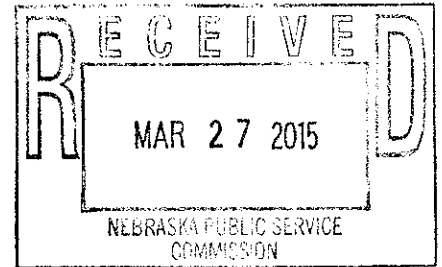


**BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Nebraska Public Service )  
Commission, on its own motion, seeking to )  
administer the Nebraska Universal Service )  
Fund's Broadband Program: Application to )  
the Nebraska Broadband Program received )  
from Windstream Communications in )  
cooperation with the Center for People in )  
Need )

Application No. NUSF-92.41



**PRE-FILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF BEATTY BRASCH**

**Q: Please state your name and business address.**

**A:** My name is Beatty Brasch. My business address is 3901 North 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Q: By whom are you employed and in what capacity?**

**A:** I am the Executive Director of the Center for People in Need.

**Q: Please describe your responsibilities at Center for People In Need.**

**A:** As Executive Director, I am responsible for overseeing the Center for People in Need, including all of its programs, and working with the community in achieving improvements for low-income individuals and families.

**Q: Please describe you professional background and experience.**

**A:** I have more than 40 years of experience as a community advocate for those with low income. During this time, I have run two major non-profits, the Lincoln Action Program and the Center for People in Need, and served as Lancaster County Election Commissioner.

**Q: Have you previously testified before the Nebraska Public Service Commission?**

**A:** No.

**Q: What is the purpose of your testimony?**

**A:** I am here today to support the Joint Request for Funding from Windstream and the Center for People In Need under the Commission's Nebraska Universal Service Fund Broadband Pilot Adoption Program and to familiarize you with the work of the Center for People in Need and its capability to address the Commission's objective of providing greater broadband access to low-income consumers. The Center supports any efforts by the Commission to provide Nebraskans with greater access to affordable broadband services.

While the Commission Staff has not recommended that the Joint Request for Funding filed by the Center and Windstream receive funding from the Pilot Program, the Center urges the Commission to nonetheless consider approving the Joint Request for Funding for the reasons discussed herein.

**Q: Please describe the services provided at the Center for People in Need.**

**A:** The Center for People in Need is a non-profit 501(c)(3) human services organization founded in 2003. The Center is located at 3901 North 27<sup>th</sup> Street in Lincoln. Its mission is to provide comprehensive services and opportunities to support low-income, high-needs families and individuals as they strive to lift themselves out of poverty and achieve economic self-sufficiency. The Center works exclusively with, and on behalf of, individuals and groups who are underserved and under-represented in the community. This population is

disproportionately comprised of low-income and ethnic minorities. Beneficiaries of agency services generally have incomes which fall below 150% of federal poverty guidelines and most are below 100% of federal poverty guidelines.

The Center aids those in the community through its programs and services, including:

- Neighborhood FOOD, which distributed over 2.2 million pounds of free food last year at four neighborhood food sites;
- Truckloads of Help, a program that distributed over \$38 million of free, new donated merchandise to 244 Nebraska human services agencies in the last two years;
- Job Skills Training (janitorial, warehousing, forklift, clerical, retail, food prep, child care), including the new TRADE (Tackling Recidivism and Developing Employability) Program at the Center, which assists those transitioning from the criminal justice system to the community, made possible by a \$1.08 million grant from the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services;
- Education Programs with Southeast Community College (English as a Second Language (ESL), General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and Adult Basic Education (ABE));
- Special Events (Giving ThanksGiving, Toyland for Kids, Tools for Education);
- Resource Handbook (information on free and low-cost goods, services, and assistance);
- and perhaps more significantly for this funding request, a Conference and Job Training Center with a 24-seat computer lab and classrooms, which is free to the public and has computer classes available to anyone who needs them.

In sum, the Center provides a variety of services to meet the basic, emergency needs of families and individuals through delivery of direct services.

**Q: Does the Center for People in Need collaborate with other human service agencies in the community?**

**A:** Yes, the Center also assists other human service agencies in the community that are providing for the social and economic needs of low-income, high-needs families and individuals. For example, the Nebraska Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (“Nebraska VR”) leases 20,000 square feet of the Center’s building to accommodate their staffing and program needs. This partnership provides unique benefits for clients from both agencies. The Center supports job skill development and education for low-income and Nebraska VR has employment counselors onsite to work with Center clients to provide additional support as participants in job skills training seek employment and enter the workforce. Part of the Center’s job skill development is to improve computer skills for low-income workers.

