

**LASTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND NETWORK CONNECTIVITY  
(LINC)  
GRANT PROGRAM**

**Version 1.0**

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# LASTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND NETWORK CONNECTIVITY (LINC) GRANT PROGRAM

## Executive Summary

The Kansas Office of Broadband Development (KOBD) at the Kansas Department of Commerce was established to help ensure all Kansans have the opportunity to live, work, learn and compete in a global economy by improving universal access to quality, reliable and affordable broadband.

KOBD is launching the Lasting Infrastructure and Network Connectivity (LINC) program which is a multi-faceted effort to improve broadband infrastructure, middle mile connectivity, and Internet Exchange Point capabilities within the State of Kansas. Through this program, applications will be solicited, and grants will be awarded for the two categories of capabilities. Separate sections outlined within this document will describe the solutions being requested, program guidelines and application requirements for each capability. The LINC program information is captured in two separate sections as documented below:

- Section 1: Broadband Infrastructure
- Section 2: Internet Exchange Point (IXP) and Middle Mile

Service providers may submit applications for any or all capabilities. Each application will be evaluated on its own merit. Service providers may submit multiple applications, specifically for Section 1 (Broadband Infrastructure) given specific geographic considerations for each type of application in these categories. Section 2 (Internet Exchange Point and Middle Mile) is a combined capability where an applicant may apply for either Middle Mile or Internet Exchange Point or for both capabilities. KOBD may choose to award grants to both capabilities or any one capability depending on the compelling information provided by the applicant pool.

## Noted Changes In The LINC Program As Compared To Previous CPF Program

The following table summarizes the major changes between the Capital Project Fund (CPF) Infrastructure program and the Lasting Infrastructure and Network Connectivity (LINC) program.

**Table 1: LINC Infrastructure Program/CPF Comparison**

Program Attribute Changes	CPF	LINC
Program Qualifying Broadband Speed	100/100 Mbps	100/20 Mbps
Price Freeze	3 years	N/A
Regional Award Distribution	Evaluated	Target priority
Covered Population	Evaluated	Target priority
Certified RDOF Areas Available for Award	Evaluated	See Determination of the Available Broadband Service section
Fiber-Based Focused	Yes	Yes + other technologies considered for award
Maximum Grant Amount (in millions)	\$10.0	\$5.0
Minimum Unserved Threshold	None	80%

FCC Service Availability Database	Form 477	Broadband Data Collection Fabric and Service Availability Data
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## **SECTION 1 – LINC BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

### **Background**

The LINC Broadband Infrastructure Program will focus on the deployment of broadband infrastructure to bring access to high-quality internet service to Kansas homes, businesses, and communities in areas of critical need that are not currently served by a wireline connection. The program's goal is to provide affordable universal access to reliable broadband services with a minimum of 100/20 Mbps services. Demands of remote learning and work, telehealth services, online business, e-government, and day-to-day quality of life implications crystalized that a compelling need exists in many areas across Kansas. Aligned with the American Rescue Plan Act, fiber-optic infrastructure will be the preferred solution as it provides a future-proof investment for bandwidth scalability as technology evolves with future bandwidth requirements. However, if it would be impracticable because of geography, topography, or excessive cost, other technologies will be considered to deliver a minimum of 100/20 Mbps speed requirements.

The LINC Broadband Infrastructure Program will deliver speeds that meet or exceed 100/20 Mbps. However, KOBD will continue to prioritize capabilities that support scalability to 1 Gbps symmetric services and higher. Cost per passing and the geographic challenges will be considered during the evaluation period relative to the access needs and overall derived benefits as a result of broadband deployment. All locations being served and funded through this program will be required to adhere to the minimum speeds listed above. Middle mile coupled with last mile solutions will also be considered. Opportunities that only involve middle mile infrastructure should be applied through SECTION 2, LINC INTERNET EXCHANGE POINT AND MIDDLE MILE PROGRAM GUIDELINES.

The LINC Broadband Infrastructure Program is intended to address the following priorities:

- Address a critical broadband need of the community to be served
- Lack of access to a reliable high-speed broadband connection
- Lack of affordable broadband
- Lack of reliable service
- Geographic Distribution: The State of Kansas may geographically distribute awards to ensure that all Kansas Economic Development Districts have the opportunity to participate in connecting Kansans
- Economically Distressed Counties and Covered Populations
- Applications submitted in the CPF Infrastructure Program that meet or are modified to meet the LINC Infrastructure Program Guidelines are eligible for re-submission. KOBD acknowledges that a re-scoping of the application may need to occur

In stewarding these public dollars, the KOBD also encourages partnership projects that optimize public infrastructure through a collective investment, such as:

- Municipal, County, or regional projects that are part of a community’s strategic broadband plan
- Scalable robust co-investment projects



- Partnership projects that involve broadband networks owned, operated by, or affiliated with local governments, non-profits, and co-operatives (providers with less pressure to generate profits and with a commitment to service entire communities) will be prioritized

## Program Overview

The objective of the LINC Broadband Infrastructure Program administered through the KOBD is to provide access to high-quality, reliable broadband in Kansas with priority given to applications that address unserved areas, economically distressed communities, and areas of compelling need. Applicants are expected to engage community leaders and stakeholders in the development of projects that are strategic, scalable, and bridge critical access gaps to support quality of life considerations and economic viability for Kansas citizens and communities. Key information for the program is as follows:

- LINC Broadband Infrastructure Program funding for the State of Kansas: \$20M-25M
- Required applicant match: 5% to 87% of the total project cost. Applicant match will be as low as 5% for difficult to serve areas, especially in rural Kansas, to as high as 87% in areas adjacent to existing well-served areas involving cost efficient expansion utilizing a sliding scale
- Solicitation date: May 5, 2023\*
- Application window: six (6) weeks
- Potential award date: September 2023
- Project period: twenty-four (24) months from award
- Maximum individual award: \$5M
- Funding source: American Rescue Plan Act - State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
- Governing Compliance Reference: Uniform Guidance ([2 CFR Part 200](#)) applies to this program, including the Cost Principles and Single Audit Act requirements
- Investments in Capital Projects must be carried out in ways that comply with applicable federal laws, including the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Among other requirements contained in [2 CFR Part 200](#), [2 CFR 200.216](#) implements certain provisions of the NDAA. It contains prohibitions on the use of grant funds to procure or obtain certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment provided or produced by designated entities, including certain entities owned or controlled by the People's Republic of China. In addition, [2 CFR 200.471](#) provides that certain telecommunications and video surveillance costs associated with [2 CFR 200.216](#) are unallowable

\* - Note: This is a tentative date until final guidelines are published

## Grant Timeline\*

The application window will be open for six (6) weeks. Applicant interviews for selected applications will follow applicant response windows, which will be followed by Kansas Department of Commerce leadership grant selection and award announcements.

**Table 2: LINC Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program Timeline**

Week #																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Application Window						Public Comment Window			Applicant Response to Public Comment Window			Grant Evaluations Completion		Applicant Interviews		Final Review	KDC Leadership Review
Grant Evaluation Period																	

- May 4, 2023: Grant Webinar, Guidelines Posted
- May 5, 2023: Application Window Open (6 weeks)
- June 19, 2023: Application Window Closes (5pm CST)
- June 27, 2023: Public Comment Window Opens (3 weeks)
- July 19, 2023: Public Comment Window Closes (5pm CST)
- July 27, 2023: Applicant Response to Public Comment Window Opens (2 weeks)
- August 10, 2023: Applicant Response to Public Comment Window Closes
- September 7, 2023: Applicant Interviews and Final Applicant Deliberations (4 weeks)
- September 2023: Awards Announced

\* - Note: This is a tentative timeline until final guidelines are published.

KOBD reserves the right to request additional information regarding applications throughout the application review period.

## Eligibility

### Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be authorized to provide broadband services in the proposed area. Eligible applicants include:

- Political subdivisions or entities of political subdivisions
- Tribal Governments
- Corporations
- Limited liability companies
- Co-operatives
- Electric Utilities
- Partnerships or other business entities
- Non-profit organizations
- Those authorized to provide broadband services in the proposed service area

Service providers will be required to be an active participant in federal subsidy programs prior to application submission to optimize digital inclusivity and adoption, including partnering with school districts and colleges to raise awareness of subsidy programs (i.e., Lifeline, Affordable Connectivity Program, Emergency Connectivity Fund). Service providers must offer a 100 Mbps service with a \$60 per month or less price point outside of the assistance of the federal subsidy. Service providers are also encouraged to partner with local housing agencies to take advantage of programs that benefit multi-dwelling units. The applicant must be an established service provider that has been operating for a minimum of three years in the State of Kansas.

### *Speed Guidelines*

- 100/20 Mbps is the minimum program speed. It is expected that this service speed and an associated price point are included as part of the customer offer within the application
- If 100/100 Mbps symmetric speed is already in the service provider's portfolio or a service provider has aligned to symmetric speeds within their broadband portfolio, the 100/100 Mbps service speed will be accepted as meeting the program minimum speed. It is expected that this service speed and an associated price point are included as part of the customer offer within the application. This is intended to prevent rework within the service provider community and minimize any impacts to existing customer bases
- If a service provider's minimum portfolio speed is greater than the minimum program speed of 100 Mbps, KOBD will accept a speed greater than 100 Mbps in lieu of the minimum program speed. However, the speed must be symmetric. It is expected that this service speed and an associated price point are included as part of the customer offer within the application
- If the minimum speed proposed is greater than 100 Mbps, the higher speed will still be evaluated against the affordability goals since the intent is to enable affordable high-speed broadband within the communities the application will serve. See "Affordability Goals" section for guidance
- Symmetric services are encouraged to be proposed to ensure Kansans have the greatest flexibility to maximize concurrent application use and digital economy participation

### *Affordability Goals*

- The affordability target for a 100 Mbps speed solution is defined as approximately \$60 per month, or less. This includes 100 Mbps asymmetric and symmetric services
- If a service provider's minimum program speed is greater than 100 Mbps and is proposed in the application (per Minimum Speed Guidelines section), the service provider should target a price point of approximately \$60 per month, or less, to meet the program affordability intent

### *Eligible Areas*

The purpose of the grant is to facilitate broadband access to unserved areas with demonstrated need and may include residential, business, and community anchor institution locations. Unserved is defined as a designated geographic area in which all households or businesses are without a fixed, terrestrial connection supporting at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speeds.

