



**Western Nebraska
Community College**

January 16, 2024

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**To the Nebraska Public Service Commission and
The Nebraska Broadcasting Office:**

Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC) is pleased to write this letter of support for Nextlink Internet to expand into unserved rural areas within our county under the CPF-2 Capital Projects Fund Grant.

We have knowledge of Nextlink being active in multiple Nebraska counties and find the company to be a potentially excellent partner to serve rural households and businesses that are woefully underserved by the lack of broadband services. Lack of reliable broadband has caused harm to our economic development efforts and, therefore, we welcome Nextlink to bring broadband to their proposed areas if funded under the CPF-2 Capital Projects Fund Grant.

As the Community College for the Panhandle of Nebraska, we can attest to students' need for broadband access for their classes, as well as any other personal business they need to complete. Having just come off of a weekend of blizzard conditions, subzero temperatures, and potentially lethal wind-chills, the option of getting physically to a location isn't always possible in this part of the state.

Nextlink's proposed **Sidney Wireless Project** will cover approximately 691 sq. miles and 353 unserved locations.

The proposed **Oshkosh Wireless Project** will cover approximately 212 sq. miles and 240 unserved locations.

The proposed **Bridgeport Wireless Project** will cover approximately 500 sq. miles and 164 unserved locations.

These areas of Nebraska have locations lacking access to broadband internet service at speeds of at least 25/3 Mbps download/upload. Within these areas, locations will be able to receive speeds up to 500 mbps download. Furthermore, each of these small communities are part of the 17,000+ square mile, mostly rural, service area for WNCC.

Nextlink's participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program also helps to ensure access to affordable internet connections our community desperately needs for work, school, and health care.

Furthermore, these projects will enable work, education, and healthcare monitoring and addresses the critical needs for our community that resulted from or was made apparent by the COVID-19 public health emergency. We are also aware of their active partnership with the Microsoft Airband Initiative which supports customer access to technical expertise, preferential pricing on innovative technological solutions, and digital skills training.

In closing, CPF-2 Capital Projects Fund Grant will help enable competent and capable internet service providers, like Nextlink, to continue their mission to close our community's digital divide by connecting additional businesses, farms, schools, and homes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grant W. Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Grant W. Wilson
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