**Q: Does the Center for People In Need participate in any collaborative programs specifically addressing access to computer technology for low - income individuals?**

**A:** Yes, it does. The Center recently received a \$350,000 Accessing College through Technology Grant (“ACT Grant”) to address on-going concerns that low-income students attending Southeast Community College (“SCC”) lack the proper technology to succeed in their education. The funding for the ACT Grant will provide 945 students that attend SCC with high speed broadband internet access at home, a laptop, a modem to connect to the internet if needed, and a USB flash drive. Those at SCC believe that the ACT Grant will be very effective in bringing

people out of poverty by improving their education through better access to computers and internet services. While SCC provides on-campus access to computers and internet, many students, especially those with families, need the ability to get their homework done after they get home from work or get the kids to bed. This makes internet-based research assignments or required reading difficult, if not impossible, to complete. Many classes also require access to online programs to complete homework assignments or to access practice questions for future tests. There are also online discussion rooms where students can ask questions of their fellow students or professors. Having internet access at home is vital for these individuals to excel in their education which can lead them to better their lives and those of their dependent family members. Because of its capacity for assisting low-income families and work on poverty, the Center is also able to provide wraparound support to students in the program that is specifically designed to address their barriers to getting out of the poverty trap, such as clothing, gas vouchers, and personal care products.

**Q: Does the community served by the Center for People in Need have adequate access to internet/broadband services in their homes?**

**A:** In most cases, no. Research and surveys conducted by the Center of its low-income population over the last two years show that most respondents believe that the limit of affordability for broadband service is \$10.00 per month. However, suitable broadband service from local providers starts at nearly \$40.00 per month. Therefore, most of the community served by the Center cannot afford broadband services in their homes.

Every year the Center conducts a client survey of over 2000 households and publishes an annual report called *The Face of Poverty Today in Lincoln, Nebraska*. In 2011, when compared with the total low income population surveyed, ADC recipients make less, have less of an education, and are in single-parent homes: 46% of ADC clients have \$0-500/month income versus 27% of the entire survey. There were 167 of 261 two-adult households in which neither adult had more than an eleventh grade education. Fifty one percent of ADC clients are single; compare this with the 36% of the total population surveyed that are single. Such profound numbers demonstrates how economically disadvantaged Nebraskans will remain in poverty if they do not have access to education, and to actually succeed, students need computers and the internet.

**Q: Does the Joint Request for Funding address the need for computer training and technical support?**

**A:** Yes, it does. It is our understanding that NUSF Funds cannot be directly used for computer training activities, so the Joint Funding Request includes indications of financial support for computer training and compatible equipment and computers from three significant local Foundations. This separate community-based funding substantially leverages the funding from the Commission's Pilot Program in a fashion that is unique to all other applications for Pilot Program funding. CPIN has long devoted significant programming efforts to digital training for its low-income population and for several years has been seeking ways for its low-income population to access affordable broadband services in their homes.

**Q: Will the benefits of the Joint Request for Funding be directed exclusively to the low -income community?**

**A:** Yes. Unlike most of the other applications for funding being considered by the Commission under its Pilot Program, the Joint Request for Funding will serve exclusively the low-income community in Lincoln, Nebraska. Specifically, it will be **entirely** directed to children who attend Lincoln Public Schools (“LPS”) and their families, who qualify for the Free Lunch Program through LPS.

**Q: Does the Center For People in Need have any suggestions to the Commission for its next round of funding?**

**A:** Yes, the Center appreciates the Commission’s work to increase broadband access among low-income consumers in Nebraska. Affordable broadband service is of vital importance to Lincoln’s low-income population and is essential to furthering education, obtaining employment, and providing additional economic opportunities. The Center welcomes the opportunity to provide data to the Commission regarding the need in the community for broadband subsidies for low-income Nebraska consumers. However, given the enormous amount of time and resources it takes to design, construct and coordinate the development of a worthy application for funding, it would be extremely useful if the Commission would develop and articulate more concrete guidelines for proposals it seeks to accomplish its goals and objectives.