Proposed service areas are not required to be contiguous within an application. However, non-contiguous areas more than 10 miles apart within the same application must include an explanation of how the economic and community impact is the same for the proposed areas. Middle mile expenses are eligible for grant funding only when necessary for the provision of last-mile services described in the application. Any project containing middle mile only investment should submit the application using SECTION 2, LINC INTERNET EXCHANGE POINT AND MIDDLE MILE PROGRAM GUIDELINES. Any submitted application must include the applicant's most recent FCC Broadband Data Collection Fabric submitted mapping data for their Kansas service area to ensure KOBD has the latest broadband footprint information from the applicant. This is in addition to the required maps for the actual application area.

Areas that have been awarded RDOF funds will be considered eligible if:

- RDOF deployment timelines do not align with LINC requirements within twenty-four (24) months
- Certified RDOF award does not align with overall LINC program improved service intent

### Eligible Costs

The LINC Broadband Infrastructure Program funds up to \$5M of the eligible broadband infrastructure deployment costs for an eligible broadband project. Eligible broadband project expenses are expenses directly related to the deployment of a qualified broadband project, including 5% of pre-project development costs and uses, including data gathering, feasibility studies, engineering design, work related to environmental, historical, and cultural reviews, and permitting. All remaining pre-project costs are eligible under matching funds. Eligible costs also include materials, supplies, equipment, and construction of “last mile” infrastructure expenses. “Last-mile” is defined as the final leg connecting a broadband service provider’s network to the end-user customer’s on-premises telecommunication equipment. Broadband infrastructure must provide access to additional residential, business, and community anchor institution locations. Middle mile expenses are eligible for grant funding only when associated with last-mile services described in the application. Grant expenses must be incurred, and funds *expended* during the project period per the official grant agreement. Funds may be used for costs incurred after March 3, 2021, subject to approval. Further eligible cost details are listed below:

- Eligible project costs: deployment-related costs associated with the broadband infrastructure build required for engineering, installation, and/or acquisition of middle mile and last-mile broadband infrastructure to provide broadband access to additional residential, business, and community anchor institution locations. Middle mile expenditures are eligible only when necessary to provide last mile services

### Ineligible Costs

Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Acquisition of spectrum licenses
- Operating expenses
- Short-term operation leases
- Satisfaction of any obligation
- Payment of interest or principal on outstanding debt instruments
- Maintenance expenses related to the project
- Infrastructure not directly connected to service provision for an end-user in the proposed area
- Indirect labor costs (fringe/benefits, travel, meals, lodging, paid time off, etc.)
- Long-term capital asset purchases/leases, although cost allocation for use during the project period will be considered on a case-by-case basis
- Federally funded areas providing qualifying speeds of 100/20 Mbps or higher are not eligible if the project deployment timeline is within twenty-four (24) months

### Application Process

The KOBD will conduct a webinar informing potential applicants of the LINC Broadband Infrastructure Program grant opportunity, and the guidelines will be posted online for applicants to review. To apply for the grant award, applicants will be invited to submit information on an established online portal. This process will evaluate the project proposal, the technical project plan, and the proposed budget. Business, economic, and community development professionals and technical experts will be enlisted to review project submissions. Applicants being considered for the award will participate in a final

interview to be held via an interactive meeting platform. Once the final recommendation has been developed, the Kansas Department of Commerce leadership will review and finalize the award recommendations.

The applicant will be required to submit plans showing it complies with applicable employment laws and to ensure that its workforce is appropriately skilled. All applicants will be required to sign an agreement stating that they are in compliance with applicable employment laws.

## Application Submission

The application information allows potential applicants to begin formulating a response to the grant opportunity. The application window will be open for six (6) weeks. KOBD reserves the right to modify the program guidelines and/or application window timeframes to generate an adequate number of viable projects.

The application contains three primary sections: Project Proposal, Technical Project Plan, and Project Budget. The submission will require documents designated for public posting during a public comment period. Citizens will be provided with the opportunity to comment on proposed projects during the Public Comment Period. If multiple applications cover the same service area, KOBD will select the project that provides the most significant benefit to Kansans.

## Public Comment Period

To ensure transparency and the best use of taxpayer funds, the application and selection process will include a three (3) week public comment period followed by a two (2) week applicant response period. This process is intended to allow providers, elected officials, and constituents to either express support or inform KOBD of any issues or concerns with an application or its proposed service area. All comments expressing concern collected during the public comment period will be considered “challenges” and are subject to public disclosure. Public comment submitters will be deemed as “challengers”.

## Public Comments Regarding Service Areas With Projects Underway

For service areas where projects are already underway, the public comment shall contain information demonstrating that the provider has begun construction activities. The project must provide a broadband network in the proposed project area with access to the internet at speeds equal to or greater than 100 Mbps for downloading and 20 Mbps for uploading. The service provider must submit proof that work has started on a project to complete broadband infrastructure in the applicant’s proposed service area. Examples of evidence to prove that an infrastructure project is underway include:

- Planning and/or engineering plans and associated drawings
- Permitting requests
- Application for franchise agreement
- Generated bill of materials
- Purchase orders for equipment on the bill of materials
- Invoices for engineering or construction activities for building broadband infrastructure in proposed service area

- Provider commitment that the stated project would complete no later than twelve (12) months after the date grant awards are made under the program and would be funded by the service provider
- A map in .kmz format detailing the project underway service area containing the following:
  - Number of serviceable locations, each marked with an identifier within the proposed project area, including the speeds those serviceable locations are able to receive
  - Street-level data of customers receiving service within the proposed project area
  - Polygon defining the service in which the infrastructure is being placed
  - Fiber routes specified within the service area polygon
  - No other format other than .kmz will be accepted

Evidence submitted will be deemed proprietary in nature and not subject to disclosure. Challenger must provide a current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Broadband Data Collection (BDC) Fabric data set for their Kansas service area as well as the proposed project service area that documents the area under construction. Challenger must submit a populated template for locations within the proposed service area and the service provider’s entire broadband coverage capabilities for all of Kansas in accordance with the “Existing Broadband Service Availability Data For Proposed Service Area” and “Required Broadband Service Availability Data for Existing Service Areas” sections.

#### Public Comments Regarding Service Area With Projects Planned But Not Underway

For proposed service areas where projects are planned, but not underway, the public comment shall contain information demonstrating that the service provider has begun the planning phase of the project. If these conditions are met, the KOBD will consider denying the applicant’s proposal. However, to do so, public comment from challenger must include the following information for consideration:

- Provider commitment to completing construction of the broadband infrastructure and providing a broadband network to the proposed project area with speeds equal to or greater than 100/20 Mbps
- Provider commitment that the stated project will complete no later than eighteen (18) months after the date grant awards are made under the program and would be funded by the service provider
- Current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Broadband Data Collection Fabric for their Kansas service area as well as the proposed project service area as of June 30, 2022
- Minimum/maximum speeds available in the proposed project service area
- Challenger must submit populated template for locations within proposed service area and for the service provider’s entire broadband coverage capabilities for all of Kansas in accordance with the “Existing Broadband Service Availability Data For Proposed Service Area” and “Required Broadband Service Availability Data for Existing Service Areas” sections
- A map in .kmz format detailing the proposed service area containing the following:
  - Number of serviceable locations, each marked with an identifier within the proposed project area, including the speeds those serviceable locations are able to receive
  - Street-level data of customers receiving service within the proposed project area
  - Polygon defining the service in which the infrastructure is being placed
  - Fiber routes specified within the service area polygon
- Using the project area map submitted by the applicant, a map indicating where the protested serviceable locations are within the proposed project area



- Heat maps (if applicable) indicating received signal strength indicator (RSSI) in the challenged area

### Public Comments For Areas Where Service Already Exists

KOBD will require a provider submitting a challenge to provide speed test results in the proposed project area in which the provider submitting the challenge states that broadband service is currently available at minimum speeds of 100/20 Mbps. Such speed test results shall be provided in a way that documents the speed test provider, downstream and upstream speed results, the physical address of where the speed test was conducted, and associated latency. Additional attributes may be prescribed by KOBD, at their discretion. Lat/long or BDF fabric ID will be accepted in lieu of physical address. Where 100/20 Mbps or higher service exists, the public comment should include the following:

- Survey or date and time-stamped speed test data for at least 5% of consumers in the designated area from no later than March 2022. KOBD would accept speed test results from sources including, but not limited to, internal challenger sources, from the FCC’s Measuring Broadband America program or Performance Measures Testing program
- Consumer statement (name and address included) from the proposed service area that have been collected within nine months of the application due date
- Challenger must submit a populated template in accordance with the “Existing Broadband Service Availability Data For Proposed Service Area” and “Required Broadband Service Availability Data For Existing Service Areas” sections
- A map in .kmz format detailing the proposed service area containing the following:
  - Number of serviceable locations, each marked with an identifier within the proposed project area, including the speeds those serviceable locations are able to receive
  - Street-level data of customers receiving service within the proposed project area
  - Polygon defining the service in which the infrastructure is being placed
  - Fiber routes specified within the service area polygon

Submissions must provide the data source and/or methodology used to develop this information and provide the raw data used to justify this proposal. Please label any proprietary information so that it may be kept confidential.

### Other Public Comments

Other public comments include any other feedback that providers, elected officials, and constituents wish to express in support of or to document concerns regarding an application or its proposed service area. If a provider submits a public comment in this category, the following information is required:

- Challenger must submit populated template in accordance with the “Existing Broadband Service Availability Data For Proposed Service Area” and “Required Broadband Service Availability Data For Existing Service Areas” sections

### Applicant Response Period

Upon completion of the public comment period, KOBD will notify each applicant of such challenge(s). The applicant shall have two (2) weeks after notification to provide any supplemental information regarding the challenged application to KOBD (known as Applicant Response Period). If additional broadband service availability information is provided, the information shall follow the template

guidelines listed in the “Existing Broadband Service Availability Data For Proposed Service Area” section.

The KOBD will evaluate the information submitted in a challenge and will not award a grant if the information submitted is credible.

