

A digital inclusion plan must be attached for consideration. The plan should specify: the applicant's process to consult with community and consider affordability; a description of how the project will meet the objective of providing broadband infrastructure deployment within the project area to directly enable work, education, and healthcare monitoring; a description of how the project will address a critical need that resulted from or was made apparent or exacerbated by the COVID-19 public health emergency; identify any critical needs of the community intended to be served by the project, and how the project will be tailored to meet those needs, including the carrier's efforts to ensure members of the community to be served will be able to afford the services offered and must describe any discounts and/or support programs to be offered for low-income individuals; specify how the project will impact access to and use of information and communication technologies within the communities it serves, including individuals and communities that are the most disadvantaged; include the pricing structure of the 100/100 Mbps plan being offered to low-income subscribers in addition to the availability of Lifeline or Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) discounts and any additional terms and conditions of service; include evidence of outreach efforts to relevant stakeholders (community leaders, community members, civic organizations, etc.) in the areas they are wishing to serve. (Attachment Letter: J)

Quick Current-Nebraska LLC

Digital Inclusion Plan

Table of Contents

Digital Inclusion Plan Introduction.....	3
Community Consultation and Affordability	3
Broadband Infrastructure for Employment, Education & Healthcare	4
Critical Need from COVID-19 Pandemic Solved by Project	5
Community Needs Addressed.....	6
Community Outreach Efforts.....	7
Summary	8

Digital Inclusion Plan Introduction

Quick Current Nebraska LLC (QC-NE) plans to use the Nebraska Capital Projects Fund grant to expand broadband services to the communities of Tekamah NE, Wayne, NE, and Carroll, NE. QC-NE has already acquired access to 2.5 GHz BRS wireless spectrum licenses for these service areas in the recent FCC Auction 108. Our long form application is pending at the FCC and we expect our call signs to be issued soon.

QC-NE will use this licensed spectrum to provide broadband services. The broadband service speeds provided will be up to 100 Mbps symmetric, which will provide subscriber households enough bandwidth for all Internet uses. QC-NE will be conducting the following Digital Inclusion activities for the residents of the service areas documented above.

Community Consultation and Affordability

QC-NE plans to focus its service areas on the historically unserved Tribal and rural communities in Northeast Nebraska. As part of QC-NE business planning, the following processes will be used for community consultation:

- Research of current available providers including service speeds, costs, and reliability.
- Research of service area demographic and economic data to determine appropriate service pricing, and where warranted, discounts.
- Our highest price tier will be \$119.95 per month for 100 Mbps Symmetric service. This will allow QC-NE to provide broadband service at no personal cost for qualifying subscribers. We will also provide lower priced tiers and as described in other areas of this application at 100/20 and 50/10 speeds and, where in conjunction with community needs, will create pricing programs to encourage adoption and use to close the digital divide.
- QC-NE commits to seek to become an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier and to process eligible subscriber Affordable Connectivity Program applications. This will help

increase service adoption, remove financial barriers for service access, and provide predictable business revenue for the company.

- QC-NE also commits to lower retail prices in the event the Quick Current LLC Middle Mile grant is awarded.

Broadband Infrastructure for Employment, Education & Healthcare

This QC-NE grant project will enable broadband services for approximately 970 households in Tekamah NE and Carroll, NE. QC-NE's broadband service delivery model provides the following network features that support employment, education, and healthcare use cases:

- **Service Speeds** – QC-NE utilizes Radio Access Network (RAN) equipment that is purpose-built for rural network deployments. Utilizing Massive MIMO and Beamforming wireless standards, the QC-NE wireless service does not require the Customer Premise Equipment to be within line of sight to the RAN and can cover up to 5 times the coverage area of traditional systems. The offered plans have enough subscriber bandwidth to support a household of 4 all simultaneously using the network for bandwidth intensive applications such as streaming video and virtual meetings for work, school, or telemedicine.
- **Lower Cost for Network Expansion** – Using Fixed Wireless can help accelerate adoption and provide faster access to high-speed internet services. In addition, the Radio Access Network (RAN) can be mounted on any structure meeting the height requirements, which can enable more subscribers to be served by lowering network deployment costs.
- **Commitment to Net Neutrality** – QC-NE recognizes that reliable high-speed Internet and cellular services are critical communications infrastructure for rural and Tribal communities. In addition, to fully gain Digital Equity subscribers must have network

services that meet their needs for full and unimpeded connections. QC-NE has committed to no data caps, service speed throttling, or paid prioritization. The QC-NE network also has been optimized to support real-time applications such as video to ensure a reliable and high-quality experience. This ensures that all network subscribers can make full use of their broadband service, which is essential for support digital work, education, and healthcare uses.

OTON's citizens are a large portion of the total community we hope to serve, including populations in Carrol and Tekamah. This community is economically disadvantaged and socially challenged. We have reached out directly to not only tribal members but also to the institutions who service the whole community including the public schools and healthcare providers. We have confirmed that the broadband infrastructure comparable to what is available in large metro areas does not exist in our targeted areas.

