

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 as a RLEC Joint Application)
Nebraska Central)

Application No. NUSF-92.44



DIRECT TESTIMONY OF ANDY JADER IN SUPPORT OF APPLICATION

Q. Please state your name.

A. My name is Andy Jader.

Q. Please state your position with and the name of your current employer and provide a summary of your duties.

A. I am the Vice President – Administration for Nebraska Central Telephone Company (“NCTC”) and have served in this role since January 1992. My duties include oversight of NCTC’s business offices, end user and carrier billing, planning, cost studies, and industry relations.

Q. Please describe the Applicant and its business.

NCTC is an incumbent local exchange carrier subject to the jurisdiction of the Nebraska Public Service Commission (“Commission”). NCTC holds a certificate of public convenience and necessity issued by the Commission and provides wireline telecommunications service and Internet access service in parts of counties located in central Nebraska. NCTC presently serves approximately 5,000 voice lines and 3,000 broadband connections.

Q. What is the purpose of your testimony?

A. My testimony is provided to support NCTC's application filed with the Commission for funding under the Nebraska Universal Service Fund Broadband Adoption Program ("Application").

Q. Can you describe the Application and its objectives?

A. Yes. Our application is a joint application with five other RLECs in Nebraska. One of our main objectives is to meet the criteria as listed in the NUSF-92 Order that was entered on January 26, 2016. Specifically, the Commission allocated monies for projects which include adoption and availability projects designed to reach low-income consumers and non-adopters. In addition, the Commission stated its desire to see proposals designed to bring broadband availability to community centers or public facilities where low-income and elderly consumers can obtain public access to free broadband service and digital literacy training. Our goal is to reach out to non-adopters, including the elderly and low income by providing them with digital literacy training in community centers and public facilities.

As we stated in our Application, research has indicated that major barriers to broadband adoption include relevancy and usefulness. Research has also indicated that many subscribers of broadband lack a sufficient level of digital readiness to use online applications. Our application is designed to train individuals in our communities that may not understand the relevance and usefulness of the Internet and may lack the basic digital literacy skills to feel comfortable accessing the Internet. Through proper training, it is our goal for those who attend the training will be able to overcome these barriers.

The training programs for this application are designed to increase individuals' knowledge of the Internet and provide the relevant skill set in an easy to understand,

non-intimidating format. By increasing the confidence and digital literacy in current non-adopters, including the elderly and low income populations, we believe the objectives of increased adoption and utilization can be achieved.

In addition, we believe providing digital literacy training to those with low income could in fact enhance the value of the FCC's Lifeline for broadband program. We believe individuals who qualify for the program are more likely to apply for the program if they have the knowledge to use broadband to enrich them personally and professionally.

Q. How will the availability of the training be maximized?

A. To maximize the availability of this training, our training partner, Consortia Consulting, will utilize a "train-the-trainer" model. Consortia will train individuals from each local exchange carrier including NCTC, and will provide all necessary materials and resources needed for each local provider to offer successful workshops in their communities. By training individuals from NCTC and providing us with the requisite skills, tools, and materials, we can be the "go-to" place for training and supporting our community members in the use of the Internet with on-line skills and knowledge. We can repeat this training at multiple locations and at multiple times depending on the relevant needs of those individuals in the communities we serve.

Q. What is the extent of NCTC's broadband coverage and what is the current broadband penetration rate?

A. Broadband is available in all of NCTC's service territory. Our broadband penetration rate is approximately 73%.

Q. What proportion of the population located in your service area are considered elderly and what proportion are low income?

A. Based on the 2010 Census, approximately 21% of the population in our service area

where the training will be offered is 65 and older and approximately 12% of the population qualifies as low income.

Q. Where and when will your training sessions take place?

A. Potential locations for training include Burwell Public Library, Gibbon Public Library, North Loup Public Library, Sargent Public Library and the Sargent Community Center. Training sessions will be scheduled during the afternoon and evening with one or two training sessions per location depending on consumer interest.

The sessions will most likely occur in the Fall of 2016 over three to four months.

Additional sessions may be provided outside of the grant based upon the outcome of the training sessions.

Q. How many training sessions are you planning to have?

A. We plan to conduct up to eight training classes, dependent on demand, with individuals from our company providing the training. Our goal is to have ten individuals in each course.

Q. Will those attending the training be expected to bring their own device?

A. No, but participants will be allowed to bring their device if they desire. NCTC will have Chromebooks available for training purposes for those individuals who do not bring a suitable device.

Q. How will you inform the public of your training sessions?

A. NCTC plans to advertise the availability of the training sessions through the newspaper, flyers, and other advertising mediums such as community organization newsletters.

Q. Will you offer incentives to current non-adopters?

A. NCTC is considering providing discounted installation and/or a special introductory rate for new customers that have attended the broadband classes. In addition, we will offer

lifeline for broadband in accordance with the FCC's Lifeline Modernization Order.

Q. Are there additional details and supporting information in the Application?

A. Yes. The Application filed with the Commission contains a more detailed description of the proposed NCTC training program project, along with all required supporting information.

Q. Does this conclude your testimony?

A. Yes.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that on this 9th day of August, 2016, the original, five copies and an electronic copy of the foregoing pleading was delivered to:

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