## Public Comments Compliance

The following items are applicable in instances where KOBD denies an application for a grant based on “Planned But Not Underway” and “Project Underway” challenges:

- The KOBD reserves the right to require a bond, Letter of Commitment (LOC) or financial guarantee from provider submitting the challenge, prior to application denial, to ensure project completion
- If the challenger does not provide broadband internet service to the proposed project area within eighteen (18) months, the challenger may not be able to challenge any grant application or apply for any grant programs within the State of Kansas for the following two fiscal years, starting from the end of the eighteen (18) month period
- If the challenger does not provide broadband internet service to the proposed project area of the “project underway” identified in the public comment within twelve (12) months of the program award, the challenger may not be able to challenge any grant application or apply for any grant programs within the State of Kansas for the following two fiscal years, starting from the end of the twelve (12) month period

## Program Inquiries

Questions regarding the application process will be accepted from the start of the application window (May 5, 2023) for two (2) weeks (May 18, 2023), after which no additional questions will be accepted. KOBD will review all submitted questions and provide a written response, which will be posted to the KOBD webpage for viewing one (1) week from submission.

## Key Project Data

Key project data will be captured for the applicant and the project, including:

- Primary Organizational Contacts (Project and Technical)
- Total Project Amount, Grant Funds Requested, and Matching Amount
- City(ies) and County(ies) impacted
- Projected download and upload speeds of the proposed project
- Anticipated impact: number of premises, number of households, number of businesses, number of community anchor institutions

## General Project Information

Applicant must provide the following information:

- Project Contact Information
- Project Name (Organization Name + Geographic Identifier)
- Proposed Target Reach
- Unserved area: Defined as a designated geographic area in which households or businesses are without a fixed, terrestrial connection supporting at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speeds



- Economically Distressed area: KOBBD will consider an area economically distressed if either the 2020 per capital BEA PCPI or PCMI metric is below the 80% threshold. . See Key Definitions section for the list of all Kansas counties that qualify as economically distressed
- Covered population: Aging individuals; incarcerated individuals, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who— (i) are English learners; and (ii) have low levels of literacy; individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group; and individuals who primarily reside in a rural area
- Requested Grant Amount
- Total Project Amount
- Counties in the Proposed Service Area
- Cities in the Proposed Service Area
- Broadband Data Collection Fabric for the proposed project service area
  - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_BDCFabric.xls
- Proposed Infrastructure Type
- Proposed Download/Upload Speed
- Number and Type of Locations Proposed to be served
  - Households
  - Education Institutions
  - Healthcare Organizations
  - Businesses
  - Municipal Organizations
  - Libraries
  - Total Community Anchor Institutions
- Is the proposed project part of Dig Once initiative or a co-investment project? [Y/N]
- Is the organization proposing the project a participant of the Affordable Connectivity Program? [Y/N]

### Project Proposal \*Publicly Posted\*

Please upload a zipped file containing the Project Proposal and Public Proposed Service Area map to be published on the program website for public comment.

- NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PublicProposal

Please include:

- An executive summary of the project: This narrative overview should include the goals of the project, needs addressed, a description of the proposed service area, community partners, stakeholders involved, and the intended impact
- A description of the location (City(s), County(s), etc.), proposed service areas, partners involved, and anticipated improvements
- Goals of the project and community need to address including whether the proposed area is unserved or economically distressed or what the compelling need is, if served
- The proposed infrastructure and access improvements planned, including the number of proposed connected premises and community anchor institutions, businesses, or other organizations and the recipients to be served by the project
- The short and long-term investment benefit to the community and service area proposed

## Service Area Map \*Publicly Posted\*

The public service area map must document the proposed service area including details for the proposed service locations. The public map should be in .kmz format and zipped with the Public Proposal.

The public map will reflect all details that need to be disclosed for the public comment phase of the program, including:

- An outlined shaded service area of the proposed area to be served
- The fiber route(s) and proposed service locations (use yellow for new fiber routes; use red for existing fiber routes, with opacity of the shaded proposed service area at 50%)
- Wireless projects: RF prediction map depicting the location of the transmitter, its footprint, and proposed service locations identified
- A legend defining all unique data points on the map
- FIBER Public Map (.kmz): Provide a public facing map that only depicts the proposed hardline routing (coax or fiber) to be funded by the grant
  - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PUBLIC\_FIBERMap
- FIXED WIRELESS PUBLIC MAP (.kmz): Provide an RF prediction map depicting the location of the transmitter and its footprint. The map should only indicate coverage areas where -78dBm or better is met
  - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PUBLIC\_FixedWirelessMap
- MOBILE WIRELESS Public Map (.kmz): Provide an RF prediction map depicting the location of the transmitter and its footprint as follows. Map should only indicate coverage areas where -102dBm or better is met
  - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PUBLIC\_MobileWirelessMap

## Community Partners, Roles And Letters Of Commitment

### Narrative

Please provide a narrative describing any community partners associated with the project's planning, promotion, adoption, or use. Describe each party's commitment and role in the project. Include any community anchor institutions (CAI) such as municipalities, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, educational institutions, healthcare organizations, libraries, public safety, or other CAIs, along with businesses, non-profits, and other community stakeholders.

### Letters Of Commitment, Letters Of Support

Please provide letters of commitment outlining the explicit commitment and role of committed partners, and letters of support as indicated. If the project is part of a Dig Once initiative, letters should be included from committed partners. For multiple partners, please consolidate into a single .pdf or .zip file.

Each letter should include the following:

- Dated letter with official organization's logo at top of letterhead
- Body of letter identifying the partner relationship and the role of the organization in the project
- Approving person's signature authorizing the commitment

Letters of commitment from the partners must include the following additional details:

- Planning, Engineering, and/or Construction partners
  - Validated estimated costs in proposed budget
  - Confirmation of their ability to complete their specific service/role in the project within the performance period
- Co-Investment partners
  - Co-investment funding source
  - The amount of co-investment
  - The specific broadband infrastructure program they are applying the co-investment funds to (i.e., the name of this program)
- Financial partners
  - Verification that the applicant has sufficient funds available to provide the minimum applicant match amount for the project
  - Letter must include minimum applicant match amount

### Justification For The Project

Provide a narrative to justify the need for this project and relevant data indicators to support the effort. Provide evidence to make a compelling case for the project relative to the proposed service area. This information should include the following:

- Detail related to broadband infrastructure deployment designed to directly enable work, education, and healthcare monitoring
- A description of how this project addresses the critical need of the community to be served
- A description of the proposed service area, including whether the area is unserved or economically distressed, serves a covered population, or if a specific, compelling need exists
- A description of this project will address lack of access to a reliable high-speed broadband connection and/or affordable reliable broadband

### Adoption, Affordability And Digital Inclusion Efforts

Adoption is a vital aspect of the success of these projects. Applicants will be asked to describe activities planned to increase adoption awareness. They are encouraged to demonstrate the affordability of the products and services within the proposed service area and how this will address current barriers to broadband access in their project proposal. Applicants are also encouraged to partner with local housing agencies to take advantage of programs that benefit multi-dwelling units. Applicants are expected to participate in ACP. An applicant must be a registered ACP participant or have an ACP application submitted prior to the closure of the LINC application window. Applicants must include the following in their narrative:

- Describe any activities planned to increase adoption awareness
- Describe any resources the applicant will be contributing to the adoption efforts (i.e., digital literacy training, marketing campaigns, surveys, low-cost service options, etc.)
- Provide supporting documentation that shows the organization is participating in subsidy programs to optimize digital inclusivity and adoption including partnering with school districts and colleges to raise awareness of subsidy programs such as Lifeline, Affordable Connectivity Program, Emergency Connectivity Fund, etc.

- For the LINC program, KOBD defines affordable broadband services as a \$60 per month or less service providing 100/20 Mbps or greater speeds. See the Affordability Goals section for further detail

## Technical Project Plan

The Technical Project Plan details the technical elements of the proposed build including:

- Proposed service area includes non-contiguous areas more than 10 miles apart [Y/N]
- If yes, provide an explanation of how the economic and community impact is the same for the proposed areas

## Technical Project Summary

Provide a technical summary of the proposed project including (Upload Template Provided):

- Overview of proposed improvements and scope of the project
- Explanation of why this area was chosen and is unlikely to be served without grant funding
- Explanation of terrain, population density or other factors contributing to cost
- Service-level options, including speed and latency offered
- Density per square mile of the proposed service area
  - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_TechProjectSummary

## Service Partners

Describe any service partners or subcontractors associated with the project's deliverables related to deployment and service delivery, including each partner's role in the project.

### Service Partners: Letters Of Support

Please upload letters of commitment or support from each service partner and subcontractor, if available. Please combine multiple letters into a single .pdf or .zip file.

- NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_ServicePartnerLetters

## Network Architecture Diagram

- Provide a comprehensive high-level, network architecture diagram for the project and upload a single .pdf or .zip file
- At a minimum, the diagram must include network connection point/connection to the point of presence, router(s) types, optical line termination units, optical network termination devices, central office/controlled environmental vaults, middle mile, and associated fiber physical connectivity types

## Proprietary Detailed Map Of The Proposed Area

The private map will reflect all details of the public map, plus other proprietary information needed by KOBD to fully evaluate the application of the proposed service area and must include the following:

- Identification of each proposed last mile fiber routes, including connections to wireless towers if enabled
- Identification of handholes, point of presence (POP) connectivity or tie-point(s) to existing network, last mile fiber, and middle mile fiber
- Identification of each location to be enabled. Each location will be sequentially numbered so that each location is easily identified on GIS maps for the proposed network in .kmz format

## Determination Of The Available Broadband Service

The KOBD desires to enable as many unserved areas as possible within the LINC program while preventing any overbuild in areas with qualifying broadband speeds (100/20 Mbps). To accomplish this goal, the proposed service area information will be compared with the FCC's BDC data set to assess the Degree of Unserved (DoU) on a per-location basis. The data set for the applicant's proposed service area will be compared to for DoU evaluation will be the Copper, Cable, Fiber to the Premise, Fixed Wireless, and Unlicensed Fixed Wireless service FCC BDC data sets. As such, each applicant will provide location data for their proposed service area for their respective application submission(s) so that the evaluation can occur post application submission. Applicants must adhere to the Fixed Broadband Availability Data Specifications Requirements section which provides the details regarding the formatting of the requested data. KOBD reserves the right to invalidate any application, public comment, or applicant response to a public comment should there be non-compliance with the data formatting requirements.

