

Applicant: Consolidated Telephone Company (“Consolidated”)

Project: Halsey

Attachment: J --Digital Inclusion Plan

In addition to making high-speed broadband services available to consumers in the described project area, Consolidated understands the importance of addressing service “affordability” and “digital literacy” concerns in a meaningful way. As its “Digital Inclusion Plan”, Consolidated would take those actions outlined below, if it is awarded grant funds under the “Broadband Bridge Program”:

1. Free modems or routers would be provided to new customers signing up for Consolidated’s broadband services within the proposed project area. Based on current charges for this equipment, this amounts to a savings per subscriber of approximately \$180, which can be a high hurdle for many new broadband subscribers.
2. Consolidated will also waive its standard broadband service install charges for new subscribers within the project area, which again eliminates an obstacle for customers who are unable to cover up-front costs.
3. Consolidated will as part of its broadband service promotion and marketing within the project area undertake concentrated efforts to ensure that those individuals and households eligible for participation under federal, state, or local broadband discount Program, such as the Lifeline Program and/or NTAP are aware of any monthly broadband discounts they may receive and how to most easily sign-up for these discounts.
4. Consolidated will be participating in the FCC’s Affordable Connectivity Program (“AEP”) prior to the end of year 2022. Participation in the AEP will provide opportunities for eligible households to receive up to a \$30 monthly discount for internet service.
 - a. *The monthly rate for 100x100 internet service for AEP eligible customers will be \$49.95*
5. Consolidated will also within the described project area take steps to ensure that students residing in the described project area have affordable access to the broadband service needed for educational needs by encouraging the participation of affected schools in the FCC’s “Emergency Connectivity Program” or other later, similar programs designed to better ensure student access to high-speed broadband services.
6. Consolidated does not impose data caps on its broadband service packages nor does it assess early termination disconnection fees on subscribers who may have a need to disconnect after only being on their broadband service for a short period of time.
7. Consolidated understands the need to not only address internet access affordability issues but also the digital literacy concerns that prevent many lower-income individuals and families from subscribing to and using available broadband to improve their life circumstances. Accordingly, Consolidated will as part of its outreach to residents within the project area include as part of its hard copy promotional and informational materials, on its website, and in social media postings information geared toward improving the digital technology and skills of those individuals either subscribing, or interested in subscribing to broadband service.