public Service Commission on November 26, 2014 and attest to the truth and accuracy to the best of my knowledge and belief of all of the information included in NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC application.

4. This completes my affidavit.

**VERIFICATION**

I, Jason Axthelm, declare under penalty of perjury that the statements in this Affidavit are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jason Axthelm  
Vice President of Business Development  
NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC



Subscribed and sworn to before me, this  
24 day of November, 2014.

Kasey Robinson\_\_\_\_\_

Kasey Robinson (Printed Name)

Notary Public, Lancaster County, Nebraska

Acting in the County of Lancaster

My Commission Expires: May 23, 2017

NebraskaLink Holdings, LLC and Lincoln City  
Libraries Construction Budget and Financials

Facility	Address	Cost
Dan A. Williams Branch Library	5000 Mike Scholl Street (Arnold Elementary School)	
Bennett Martin Public Library	136 South 14th Street	
Victor E. Anderson Branch Library	3635 Touzalin Avenue	
Bethany Branch Library	1810 North Cotner Boulevard	
Loren Corey Eiseley Branch Library	1530 Superior Street	
Charles H. Gere Branch Library	2400 South 56th Street	
South Branch Library	2675 South Street	
Bess Dodson Walt Library	6701 South 14th Street	
		<b>Total Cost</b>



CONFIDENTIAL



MAYOR CHRIS BEUTLER

555 South 10th Street Suite 301 Lincoln, NE 68508  
402-441-7511

[lincoln.ne.gov](http://lincoln.ne.gov)

November 20, 2014

Pat Leach, Director  
Lincoln City Libraries  
136 S. 14<sup>th</sup> St.  
Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Pat:

I write in support of the grant application for Lincoln City Libraries for the Nebraska Universal Service Fund Broadband Program, NUSF-92.

I am proud that our City libraries provide Internet access free of charge throughout Lincoln. For people who do not have equipment or Internet access at home, the libraries provide critical access to a wide range of needs including employment opportunities, E-Government services, and connections to loved ones. Library staff provides direct assistance as people use these services. Libraries bridge the digital divide.

As our schools move toward more extensive use of tablets and mobile technologies, the libraries must be poised to provide fast and reliable access outside of school.

In addition, free wireless access via libraries provides support for all kinds of people in Lincoln, from entrepreneurs to visiting faculty to university students to tourists.

The libraries are currently underserved in regard to their current connectivity, capacity and service speeds. In order to meet the considerable demands and needs of the community, Lincoln City Libraries require broadband speeds and capacities substantial enough to meet current and future service needs.

As Mayor of Lincoln, I have worked to enhance our City's overall technology infrastructure. Much of the success and energy of the City relies on strong connectivity. Our continued success requires us always to seek improvement, which is why I support constructing a city-wide fiber network to connect all eight locations of Lincoln City Libraries.

I appreciate your work on this application, and I encourage the Nebraska Public Service Commission's support of the proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Beutler", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Beutler  
Mayor of Lincoln

Pat Leach, Library Director  
Lincoln City Libraries  
136 South 14th Street  
Lincoln, Ne 68508

Dear Pat:

I am writing in support of the Lincoln City Libraries' efforts to provide greater service to the Lincoln community by increasing the capacity of their broadband connections between their library locations and to the Internet. Learners that attend the Lincoln Public Schools are among the patrons that will greatly benefit by this increased access.

The Lincoln Public Schools Board of Education is finalizing a resolution in support of the district's CLASS (Connected Learning for the Achievement of Students and Staff) plan that will serve as the framework for moving the delivery of curriculum content, assessment, and course collaborative efforts into the digital domain. Among the components of the CLASS plan is the provision of computing devices to students who will require broadband access outside the time they spend at school. The Lincoln City Libraries are key to ensuring all learners have access to a safe environment with the broadband capacity to serve their needs and, most importantly, the thirty-two percent of households without Internet access that report accessing the Internet at a library or other public facility.

The connection of the Lincoln City Libraries to Network Nebraska will also provide for a high-speed direct connection to the Lincoln Public Schools network that will allow learners access to Lincoln Public Schools network resources that would not otherwise be accessible via an Internet connection. This represents the next generation of network collaboration between our organizations that began over two decades ago when Lincoln City Libraries provided Southeast High School with a terminal to access its catalogue.

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The joint commitment of our respective organizations is essential to cost-effectively fulfilling recommendations in the Nebraska Broadband Plan recommendations including:

- Enhance the capacity of local communities to address broadband development;
- Support the development of libraries as community anchor institutions;
- Increase digital literacy and broadband access to the Internet.

I look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts and greatly appreciate our community partnership in support of life-long learning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "H Kirk Langer Jr". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "H".

H. Kirk Langer, Jr  
Chief Technology Officer  
Lincoln Public Schools



**Dave Heineman**  
Governor

# STATE OF NEBRASKA

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER**  
**Brenda L. Decker**  
*Chief Information Officer*  
P.O. Box 95045  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-5045  
402-471-3560

November 18, 2014

Pat Leach, Library Director  
Lincoln City Libraries  
136 S. 14th Street  
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Pat:

I am writing in support of the Lincoln City Libraries' efforts to achieve faster broadband connections for each of its branch libraries and Bennett Martin Library in downtown Lincoln. Increasing the Lincoln City Libraries broadband speeds would enable the library system to provide faster Internet for patron and student use of library-owned computers as well as more wireless access for patron-owned Internet devices, such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets.