KOBD will determine the DoU by comparing the proposed service area location enablement with the existing broadband service availability documented in the FCC's BDC data set.

To ensure submitted applications target unserved areas, KOBD will only accept applications with a DoU of 80% or greater. An unserved area is defined as a geographic region that has 80% or more locations that do not receive a minimum 100/20 Mbps broadband speeds via fixed, terrestrial-based infrastructure. The DoU can be calculated with the following equation:

$$\text{DoU} = \frac{\text{Number of Location IDs without 100/20 Mbps services within the proposed service area}}{\text{Number of Locations IDs within the proposed service area}} = \%$$

The KOBD encourages applicants to calculate an application's DoU prior to submission to ensure it meets the 80% or greater DoU criteria. Technologies claiming ubiquitous coverage across all locations over a physical medium known to have service degradation based on distance from central offices/head ends/towers will be assessed in greater detail. Submitted location IDs that are designated as "served" by an unreliable technology such as unlicensed fixed wireless or mobile wireless may, after evaluation by KOBD, be excluded from the equation's numerator based on ubiquitous coverage capabilities or other supplemental data provided by the applicant.

Refer to the most current FCC Broadband Data Collection tool data to determine existing broadband service levels and identify unserved areas with the proposed service area map.

All attached files requested within the Determination of the Available Broadband Service section must be uploaded in Comma Separated Value (.csv) format. The files must also match the specifications in the Fixed Broadband Availability Data Specifications Requirements section within this document.

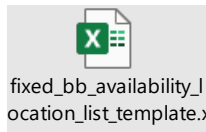
### Applicant's Proposed Service Area Data

The attached Excel spreadsheets provide the template for the applicant to populate the specific locations that will be enabled with their respective proposed service area. The applicant must provide row-by-row input for each location served by the application. The data set format is listed in the Fixed Broadband Availability Data Specifications Requirements Section and complies with the FCC's BDC

data set submission requirements and supports both the Locations list and Polygon submission formats. Either format is acceptable to submit in the application process.

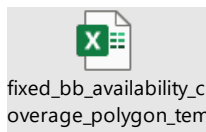
### Locations

- Applicant provides a list of locations that will be served by the proposed service area in a tabular format, where the locations are based on the FCC’s Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric
  - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_EvidenceData



### Polygon

- Applicant provides a polygon representing the availability of the provider’s service in acceptable GIS format (see Fixed Broadband Availability Coverage Maps Section for specific data format details). GIS formatted file must be zipped prior to providing. Associated .dbf file must adhere to the attached template
  - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_EvidenceData



### Existing Broadband Service Availability Data For Proposed Service Area

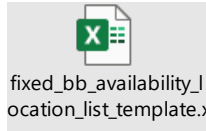
The attached excel spreadsheet provides the template for the applicant to populate the current broadband service availability for the proposed service area, per the FCC BDC data set. The attached template must be populated with each technology data set that is listed in the template (Cable, Copper, Fiber to the Premise, Licensed Fixed Wireless, and Unlicensed Fixed Wireless). Each technology type being used to enable a location should be populated in this spreadsheet. Example: Service Provider A uses Copper, Fiber, and Unlicensed Fixed Wireless to deliver broadband services within their service area. The locations served by copper, with associated data, will be uploaded on the copper worksheet, the locations served by Fiber will be uploaded on the Fiber to the Premise worksheet, and the locations served by Unlicensed Fixed Wireless will be uploaded on the Unlicensed Fixed Wireless worksheet, and submitted as one file.

The FCC BDC submission data set that should be used to populate this template is dated June 30, 2022. KOBD will use the FCC Broadband Data Collection service availability information from December 31, 2022 if it becomes available before or during the application evaluation window and does not impact the overall award timeline.

### Locations

- Applicant provides a list of locations that are served in the proposed service area, in a tabular format, where the locations are based on the FCC’s Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric
  - NAMING CONVENTION:  
LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_ExistingProposedEvidenceData



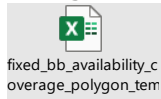


*Polygon*

- Applicant provides a polygon representing the availability of the provider’s existing service(s) in acceptable GIS format (see Fixed Broadband Availability Coverage Maps Section for specific data format details). GIS formatted file must be zipped prior to providing. Associated .dbf file must adhere to attached template

- NAMING CONVENTION:

LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_ExistingProposedEvidenceData



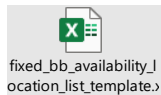
**Required Broadband Service Availability Data For Existing Service Areas**

As part of participating in the LINC Program, KOBD requires that existing service providers submit their most up to date broadband coverage capabilities for all of Kansas in FCC BDC format to complement the LINC application. The FCC BDC submission data set that should be used to populate this template is dated June 30, 2022. KOBD will use the FCC Broadband Data Collection service availability information from December 31, 2022 if it becomes available before or during the application evaluation window and does not impact the overall award timeline.

The attached excel spreadsheet provides the template for the applicant to populate the current broadband service availability, per the FCC BDC data set. The attached template must be populated with one technology data set listed in the template (Cable, Copper, Fiber to the Premise, Licensed Fixed Wireless, and Unlicensed Fixed Wireless). If a service provider is offering more than one technology within their existing broadband service area, a separate file must be submitted for each type of technology being used to deliver broadband services. Example: Service Provider A delivers broadband over Cable, Licensed Fixed Wireless, and Fiber to the Premise. Service provider A will submit three separate files (one for Cable, one for Licensed Fixed Wireless and one for Fiber to the Premise) documenting existing broadband services being provided within their respective service area.

*Locations*

- Applicant provides a list of locations that are served in the existing service area, in a tabular format, based on the FCC’s Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric
  - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_EntireExistingEvidenceData

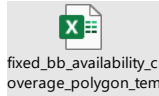


*Polygon*

- Applicant provides a polygon representing the availability of the provider’s existing service(s) in acceptable GIS format (see Fixed Broadband Availability Coverage Maps Section for specific

data format details). GIS formatted file must be zipped prior to providing. Associated .dbf file must adhere to the attached template

- NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_EntireExistingEvidenceData



## Fixed Broadband Supporting Data And Required Attestations

All applicants, public comment providers and applicant respondents to public comments must comply with The FCC’s “Broadband Data Collection: Data Specifications for Biannual Submission of Subscription, Availability, and Supporting Data” document dated February 7, 2023. Section 7, Fixed Broadband Supporting Data (<https://us-fcc.box.com/v/bdc-availability-spec>) defines the specific data attributes of the defined service area and associated location IDs when submitting location data in support of applications, public comments, and applicant responses to public comments. At the time of submitting respective data sets, an attestation will be required stating that each data submission is in compliance with FCC BDC standards on how the respective provider generated their coverage information.

KOBD will also require an attestation from each provider stating that their submitted data sets were uploaded into the FCC’s BDC upload tool and passed all the accuracy tests prior to submitting to KOBD. If the data was not validated through the FCC BDC accuracy tests and is submitted, the associated application, public comment, and applicant response will be disqualified from consideration.

### Other Data Providing Evidence Of Unserved Area

As the FCC is collecting challenges for locations where there are qualifying speed service availability discrepancies between service providers and end users, some challenges may not be resolved before the LINC Program application window closes. As such, KOBD will accept and evaluate the following data to determine broadband service availability as applicable:

- Speed test survey data for a majority of consumers in the designated area. KOBD will accept speed test data time stamped after March 2022. KOBD would accept speed test results from sources including, but not limited to, internal challenger sources, from the FCC’s Measuring Broadband America program or Performance Measures Testing program
- Documentation of existing infrastructure attributes indicating unserved areas
- Documentation from website of reported service provider stating that service is not available in the proposed project area
- Letters from residents, community representatives and other stakeholders that attest to a lack of qualifying broadband service speeds (100/20 Mbps)

Data may be in .pdf, .doc, .xls, or other commonly available formats. Multiple documents should be combined into a single .zip or .pdf file.

### Broadband Service Availability Justification

The following justification documentation must be provided in the project narrative:



- For the locations where the FCC BDC data shows an existing service provider offering speeds equal to or greater than 100/20 Mbps, the applicant must explain why grant funding should be used to enable speeds that already meet or exceed program requirements

The presence of existing infrastructure alone does not disqualify an area from the grant process. For example, fiber for residential service may be constructed in an area but service is not yet available to specific locations, or the address lacks a service drop that can be provided within ten (10) business days of service order. Additionally, fiber might run through an area but not be available for residential services along that route (e.g., backhaul service to a tower location).

A location ID will be deemed ineligible if service is available at terrestrial, fixed 100/20 Mbps speeds at specific locations.

Areas already receiving funding for broadband expansion from other sources are ineligible. Ineligible areas include but are not limited to:

- Areas awarded Coronavirus Relief Fund Connectivity Emergency Response Grants (CERG) with more than 100/20 Mbps speeds enabled
- Areas awarded Broadband Acceleration Grants for Year 1 (BAG 1.0)
- Areas awarded Broadband Acceleration Grants for Year 2 (BAG 2.0)
- Areas awarded NTIA Tribal Broadband Grants
- Areas with certified awards thru the FCC Rural Development Opportunity Fund (RDOF) with more than 100/20 Mbps wireline/fiber speeds enabled
- United States Treasury Capital Projects Fund (CPF) Broadband Infrastructure grant awards

*Note: Areas where applicants forfeited grant awards will remain eligible.*

Previous KOBD programs awarded to a municipality to serve community anchor institutions for public safety, or an enterprise-focused award will not be disqualified for a new residential proposal.

***NOTE:*** Applicants falsifying location eligibility may be subject to grant rescindment and/or restricted from future program participation.

## Fixed Broadband Availability Data Specifications Requirements

Facilities-based providers of fixed broadband service must report data on their service availability and proposed service availability within Kansas for the LINC Program in one of two formats:

- A list of locations served by the provider, in a tabular format, where the locations are based on the FCC's Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric, or
- A polygon representing the availability of the provider's service in one of the acceptable GIS formats listed below

Service provider applicants or public commenters must use one of these formats for their fixed availability data. They may not submit fixed availability data in multiple formats.

