Frequently Asked Questions

Commission Application Forms

1. Why is the application form a fillable PDF that cannot be printed? How can applicants be sure that their data will not be changed after submission?

The application form is a fillable PDF so that Commission staff can import data for efficient review. Upon request, the Commission can return a printed PDF of the application to the applicant as confirmation of the data submitted. All applications must be received in PDF format. Printed applications will not be accepted.

2. Do you have templates for business plans, digital inclusion plans, etc.?

The materials posted to the website are the extent of the pre-prepared materials. Candidates may structure other supporting documentation how they choose. Applicants can view materials submitted by applicants from past years on the Commission's website. Applicants must ensure that the supporting documentation provided with an application is complete and includes all required elements for the relevant funding year.

3. How should we submit letters of support from the community?

Letters of support should be submitted as Attachment M to an application. While the Commission will review letters of support submitted directly by community members, such letters will not be posted to the website unless included as part of an application.

4. My application is too large to be emailed. How should I submit it?

If all documents cannot be attached within a single e-mail due to size limitations, the submission may be sent in more than one e-mail. If it is necessary to submit in separate transmissions, the subject of the e-mails should clearly indicate the applicant and project name, and how many e-mails are being sent (e.g. Email 1 of 4, etc.). Files should be attached to the e-mails; links to websites are not acceptable. Alternatively, you may utilize programs such as zip files, Dropbox, Sharefile, provided that they contain individual files. Each attachment should be clearly labeled to indicate the

contents. Please contact the Commission at psc.broadband@nebraska.gov at least one week before the application deadline if further direction is required.

5.   When should I submit my application?

While the Commission will consider any applications received prior to 5:00 p.m. Central Time on July 1, 2022, we strongly encourage applicants to submit their applications as soon as they are ready. This allows Commission staff to contact applicants prior to the deadline in case of any inadvertent errors or other issues. **Applications received at 5:01 p.m. Central Time or later will not be considered.**

What to Include in an Application

6.   What information can I submit confidentially?

Only information specifically listed as confidential in the Protective Order governing the 2022 grant application cycle can be submitted confidentially. A copy of the Protective Order can be found on the PSC website, listed here:

https://psc.nebraska.gov/telecommunications/nebraska-broadband-bridge-program-nbbp

7.   How do I ensure confidential information submitted will be protected?

We encourage all applicants and challengers to follow the terms of the Protective Order closely. All confidential materials should be marked as such both in the filename and as a stamp or watermark on each page of the document itself. The Commission does not guarantee that information submitted that is not marked in accordance with the terms of the Protective Order will be protected.

8.   Who should be listed as the legal contact for an application?

An attorney licensed to practice and in good standing in Nebraska should be listed as the legal contact for the application.

9.   How should my application and attachments be formatted?

Application materials and attachments should be submitted in PDF format. However, spreadsheets (such as required by Attachment H, or that may be included in a business plan or financial reports) should be submitted in Excel format, along with a PDF copy as well for posting to the Commission website.

10.   How should shapefile/polygons be submitted?

Shapefile maps and polygons should be submitted along with other application materials. All supporting files necessary to open a shapefile must be included, such as .shp, .sbx, .sbn, .cpg, .dbf, .prj, .shx. We encourage applicants to use a zipped file folder to submit these files. All shapefiles must show the project area in its entirety.

11. Will data plans with usage caps be allowed?

Yes. Applications may reflect data plans with usage caps or "throttling" mechanisms. Data plans with "pay as you go" models will also be allowed. However, these plans will receive a score deduction in accordance with the Scoring Sheet.

12. What should be included in a digital inclusion plan?

A digital inclusion plan must 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. Specifically, a digital inclusion plan should describe the specific needs of the community intended to be served by the project, and how the project will be tailored to meet those needs.

Up to 5 (five) points will be awarded to carriers who offer a discounted plan for low-income subscribers. Such plans must be eligible for additional discounts through Lifeline and ACP. These plans must also either cost less than $50 per month prior to Lifeline and ACP discounts, or cost 25% less on a monthly basis than the carrier's next lowest-priced plan offering, whichever is lower.

Revisions to Applications

13. **I received a Notice of Intent to Reclassify Application. What does this mean?**

    Following the initial review of an application, Commission staff will reach out to applicants if a discrepancy is found between the information provided in an application and publicly available data. The applicant will then be afforded an opportunity to supplement or modify its application.

14. **Our project area overlaps with the project area submitted by another applicant. How do we proceed?**

    If multiple applications significantly overlap, the Commission will only be able to fund the highest-ranked project. Applicants will be notified if project areas overlap. The Commission encourages applicants to reach out to one another to resolve issues with overlapping applications. Applicants who reach an agreement regarding overlapping applications may submit a modified application. Contact the Commission at psc.broadband@nebraska.gov for more information.

15. **What happens if information is marked as Confidential in submission, but is not covered under the Protective Order?**

    Only information designated by the Protective Order as Confidential Materials will be withheld from the publicly accessible NBBP website. Commission Staff will reach out to applicants who submit information incorrectly marked as Confidential and give them an opportunity to remove the marking.

Additional Questions

16. **Where should questions regarding the applications be directed?**

    Questions regarding the application forms and content should be directed to psc.broadband@nebraska.gov. Please read through the posted program materials before emailing, as we cannot guarantee a timely response due to the volume of questions received.