As the Nebraska Broadband Plan aptly describes, libraries are key partners in efforts to provide community anchor-based public access to the Internet, access to E-Government services, and training on computer applications. Often libraries are the only free access point in a community, bridging the digital divide between those who have access and those who do not. Thirty-two percent of the households in Nebraska without Internet access use the computer resources at a library or other public use facility. Other community anchor institutions use broadband as infrastructure whereas public libraries provide broadband as a service, as well as infrastructure for increasingly bandwidth intensive applications. (Nebraska Broadband Plan, <http://nitc.nebraska.gov/documents/2014reports/broadbandplan.pdf>)

By interconnecting all of the Lincoln City Libraries with high speed fiber, and connecting the library system to Network Nebraska, the resulting infrastructure could enable fulfillment of three of the Nebraska Broadband Plan recommendations listed below, with the potential to reduce annual expenditures at the same time:

- **Enhance the capacity of local communities to address broadband development;**
- **Support the development of libraries as community anchor institutions;**

- **Increase digital literacy and broadband access to the Internet.**

I commend you on your goal of improving the infrastructure and increasing the broadband speeds to Lincoln City Libraries. If there is anything that staff of the Office of the CIO can do to assist, please do not hesitate to contact me.

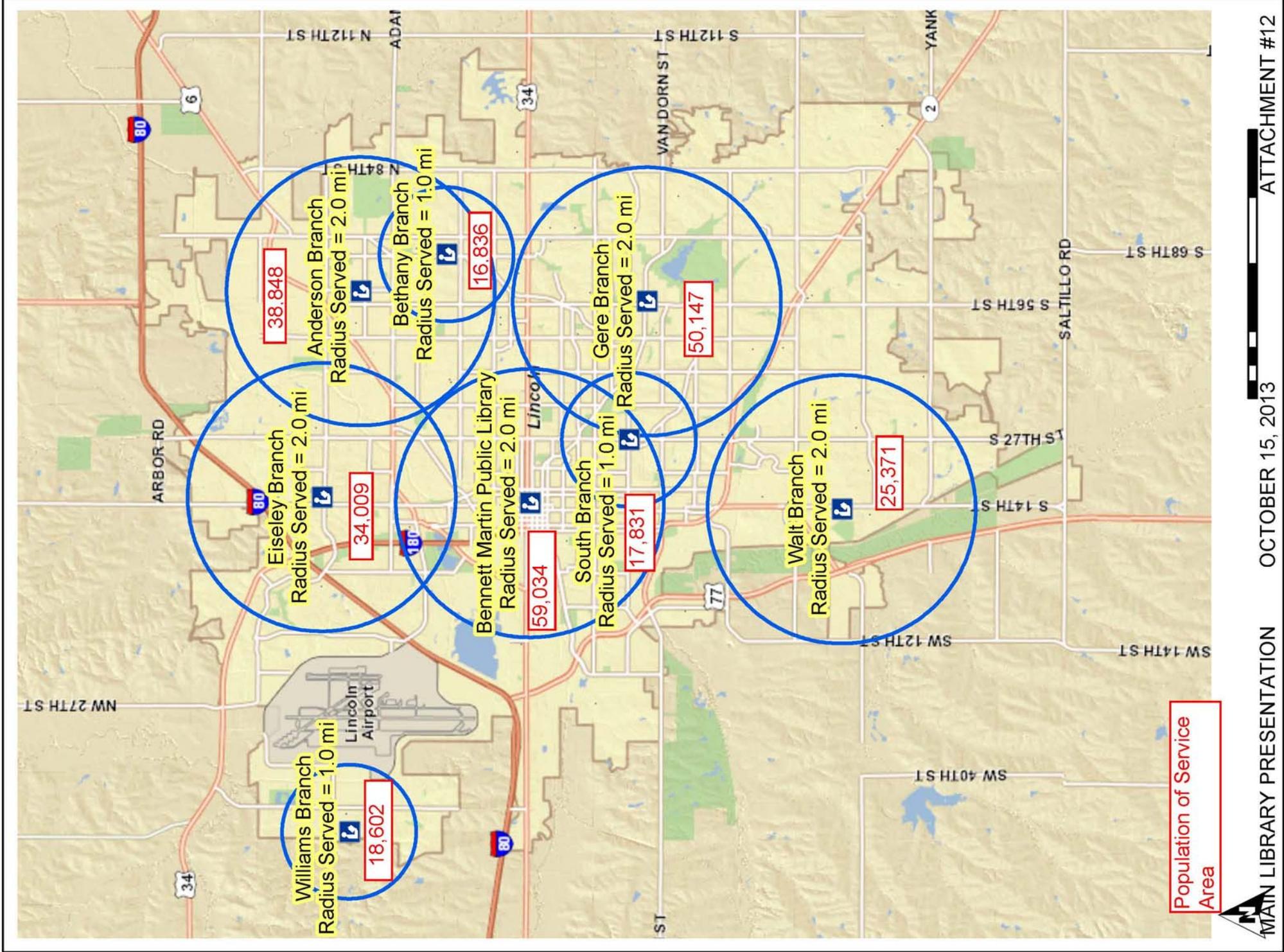
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda L. Decker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B' and 'D'.

Brenda L. Decker  
Chief Information Officer  
State of Nebraska

BLD/hs

**PROPOSED FIBER ROUTE MAP  
REDACTED IN ENTIRETY**



Population of Service Area