Regardless of the format chosen, providers of fixed broadband service must base their service availability footprints on the definitions and standards specified in the Broadband DATA Act and adopted by the FCC. Specifically, providers reporting fixed service must identify the specific locations in areas where they have built out their broadband network infrastructure and to which they either

currently provide service or could perform a standard broadband installation. A standard installation is defined in the Broadband DATA Act as “[the] initiation by a provider of fixed broadband internet access service [within ten (10) business days of a request] in an area in which the provider has not previously offered that service, with no charges or delays attributable to the extension of the network of the provider.”

### Fixed Wired Reporting

Providers of fixed wired broadband service must not exceed specific maximum buffer distances around their aggregation points when reporting service availability based on their wired technologies. Buffer distances from the aggregation point to the location served are measured in route distance and must reflect where providers have deployed their last-mile distribution networks. Providers may not create and submit a coverage area based on an aerial (or “as the crow flies”) radius around an aggregation point. Below is a summary of the maximum buffer sizes:

- For providers using Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) technologies to offer speeds at 25/3 Mbps or greater, the maximum buffer is a distance of 6,600 route feet from the DSL Access Multiplexer (DSLAM) to the covered premises
  - Providers that make fixed DSL service available at a maximum speed less than 25/3 Mbps in an area will not be subject to a maximum buffer requirement for such areas. However, these coverage areas must include only the areas where the provider has actually built out their broadband network infrastructure, such that they are able to provide service or could perform a standard broadband installation
- For providers using Hybrid-Fiber Coax (HFC or cable) technology, the maximum buffer is 12,000 route feet from the aggregation point to the customer premises
- For providers using Fiber to the Premises (FTTP or fiber) technologies, the maximum buffer is 196,000 route feet from the Optical Line Terminal (OLT) to the Optical Network Termination (ONT)
- For all fixed wired technologies, the buffer distance from the aggregation point shall include the drop distance. The drop distance is a maximum of 500 feet from a deployed line or distribution network infrastructure to the parcel boundary of a served location

These buffers are not safe harbors or substitutes for a provider’s own determination of the extent of the actual availability of its service. Instead, the buffers are maximum distances that wireline broadband service providers may not exceed in filing their availability data except where a specific exception applies. In their availability reporting, filers should only include locations outside of the prescribed buffers under the following circumstances:

- The filer has served a current or former subscriber using speed and technology
- The locations are in an area in which the provider is receiving or has received universal
  - service support to provide broadband service—or has other federal, state, or local obligations to make service available in the area—and the provider makes service available in that area
- The Commission has granted a waiver to exceed the buffers based on a specific shown by the provider

## Terrestrial Fixed Wireless Reporting

Fixed wireless providers that submit availability information in a coverage polygon format must base their coverage on propagation modeling. Fixed wireless providers must use the following parameters in their propagation modeling when generating their coverage for BDC:

- A minimum 75% cell edge probability
- A minimum 50% cell loading factor and
- Receiver heights within a range of four to seven meters

**Table 3: Terrestrial Fixed Wireless Reporting Description**

Section	Data Item	Entities	Method of Submission	Description/Notes
Fixed Broadband Availability Location Lists	Fixed Broadband Coverage (Location List)	Fixed Service Providers Governmental Entities Third Parties	File Upload	A list of locations (coded from the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric) indicating the extent of a fixed service provider's broadband service area in tabular format.
Fixed Broadband Availability Coverage Maps	Fixed Broadband Coverage (Polygon Map)	Fixed Service Providers Governmental Entities Third Parties	File Upload	Coverage map(s) with polygon GIS data indicating the extent of a fixed provider's broadband service availability in an area.

### Fixed Broadband Availability Location Lists

If an applicant chooses to submit availability data using this format, the file must contain a list of the locations served by a fixed broadband provider. The locations should match and conform to the locations in the FCC's Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric, which will include a unique identifier, the geographic coordinates, and, where available, the address(es) associated with each location.

Because a provider could potentially serve an individual location using multiple technologies, each with its own maximum advertised download and upload speeds, latency flag, and business/residential category, a location can be included multiple times. However, each technology offered to an individual location should have only one record for each combination of location, technology, and business/residential category (in cases where a provider offers a distinct residential service and distinct business service at a location). The record should include a single maximum download speed, maximum upload speed, and latency flag for that technology.

Any service that does not offer maximum advertised speeds that are at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload should be reported as either 10/1 Mbps or 0/0 Mbps based on the guidance in the table below. When service is offered to a location with multiple potential or existing connections, the filer should report the maximum advertised download and upload speeds offered to end users at the location (not the aggregate bandwidth deployed by a provider's network to the building). If no maximum downstream or upload speeds are advertised for the service, enter the speeds that end users should expect to receive.

The file with the list of locations where the service is available must be uploaded in Comma Separated Value (.csv) format and match the specifications in the table below. All values are required. Additional information on the formatting of the Location ID field will be provided at a later date.

**Table 4: Fixed Broadband Availability Location Attributes**

Field	Header	Data Type	Example	Description/Note
<b>Provider ID</b>	provider_id	Integer	131425	A unique 6-digit code generated by the FCC that identifies each service provider. The list of Provider IDs will be posted on the FCC's BDC website at: <a href="http://www.fcc.gov/BroadbandData/filers">http://www.fcc.gov/BroadbandData/filers</a> .  <i>- When the entity is a service provider, the values in this field can be null and will be ignored, but the field must be included in the file.</i>
<b>Brand Name</b>	brand_name	String	Verizon	Name of the entity or service advertised or offered to consumers.
<b>Location ID</b>	location_id	String		A unique identifier for the location served. A Location ID will be included for each location in the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric when the Fabric is made available to filers.
<b>Technology</b>	technology	Integer	50	Code for the technology used for the deployed service. The value must be one of the following codes (see Section 4 for a description of each technology code):  <i>10 – Copper Wire 40 – Coaxial Cable / HFC 50 – Optical Carrier / Fiber to the Premises 60 – Geostationary Satellite 61 – Non-geostationary Satellite 70 – Unlicensed Terrestrial Fixed Wireless 71 – Licensed Terrestrial Fixed Wireless 72 – Licensed-by-Rule Terrestrial Fixed Wireless  0 – Other</i>

Field	Header	Data Type	Example	Description/Note
<b>Maximum Advertised Download Speed</b>	max_advertised_download_speed	Integer	1000	<p>Maximum advertised download speed, in Mbps, offered to the end user(s) at the location. Enter the value as an integer. The system will reject a file if the value in this field is not an integer and does not meet the requirements below. It will not round or truncate decimals.</p> <p><u>Service Below 25/3 Mbps</u></p> <p>Regarding the maximum advertised speeds of the service offered, if the download is less than 25 Mbps <u>or</u> the upload is less than 3 Mbps, but either the download or upload speed is at least 200 kbps, then report using one of the following service tiers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) If the maximum advertised download speed is less than 10 Mbps <u>or</u> the maximum advertised upload speed is less than 1 Mbps: <b>enter 0</b>. The system will ask the filer to confirm that the service offered falls in this tier.</li> <li>2) If the maximum advertised download speed is greater than or equal to 10 Mbps <u>and</u> the maximum advertised upload speed is greater than or equal to 1 Mbps: <b>enter 10</b>.</li> </ol> <p>For example, speed combinations of 50/2 Mbps (down/up), 10/10 Mbps, and 10/20 Mbps should all be reported as 10 in this field (since they all meet or exceed a 10/1 Mbps speed for both download and upload). Speed combinations of 5/5 Mbps and 10/0.768 Mbps should report 0 in this field (since they do not meet a 10/1 Mbps speed).</p> <p><u>Service At or Above 25/3 Mbps</u></p> <p>If the service offered has a maximum advertised download speed that is greater than or equal to 25 Mbps <u>and</u> a maximum advertised upload speed that is greater than or equal to 3 Mbps, enter the value of the advertised download speed in Mbps as an integer.</p> <p>If no downstream speed is advertised for the service, enter the speed that end users should expect to receive.</p>

Field	Header	Data Type	Example	Description/Note
<b>Maximum Advertised Upload Speed</b>	max_advertised_upload_speed	Integer	1000	<p>Maximum advertised upload speed, in Mbps, associated with the maximum advertised download speed offered to the end user(s) at the location. Enter the value as an integer. The system will reject a file if the value in this field is not an integer; it will not round or truncate decimals.</p> <p><u>Service Below 25/3 Mbps</u></p> <p>Regarding the maximum advertised speeds of the service offered, if the download is less than 25 Mbps <u>or</u> the upload is less than 3 Mbps, but either the download or upload speed is at least 200 kbps, then report using one of the following service tiers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) If the maximum upload speed is less than 1 Mbps <u>or</u> the download speed is less than 10 Mbps: <b>enter 0</b>. The system will ask the filer to confirm that the service offered falls in this tier.</li> <li>2) If the maximum upload speed is greater than or equal to 1 Mbps <u>and</u> the download speed is greater than or equal to 10 Mbps: <b>enter 1</b>.</li> </ol> <p>For example, speed combinations of 50/2 Mbps (down/up), 10/10 Mbps, and 10/20 Mbps should all report 1 in this field (since all meet or exceed a 10/1 Mbps speed for both download and upload). Speed combinations of 5/5 Mbps and 10/0.768 Mbps should report 0 in this field (since they do not meet a 10/1 Mbps speed).</p> <p><u>Service At or Above 25/3 Mbps</u></p> <p>If the service offered has a maximum advertised upload speed that is greater than or equal to 3 Mbps paired with a maximum advertised download speed that is greater than or equal to 25 Mbps, enter the value of the advertised upload speed in Mbps as an integer.</p> <p>If no upstream speed is advertised for the service, enter the speed that end users should expect to receive.</p>

Field	Header	Data Type	Example	Description/Note
<b>Latency</b>	low_latency	Boolean Integer	1	The offered service is low latency, defined as having round-trip latency of less than or equal to 100 milliseconds based on the 95 <sup>th</sup> percentile of measurements.  <i>- Value must be one of the following codes:</i>  <i>0 - False</i> <i>1 - True</i>
<b>Business / Residential Category</b>	business_residential_code	Enumerated String {1}	B	Enumerated character identifying whether the service at the location is business-only, residential-only, or offered to both business and residential customers.  <i>Value entered must be one of the following codes:</i>  <i>B - Business-only service</i> <i>R - Residential-only service</i> <i>X - Business and Residential service</i>  If distinct residential and business services, each with different maximum advertised download and upload speeds, are offered at the same location, enter those services as separate records, one with R and one with B.