**Q: Does that conclude your testimony?**

**A:** Yes, thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of this very worthy Proposal.

**BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

<p>In the Matter of the Nebraska Public Service Commission, on its own motion, seeking to administer the Nebraska Universal Service Fund's Broadband Program: Application to the Nebraska Broadband Program Received from City of Lincoln.</p>	<p>) ) ) ) ) ) )</p>	<p>Application No. NUSF-92.20</p>
<p>In the Matter of the Nebraska Public Service Commission, on its own motion, seeking to administer the Nebraska Universal Service Fund's Broadband Program: Application to the Nebraska Broadband Program Received from Cox Telcom, LLC and the Salvation Army.</p>	<p>) ) ) ) ) ) )</p>	<p>Application No. NUSF-92.22</p>
<p>In the Matter of the Nebraska Public Service Commission, on its own motion, seeking to administer the Nebraska Universal Service Fund's Broadband Program: Application to the Nebraska Broadband Program Received from NebraskaLink Holdings.</p>	<p>) ) ) ) ) ) )</p>	<p>Application No. NUSF-92.31</p>
<p>In the Matter of the Nebraska Public Service Commission, on its own motion, seeking to administer the Nebraska Universal Service Fund's Broadband Program: Application to the Nebraska Broadband Program Received from Plainview Telephone Company and City of Plainview Library.</p>	<p>) ) ) ) ) ) )</p>	<p>Application No. NUSF-92.34</p>
<p>In the Matter of the Nebraska Public Service Commission, on its own motion, seeking to administer the Nebraska Universal Service Fund's Broadband Program: Application to the Nebraska Broadband Program Received from Windstream and the Center for People in Need.</p>	<p>) ) ) ) ) ) )</p>	<p>Application No. NUSF-92.41</p>
<p>In the Matter of the Nebraska Public Service Commission, on its own motion, seeking to administer the Nebraska Universal Service Fund's Broadband Program: Application to the Nebraska Broadband Program Received from CenturyLink/Adoption Program.</p>	<p>) ) ) ) ) ) )</p>	<p>Application No. NUSF-92.42</p>




In the Matter of the Nebraska Public Service Commission, on its own motion, seeking to administer the Nebraska Universal Service Fund's Broadband Program: Application to the Nebraska Broadband Program Received from Pinpoint Communications/Adoption Program.	) ) ) ) ) ) ) ) ) )	Application No. NUSF-92.43
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**NOTICE OF SERVICE**

COMES NOW, the Center for People in Need and hereby provides this notice of the filing of the Direct Testimony of Beatty Brash in the above matters. A copy of the same is attached hereto and has been served on all interested parties as indicated on the Certificate of Service.

Respectfully submitted this 27<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2015.

**CENTER FOR PEOPLE IN NEED**

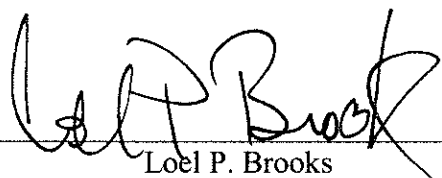
By 

Loel P. Brooks, #15352  
 Katherine S. Vogel, #23982  
 BROOKS, PANSING BROOKS, PC, LLO  
 1248 "O" Street, Suite 984  
 Lincoln, NE 68508-1424  
 lbrooks@brookspanlaw.com  
 kvogel@brookspanlaw.com

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that on this 27<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2015, an original, five copies and an electronic copy of Notice of Filing of the Direct Testimony of Beatty Brasch on behalf of the Center for People in Need in Docket No. NUSF-92.41 were delivered to:

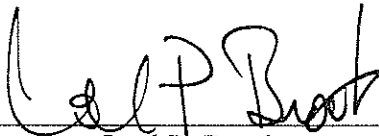
Sue Vanicek Nebraska Public Service Commission 1200 N Street, Suite 300 Lincoln, NE 68508 sue.vanicek@nebraska.gov	Shana Knutson Nebraska Public Service Commission 1200 N Street, Suite 300 Lincoln, NE 68508 shana.knutson@nebraska.gov
Brandy Zierott Nebraska Public Service Commission 1200 N Street, Suite 300 Lincoln, NE 68508 Brandy.zierott@nebraska.gov	

  
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Loel P. Brooks

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that on this 27<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2015, an electronic copy of Notice of Filing of the Direct Testimony of Beatty Brasch on behalf of the Center for People in Need in Docket No. NUSF-92.41 was delivered to:

<b>Paul Schudel</b> <b>James Overcash</b> pschudel@woodsaitken.com jovercash@woodsaitken.com	<b>Jeffrey Kirkpatrick</b> jkirkpatrick@lincoln.ne.gov
<b>David Young</b> dyoung@lincoln.ne.gov	<b>Deonne Bruning</b> deonnebruning@neb.rr.com
<b>Michael Mills</b> mmills@gettmanmills.com	<b>Norman Curtright</b> Norm.curtright@centurylink.com
<b>Adam Wiekamp</b> Adamw@binary.net	<b>Jason Axthelm</b> Jason.axthelm@nebraskalink.com
<b>Chris Karn</b> Chris.karn@pnpt.com	<b>Grant Dummer</b> plvwtelco@plvwtelco.net
<b>Russ Westerhold</b> rwesterhold@fraserstryker.com	<b>Matthew Feil</b> Matthew.feil@windstream.com
<b>Rob Logsdon</b> Rob.logsdon@cox.net	<b>Sharon Webber</b> Sharon.webber@windstream.com

  
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Loel P. Brooks