Critical Need from COVID-19 Pandemic Solved by Project

Due to the lack of high-speed Internet service, the project service area communities experienced significant challenges in maintaining adequate connections for virtual work and education. In some cases, students and community members traveled to facilities that had reliable Internet service to continue with work and education. Cellular connections were also used but varied due to inconsistent cellular coverage.

The proposed project will provide high-speed internet connections to approximately 970 households, many of whom were impacted by the lack of reliable high-speed broadband infrastructure. Since the service is delivered over wireless, subscribers can get access to service much faster than any other method. Since wireless can also serve many more users

per deployment, this can increase the number of community residents who can gain access to critical network services.

Community Needs Addressed

The primary community need met by the project is affordable access to reliable high-speed broadband services. To ensure affordable access to service, QC-NE has taken the following steps in business planning:

- Simple Service Plan Pricing – QC-NE has three (3) standard pricing plans. There are no additional fees such as data caps, which makes the internet service fees predictable for budgeting.
- Alignment with FCC Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) & Lifeline – QC-NE’s target service areas focus on disadvantaged Tribal and rural communities. Since these communities have high rates of low-income residents, QC-NE will register as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier. This will allow QC-NE to process Affordable Connectivity Program applications for qualifying subscribers when they activate service. QC-NE will also support Lifeline program registration and subsidy processing for qualifying subscribers.
- Leverage Grant Funding – There are numerous grant programs available for broadband infrastructure, including the Nebraska CPF Grant. QC-NE will attempt to leverage grant funding in a non-duplicative manner will help accelerate network deployment and expansion, which will help reduce network operations costs and keep service prices within affordable ranges.
- Network Cost Efficiency - QC-NE has selected wireless network infrastructure that is purpose built for rural environments. This reduces the total amount of wireless towers required for service. The Radio Access Network (RAN) is also software defined which

further reduces network operations costs as it allows for upgrades. These efficiencies help ensure that QC-NE can build a sustainable service provider business and offer affordable Internet and cellular service pricing.

Community Outreach Efforts

A community outreach plan was developed to raise awareness of service availability, discount programs available, and community digital literacy workshops to help educate subscribers on Internet use and online safety. If awarded for the target project communities of Tekamah, and Carroll Nebraska, we will follow the same community outreach initiatives consisting of the following:

- Meet with Local Community Leaders - Provide an overview of QC-NE, service offerings provided, and collect specific community needs that can be addressed with QC-NE network services. This has included discussions on providing services to the local community government facilities including the Wayne and Tekamah public school systems.
- Marketing - QC-NE will begin advertising services and community workshops for digital literacy skills approximately 3-6 months prior to service activation. The workshops will be a mix of in-person training and webinars where possible. QC-NE's consulting partner, Numu Communications, is part of the working group for the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA <https://www.digitalinclusion.org>) and will be providing educational content based on the NDIA resources.
- Ongoing Community Workshops – QC-NE will provide a regular cadence of monthly and quarterly meetings with interested community members to provide updates on network services and performance, training on a specific network topic, and service feedback. As a community-based service provider, the collection of subscriber

- feedback and regular communication of network performance is key. Separate cadences will be established with community leaders to review the same information and to collect feedback on upcoming community activities that may require network services.
- **Published Network Performance Metrics** – QC-NE will publish network metrics that show average service speeds, outages, latency metrics, and service support information including support ticketing details. This information will be reviewed monthly with community leaders and published on a publicly accessible website for community access.
 - **Website community forms:** We have recently launched our website: www.qcbroadband.com and our site has an online form that interested community members can engage with. We intend to add similar forms specific to each community as we create specific outreach programs. For example, post award and in the event a public school like Tekamah-Herman School (THS) wished to add to their current Backpack Program an offer for subsidized broadband for students to be able to access broadband at home, we would give a level of autonomy to their administrator, Ms. Hansen, to add home address to a broadband outreach program. We will offer a similar capability to Wayne County schools (Carroll is zoned to these schools) and to healthcare providers. We plan to discuss our services with other community leaders once we have the capability to deliver the service.

Summary

Quick Current-Nebraska (QC-NE) is committed to providing high-speed Internet and cellular services for Tribal and rural residents in Northeast Nebraska. As a majority tribal owned community run service provider, QC-NE is focused on delivering quality network services and increasing the digital skills of the community. QC-NE has a keen understanding of the challenges that disadvantaged communities face when trying to access affordable Internet services. QC-NE's business model is focused on keeping operational costs low to provide lower cost service plans when compared to other service providers. Digital literacy training programs are key strategic initiatives for QC-NE as subscribers that have greater knowledge about Internet

use tend to utilize more network services. With the execution of the QC-NE Digital Inclusion plan, community members will gain access to affordable high-speed network services and improve their digital skills and knowledge.