### Fixed Broadband Availability Coverage Maps

If a fixed broadband provider chooses to submit availability data as a coverage polygon, rather than the list of locations described in Section 6.1 of the FCC’s “Broadband Data Collection: Data Specifications for Biannual Submission of Subscription, Availability, and Supporting Data” (dated February 7, 2023), the data file must contain GIS data with polygon geometries and associated data attributes. The data must be submitted in one of the following GIS data formats: ESRI Shapefile, ESRI FileGDB, GeoJSON, or Geopackage. The required specifications for the data attribute table in the chosen GIS data file are outlined below in Table 5: GIS Data Attributes.

Coverage polygons must only encompass the locations to which the provider either currently provides service or could perform a “standard broadband installation” as defined in the FCC’s rules. Each polygon should represent a unique combination of the following fields: providerid, brandname, technology, maxdown, maxup, lowlatency, and bizrescode. When a service provider reports multiple technologies for the coverage areas, the different technologies (such as DSL and fiber) can overlap. In addition, in cases where a provider offers a distinct residential service and distinct business service in an area, each with its own distinct maximum advertised download and upload speed, those coverage areas can overlap. Otherwise, coverage areas for the same technology cannot overlap, and if residential or business mass market service is offered at different download and upload speed combinations using the same type of technology, the filer should report the highest speeds offered (based on the guidance below). If service is offered at different *maximum* speeds in different areas, the

provider must submit separate polygons representing the coverage areas of those different speeds, but the polygons must not overlap.

If no maximum downstream or upload speeds are advertised for the service, enter the speeds that end users should expect to receive.

Providers may split each map up into multiple files to facilitate the generation and submission of the GIS data, as long as the polygons in one file do not overlap with the polygons in another file for the same technology.

## GIS Data Attributes

**Table 5: GIS Data Attributes**

Data Attribute Field	Data Type	Example	Description/Notes
<b>providerid</b>	Integer	131425	A unique 6-digit code generated by the FCC that identifies each service provider. The list of Provider IDs will be posted on the FCC's BDC website at <a href="http://www.fcc.gov/BroadbandData/filers">http://www.fcc.gov/BroadbandData/filers</a> .  <i>- When the entity is a service provider, the values in this field can be null and will be ignored, but the field must be included in the file.</i>
<b>brandname</b>	Text	Verizon	Name of the entity or service advertised or offered to consumers.
<b>technology</b>	Enumerated Integer	50	Code for the technology used for the service offered. The value must be one of the following codes (see Section 4 for a description of each technology code):  <i>10 – Copper Wire 40 – Coaxial Cable / HFC 50 – Optical Carrier / Fiber to the Premises 60 – Geostationary Satellite 61 – Non-geostationary Satellite 70 – Unlicensed Terrestrial Fixed Wireless 71 – Licensed Terrestrial Fixed Wireless 72 – Licensed-by-Rule Terrestrial Fixed Wireless  0 – Other</i>



Data Attribute Field	Data Type	Example	Description/Notes
maxdown	Integer	100	<p>Maximum advertised download speed offered to the end user(s) at the location in Mbps as an integer. The system will reject a file if the value in this field is not an integer and does not meet the requirements below. It will not round or truncate decimals.</p> <p><u>Service Below 25/3 Mbps</u></p> <p>Regarding the maximum advertised speeds of the service offered, if the download is less than 25 Mbps <u>or</u> the upload is less than 3 Mbps, but either the download or upload speed is at least 200 kbps, then report using one of the following service tiers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If the maximum advertised download speed is less than 10 Mbps <u>or</u> the maximum advertised upload speed is less than 1 Mbps: <b>enter 0</b>. The system will ask the filer to confirm that the service offered falls in this tier.</li> <li>2. If the maximum advertised download speed is greater than or equal to 10 Mbps <u>and</u> the maximum advertised upload speed is greater than or equal to 1 Mbps: <b>enter 10</b>.</li> </ol> <p>For example, speed combinations of 50/2 Mbps (down/up), 10/10 Mbps, and 10/20 Mbps should all be reported as 10 in this field (since they all meet or exceed a 10/1 Mbps speed for both download and upload). Speed combinations of 5/5 Mbps and 10/0.768 Mbps should report 0 in this field (since they do not meet a 10/1 Mbps speed).</p> <p><u>Service At or Above 25/3 Mbps</u></p> <p>If the service offered has a maximum advertised download speed that is greater than or equal to 25 Mbps <u>and</u> a maximum advertised upload speed that is greater than or equal to 3 Mbps, enter the value of the advertised download speed in Mbps as an integer.</p> <p>If no downstream speed is advertised for the service, enter the speed that end users should expect to receive.</p>

Data Attribute Field	Data Type	Example	Description/Notes
maxup	Integer	10	<p>Maximum advertised upload speed, in Mbps, associated with the maximum advertised download speed offered to the end user(s) at the location. Enter the value as an integer. The system will reject a file if the value in this field is not an integer; it will not round or truncate decimals.</p> <p><u>Service Below 25/3 Mbps</u></p> <p>Regarding the maximum advertised speeds of the service offered, if the download is less than 25 Mbps <u>or</u> the upload is less than 3 Mbps, but either the download or upload speed is at least 200 kbps, then report using one of the following service tiers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If the maximum upload speed is less than 1 Mbps or the download speed is less than 10 Mbps: enter 0. The system will ask the filer to confirm that the service offered falls in this tier.</li> <li>2. If the maximum upload speed is greater than or equal to 1 Mbps <u>and</u> the download speed is greater than or equal to 10 Mbps <b>1</b>.</li> </ol> <p>For example, speed combinations of 50/2 Mbps (down/up), 10/10 Mbps, and 10/20 Mbps should all report 1 in this field (all meet or exceed a 10/1 Mbps speed for both download and upload). Speed combinations of 5/5 Mbps and 10/0.768 Mbps should report 0 in this field (since they do not meet a 10/1 Mbps speed).</p> <p><u>Service At or Above 25/3 Mbps</u></p> <p>If the service offered has a maximum advertised upload speed that is greater than or equal to 3 Mbps paired with a maximum advertised download speed that is greater than or equal to 25 Mbps, enter the value of the advertised upload speed in Mbps as an integer.</p> <p>If no upstream speed is advertised for the service, enter the speed that end users should expect to receive.</p>
lowlatency	Boolean Integer	1	<p>The offered service is low latency, defined as having round-trip latency of less than or equal to 100 milliseconds based on the 95th percentile of measurements.</p> <p>- Value must be one of the following codes:</p> <p>0 – False 1 – True</p>

Data Attribute Field	Data Type	Example	Description/ Notes
<b>bizrescode</b>	Enumerated Text	B	<p>Enumerated character identifying whether the service in the area is business-only, residential-only, or offered to both business and residential customers.</p> <p><i>Value entered must be one of the following codes:</i></p> <p><i>B – Business-only service</i>  <i>R – Residential-only service</i>  <i>X – Business and Residential service</i></p> <p>Polygons representing distinct residential and business service areas, each with different maximum advertised download and upload speeds, can overlap.</p>

## GIS Data Standards

- All files must contain valid GIS data in a supported file format (i.e., ESRI Shapefile, ESRI, FileGDB, GeoJSON, or GeoPackage)
- For ESRI Shapefile or ESRI FileGDB data, GIS data must be submitted as a single .zip archive file
- GIS data must use the unprojected (geographic) WGS84 / EPSG:4326 coordinate reference system
- GIS data must contain well-formed 2D vector polygon data according to the OGC (Open Geospatial Consortium) rules
- GIS data must contain only closed, non-overlapping polygons
- Any variation in any of the required fields necessitates the creation of a separate polygon showing the relevant coverage. In other words, each polygon must have a single value for each of the following fields: technology code ("technology"), maximum advertised download speed ("maxdown"), maximum advertised upload speed ("maxup"), low latency flag ("lowlatency"), and business/residential code ("bizrescode")

## Project Plan And Milestones

Please upload a project plan in .xls or .pdf format that includes details relevant to each stage of the project and milestones for each phase of the project, covers the entire project period, and aligns to the proposed project budget.

At a minimum, the plan should incorporate the following:

- Preconstruction Planning - Engineering
- Permitting - Leasing - Licensing
- Construction
- Equipment Installation
- Project Implementation
- Adoption and Marketing Outreach
- Operational Validation Plan

Consolidate multiple files into a single .pdf or .zip file. A template is available online.

- NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_ProjectPlan

## Technical Infrastructure Proposed

- Option A: Fiber to Premise
- Option B: Fixed Wireless
  - Backhaul
- Option C: Mobile Wireless
  - Backhaul
- Option D: Hybrid Fiber Cable (HFC)

If Option A: Fiber to Premise is chosen above:

### Technical Infrastructure Proposed: Fiber To The Premise

- Provide a detailed description of the proposed fiber project
- In addition to the PUBLIC MAP provided earlier, provide a detailed PRIVATE/PROPRIETARY map in .kmz uploaded as a .zip file. Please provide a .kmz map of the project (uploaded as a .zip file) to include:
  - Routes of all new plant to be funded by the grant
  - Existing plant (coax or fiber) feeding the proposed build-out
  - On the map, please delineate which portions are new or existing
  - End point connections
  - Delineate routing between types: coax and fiber
  - Please identify the map is private/proprietary
- NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PRIVATE\_FIBERMap

### *Provide A Fiber Equipment Spreadsheet (.xls)*

- Typical equipment used: include manufacturer and model number
- Head end
- Access gear
- Cabinets
- NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_FIBEREQUIP

If Option B: Fixed Wireless is chosen above:

#### Technical Infrastructure Proposed: Fixed Wireless

- Provide a technical overview of the fixed wireless solution proposed [Text Box]
- FIXED WIRELESS PROJECT MAPS: [Upload] In addition to the PUBLIC Project Map uploaded earlier, please provide the following .kmz project maps for the fixed wireless project proposed. These PRIVATE/PROPRIETARY maps should be labeled as such
- FIXED WIRELESS PROJECT MAPS \*PROPRIETARY\* Internal Review only (.kmz):
  - SERVICE AREA MAP: Provide a polygon of the desired geography to be covered by the project. The map should only include areas where -78dBm or better is met. Map should also include the following:
    - Points inside the polygon of all CPE locations for fixed wireless connectivity
    - Points for the locations of base station equipment
    - NAMING CONVENTION:  
LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PRIVATE\_ServArea
  - RF PREDICTION MAP: Provide an RF prediction map depicting the location of the transmitter, its footprint, and a map legend. Use an RSSI scale of -70dBm, -80dBm, -90dBm. Map should also include:
    - Base stations
    - Where CBEs are located in RF coverage
    - Basic antenna orientation
    - NAMING CONVENTION:  
LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PRIVATE\_RFpredict
  - BACKHAUL MAP (.kmz)
    - Point-to-Point (PTP) Backhaul: In Google Earth, draw in the points of each PTP link for review
      - NAMING CONVENTION:  
LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PRIVATE\_BackhaulPTP
    - FIBER Backhaul map should include:
      - Routes of all new plant to be funded by the grant
      - Point connections
      - Delineate routing between types if needed: coax and fiber
      - NAMING CONVENTION:  
LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PRIVATE\_BackhaulFiber
- Please provide a FIXED WIRELESS Equipment Spreadsheet (.xls) with worksheets for the RF Equipment, Customer Premise Equipment (CPE), and Backhaul equipment relative to the proposed project to include the details outlined below:
  - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_FixedWirelessEQUIP
- Please provide an RF data worksheet to include the following:
  - Base station equipment
    - Manufacturer
    - Model Number
    - EIRP
  - Base station antenna information
    - Manufacturer
    - Model number

- Azimuth
  - Down tilt
  - Center Line
- Please provide a Customer Premise Equipment (CPE) worksheet to include the following:
  - A standard CPE configuration is to be used in the project. Include manufacturer and model numbers
  - CPE antenna information including:
    - Manufacturer
    - Model number
    - Center line
    - Gain of antenna
- Backhaul Equipment worksheet to include equipment appropriate to the backhaul. Please identify the type of Backhaul by the worksheet label (Backhaul PTP or Backhaul):
  - Backhaul - Point To Point (PTP) Equipment worksheet to include every PTP link location:
    - PTP Radio Equipment
      - Manufacturer
      - Model number
    - PTP Antenna information
      - Manufacturer
      - Model number
      - Azimuth
      - Down tilt
      - Center line
  - Backhaul-Fiber Equipment worksheet to include:
    - Typical equipment used to include manufacturer and model number
    - Head end
    - Access gear
    - Cabinets
- Please define the clutter terrain resolution utilized in the RF predictions:
  - 30m
  - 10m
  - 1m
  - 3D
  - Other
- Provide projected capacity per base station expectations
- Provide projected/designed subscription throughputs
- Provide oversubscription ratios
- Describe the MIMO allocation:
  - 2x2
  - 2x4
  - 4x4
  - Other

If Option C: Mobile Wireless is chosen above:

## Technical Infrastructure Proposed: Mobile Wireless

Please provide a technical summary of the mobile wireless solution proposed:

- REQUIRED (Private/Proprietary) (.kmz). Please upload a Service Area Map, an RF Prediction Map, and a Backhaul Map as outlined. Upload these as a SINGLE ZIP FILE using the naming convention provided. These maps should be labeled “Private”/” Proprietary” and be in a .kmz format:
  - SERVICE AREA MAP: Provide a polygon of the desired geography to be covered by the project. The map should only include areas where -102dBm or better is met. Map should be noted as proprietary and include the following:
    - Points inside the polygon of all CPE locations for fixed wireless household connectivity
    - Points for the locations of base station equipment
    - NAMING CONVENTION:  
LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PRIVATE\_ServiceArea
  - RF PREDICATION MAP: Provide an RF prediction map depicting the location of the transmitter, its footprint, and a map legend. Use an RSRP scale of -92dBm, -102dBm, -106dBm. Identify this map as proprietary. Please include the following:
    - Base stations
    - Where CBEs are located in RF coverage
    - Basic antenna orientation
    - NAMING CONVENTION:  
LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PRIVATE\_RFPrediction
  - BACKHAUL MAP
    - If the Point to Point Backhaul drawing is in .kmz format, then in Google Earth, draw in the points of each PTP link for review. Format must be .kmz
    - NAMING CONVENTION:  
LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PRIVATE\_BackhaulPTP

### *Mobile Wireless Equipment File Requirements*

Provide a Mobile Wireless Equipment Spreadsheet (.xls) format with the following worksheets: RF Base station equipment and the Backhaul equipment. Upload as a single spreadsheet.

- NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_MobileWirelessEQUIP
- RF data worksheet should include the following:
  - Base station equipment
    - Manufacturer
    - Model number
    - EIRP
  - Base station antenna information
    - Manufacturer
    - Model number
    - Azimuth
    - Down tilt
    - Center line
- Backhaul Equipment worksheet to include equipment appropriate to the backhaul proposed:
  - Backhaul - PTP Equipment worksheet to include every PTP link location
    - PTP radio equipment
      - Manufacturer

- Model number
- PTP antenna information
  - Manufacturer
  - Model number
  - Azimuth
  - Down tilt
  - Center line
- Backhaul-Fiber Equipment worksheet to include:
  - Typical equipment used to include manufacturer and model number
  - Head end
  - Access Gear
  - Cabinets
  - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_MobileWirelessEQUIP

Once the worksheets are completed, please complete the following in the application:

- Provide description of engineered hand-off levels in RSRP
- Please describe channel size (5-80)
- Provide projected capacity per base station expectations
- Provide oversubscription ratios
- Describe the MIMO allocation
  - 2x2
  - 2x4
  - 4x4
  - Other

Please upload any additional technical reports, predictions, or documents relative to the project important to technical consideration or the review process. If multiple files, please consolidate into a single .pdf or .zip.

- NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_TechnicalAttachments

If Option D: Hybrid Fiber Cable (HFC) is chosen above:

#### Technical Infrastructure Proposed: Hybrid Fiber Cable (HFC)

- Provide a detailed description of the proposed HFC project
- In addition to the PUBLIC MAP provided earlier, provide a detailed PRIVATE/PROPRIETARY map in .kmz uploaded as a .zip file. Please provide a .kmz map of the project (uploaded as a .zip file) to include:
  - Routes of all new plant to be funded by the grant
  - Existing plant (coax or fiber) feeding the proposed build-out
  - On the map, please delineate which portions are new or existing
  - Point connections
  - Delineate routing between types: HFC and fiber
  - Please identify the map is private/proprietary
- NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_PRIVATE\_FIBERMap

#### *Provide A Fiber Equipment Spreadsheet (.xls)*

- Typical equipment used: include manufacturer and model number



- Head end
- Access gear
- Cabinets
- NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_HFCEQUIP

## Long Term Investment Viability/Scalability

KOBD is interested in making long-term broadband investments that will prevent near-term electronics upgrades from occurring and “leap-frogging” other infrastructure programs to accelerate high-speed broadband services to Kansas. As such, if fiber infrastructure is used in proposed service area projects, applicants are highly encouraged to implement electronics within their respective architecture that can deliver up to 10 Gbps symmetrical speeds at the time of project build. Additional points will be awarded during the application evaluation process should 10 Gbps capable electronics be implemented in the applicant’s proposed projects.

Please upload evidence to demonstrate the scalability and capabilities of the proposed project’s technology. Include current technology levels, ability to upgrade, and latency levels. Scalability and future-proofing are defined as the ability to achieve up to 10 Gbps symmetrical speeds through initial deployment or the capability to upgrade within the minimal incremental investment.

- NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_Scalability

## Financial And Legal

### Required Applicant Match And Co-Investment

Levels of participation through matching funding and other co-investment mechanisms are expected to vary statewide on a project-by-project basis in recognition of the variable costs of installing broadband infrastructure. KOBD is implementing a required applicant match sliding scale model for the LINC Broadband Infrastructure Program. The new model is intended to:

- Encourage investment in unserved areas with a special focus on rural and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations
- Enable ISP partners to offer affordable broadband services to potential customers
- Encourage subscriber adoption
- Establish a minimum required applicant match

A minimum applicant match is required based on the cost per location passed sliding scale. Additional points will be awarded if applicants can provide incremental matching funds beyond the values derived from the minimum applicant match sliding scale. An example of an applicant providing incremental matching funds beyond the required applicant match is below:

- Minimum applicant match derived from the Sliding Scale Match Table is 18.2% of total project cost (see Table 6: Sliding Scale Match, below)
- Applicant decides to match at a 23.2% value
- Incremental application scoring points will be awarded for the additional 5% of total project cost matched by the applicant

Matching funds may include an in-kind match of up to 50% of the total match. An in-kind match requires valuation documentation and is subject to KOBD’s approval. For federal grants or federal broadband funding, applicant must check with federal funding source to determine allowability.

The minimum applicant match required will be derived from: Table 6: Sliding Scale Match, below. This table identifies the percentage match that the KOBD will provide to an applicant on a cost-per-location passed basis. Instructions for use are listed next to the table. An embedded Excel spreadsheet is attached to assist with determining an applicant's match on a per-project basis and is recommended for use. Instructions on how to use this spreadsheet can be found on the first worksheet within the spreadsheet labeled "Instructions". Applicants need only provide the total project cost and the number of locations passed by the project. Required inputs are highlighted in yellow within the embedded spreadsheet. The excel spreadsheet will determine:

- Cost per location passed
- Minimum applicant match percent
- Minimum applicant project match

### Co-Investment

The KOBD highly encourages partnerships between service providers and co-investment sponsors to come together as a team to identify gaps in broadband infrastructure and establish community priorities. Applicants are encouraged to include co-investment funds intended to demonstrate community partnership, involvement, overall support and capture the degree of need for broadband infrastructure projects. Eligible sources of co-investment funds can be from the local, county, and eligible state programs or other contributors (examples: local ARPA funds, County Commission grants, private sector investments, non-profit contributions, etc.). For this program, co-investment funds can offset the applicant's match amount. Co-investment funds from local governments will be prioritized and encouraged to help fund broadband expansion programs in partnership with applicants.

### Determining Required Minimum Applicant Match And Co-Investment

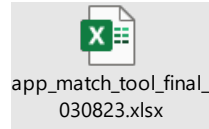
Please review: Table 6: Sliding Scale Match (below), as well as the Instructions for Use to determine the required minimum applicant match and co-investment value applied to the proposed project, if applicable.

**Table 6: Sliding Scale Match**

Sliding Scale Match Table	
Cost Per Location Passed	Applicant Match Percentage
\$ 750	86.7%
\$ 1,000	70.0%
\$ 1,500	50.0%
\$ 2,000	40.0%
\$ 2,500	34.0%
\$ 3,000	30.0%
\$ 3,500	28.6%
\$ 4,000	25.0%
\$ 4,500	22.2%
\$ 5,000	20.0%
\$ 5,500	18.2%
\$ 6,000	16.7%
\$ 6,500	15.4%
\$ 7,000	14.3%
\$ 7,500	13.3%
\$ 8,000	12.5%
\$ 8,500	11.8%
\$ 9,000	11.1%
\$ 9,500	10.5%
\$ 10,000	10.0%
\$ 10,500	9.5%
\$ 11,000	9.1%
\$ 11,500	8.7%
\$ 12,000	8.3%
\$ 12,500	8.0%
\$ 13,000	7.7%
\$ 13,500	7.4%
\$ 14,000	7.1%
\$ 14,500	6.9%
\$ 15,000	6.7%
\$ 15,500	6.5%
\$ 16,000	6.3%
\$ 16,500	6.1%
\$ 17,000	5.9%
\$ 17,500	5.7%
\$ 18,000	5.6%
\$ 18,500	5.4%
\$ 19,000	5.3%
\$ 19,500	5.1%
\$ 20,000	5.0%

**Instructions for Use**

Please use embedded “Minimum Required Applicant Match Calculator” to determine minimum required applicant match. This tool is available to use to assist in determining Cost Per Location Passed, associated Minimum Applicant Match Percentage and Minimum Applicant Match value for the project once applicant inputs total project cost and total number of locations passed. To use the tool, double click on the icon below with your computer mouse and follow the instructions listed on the “Instructions” worksheet.



**For applicants wanting to validate/calculate project match manually, please follow the directions below:**

Step 1: Based on the proposed project budget and locations passed, determine cost per location passed (Cost Per Location Passed = Project budget total divided by proposed total locations passed).

Step 2: Locate the “Cost Per Location Passed” column in the Sliding Scale Match Table.

Step 3: Based on “Cost Per Location Passed”, find the applicant match percentage.

Step 4: If the “Cost Per Location Passed” falls between two values in the “Cost Per Location Passed” column, please use the lower applicant match percentage.

For project applications that have “Cost Per Location Passed” costs beyond the \$20,000 per location passed level, a 5% applicant match percent should be used.

Example:

Proposed project attributes:

- Total project cost = \$2,000,000
- Total number of locations passed = 370
- Calculated cost per location passed = \$5,405.40

Step 1: The proposed project cost per location passed = \$5,405

Step 2: The \$5,405 amount is between the pre-defined \$5,000 and \$5,500 “Cost Per Location Passed” levels within the Sliding Scale Match Table.

Step 3: The correlating matching percentage values would be 18.2% and 20.0%.

Step 4: Select the lower of the two matching percentage values, which is 18.2%.

Step 5: Multiply match percentage value, 18.2%, by the total project cost, \$2,000,000 (18.2% x \$2,000,000). The \$364,000 is the minimum required applicant match.

## Budget And Financial Requirements

Project budget and financial submission requirements include the following:

- Budget Narrative
  - Provide explanation of costs that correspond with the information included in the project budget spreadsheet
  - The necessity and basis for costs
  - Reflect only allowable costs consistent with project scope
- Project Budget and Bill of Materials [Upload]
  - Upload a project budget and bill of materials according to the appropriate infrastructure template (Fiber or Wireless). All applicants must complete and submit a budget using the provided Budget Template, located on the program website. This includes all the associated bill of materials. Please also include the Required Applicant Match and Co-Investment. Submissions that do not meet the minimum required applicant match may not be reviewed
    - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_BudgetFinancial validation documentation
  - Bank verification letter that proves there are sufficient funds for the minimum required applicant match amount. Other acceptable proof demonstrating sufficient funds are noted below:
    - Companies (Public or Private) providing a bond rating from Moody's, Standard and Poor's, or Fitch of Investment Grade at the time an application is submitted
    - Companies may provide financial information of parent organization if audited financials for operating subsidiary are not available.
    - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_BankVerification
  - Last two years of applicant's income statement
    - NAMING CONVENTION:  
LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_FinancialStatement
  - Matching funds include in-kind match? (Y/N)
    - If yes, upload documentation that validates the in-kind match being submitted with the project. Please combine multiple files into one .pdf or .zip file
    - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_In-Kind
    - In-kind match valuations must not exceed 50% of the 50% required project match. All claims for reimbursement for in-kind contributions will be analyzed using criteria similar to the program descriptions available here and claims for in-kind contributions should be reasonable. KOBD and the Kansas Department of Commerce will ultimately have the discretion to determine if an in-kind contribution is acceptable or not
- Applicant Attestations:
  - The grant applicant is in good financial standing with the State of Kansas
  - The grant applicant is not currently involved in pending litigation in association with previous Kansas-sponsored broadband infrastructure grant projects
  - The grant applicant is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participating in covered transactions by any federal department or agency
  - If a private entity, the grant applicant has been operating in the State of Kansas for no fewer than three (3) years. The grant applicant has not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against

- them for the commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property
- The grant applicant is not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state or local)
  - The grant applicant has not within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default
  - The grant applicant is participating in subsidy programs to optimize digital inclusivity. (i.e., Lifeline, Affordable Connectivity Program, Emergency Connectivity Fund etc.)
  - All applicants will be required to agree to accept the terms and conditions of the program agreement at the time of application submission. The program agreement will be provided within the application portal
  - The grant applicant agrees that if awarded funds through the LINC program, the grant agreement will be executed within 60 days of receipt from Commerce. If the agreement is not executed within 60 days, the Kansas Department of Commerce reserves the right to reallocate funds
  - All applicants will be required to sign the Department of Commerce Confidentiality Agreement at the time of application submission

## Application Evaluation Criteria

Application evaluation will be based on the overall quality of the application, including the Project Proposal, Technical Project Plan, and financial information presented. KOBD will be evaluating applications based on projects that optimize stewardship of public infrastructure dollars through collective investment and include:

- Projects that address a critical broadband need within the community
- An unserved area as defined in the definitions section of these guidelines
- An economically distressed area or a covered population (as described and measured in “Key Definitions” section)
- Prioritization of fiber-optic infrastructure
- Scalability beyond 1 Gbps
- Speeds delivered and associated latency
- Anticipated impact (locations passed)
- Cost reasonableness
- Demographics
- Affordability of Services/Offer Pricing
- Rurality
- Technical viability
- Partnerships
- Municipal and/or County projects that are part of a local strategic broadband plan
- Minimum applicant match and associated applicant match value
- Co-investment partnership projects involving local municipalities, community anchor institutions and service provider’s match

## Applicant Interview

KOBD will conduct an interview with the final grant candidates and give them an opportunity to ‘make their case’. This meeting should include organization and financial contacts, key project personnel, and partners critical to the overall success of the effort. Co-investment projects should include partner investors in the interview. Participants should be prepared to speak about specific aspects of the proposed project, the technical project plan, the financials submitted, and the demonstrated need that supports the project. This interactive meeting will provide an opportunity for grantees to call into focus key aspects of the project, the compelling needs of the proposal, and answer the question: “Why should the State of Kansas invest in this project?”

## Funds Disbursement

The LINC Broadband Infrastructure Program will provide structured reimbursements for validated grant expenditures submitted. Grantees are expected to submit supporting documentation for expenditures (i.e., invoices, receipts) and proof of payment if requested. Grantees must submit all required legal and contractual agreements/documents prior to funds disbursement.

Project extensions will be considered in light of the current supply chain and pandemic-related delays on a case-by-case basis. Should actual project costs exceed the proposed/approved budget, grantees will be responsible for completing the proposed project without an increase in the grant award. KOBD reserves the right to partially fund projects that are not completed during the approved project period.

## Compliance

KOBD will provide a collaborative partnership and overall support for LINC Broadband Infrastructure Program Grantees by offering technical support related to reporting and compliance requirements, as listed in the following paragraphs.

### Monthly Reporting

In addition to periodic Grantee meetings, KOBD will streamline reporting by providing baseline reporting templates and clear expectations for grantees participating in the program. The monthly reporting includes the following:

- A narrative update on the status of the project, including notification of any delays
- A monthly budget expenditure report of the project
- A monthly .pdf containing supporting project expenditure documentation for reimbursement requested (i.e., invoices/receipts/proof of payment)
- Reimbursements will occur on a quarterly basis

### Closeout Reporting

Closeout reporting will be required within 45 days of project completion. Project completion and submission of the closeout report are required prior to the final payment. Closeout reporting includes, but not limited to, the following:

- Validation that the broadband infrastructure project build has been completed. This will provide service at the locations and service level speeds specified in the application
- Grantees will be required to submit census block data, .kmz maps, speed test, latency, and network performance validation upon completion of the project

- KOBD will require validation of as-built drawings versus the initial .kmz map submitted with the application through field validation and speed tests as services are turned up at specific locations
- Grantees must complete/submit the required financial documents, legal agreements, and reports
- The KOBD reserves the right to amend the scope of grant awards or partially fund applications

### Accountability

Grantee shall create, maintain, and preserve sufficient records to demonstrate their compliance with the requirements of this program. The grantee shall provide all required records to KOBD promptly upon written request. KOBD requests may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Information regarding service offering at the pricing and speed levels specified in the application for the duration of the grant period
- The right to recoup funding for incomplete projects or for lack of adherence to program guidelines
- The right to desk or field audit the project at any time. The project may be subject to state and/or federal audits
- Grantees are required to retain all records for up to five (5) years after project completion.



## **SECTION 2 – LINC INTERNET EXCHANGE POINT AND MIDDLE MILE PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

### **Background**

Substantial funding from the federal government has been awarded to the State of Kansas to improve last mile connections for Kansans who lack adequate broadband services, primarily in rural areas. With those funds, substantial progress is being made to connect Kansans. However, there are still barriers to enabling rural areas with high-speed broadband services. Rural areas typically lack sufficient infrastructure, both last mile and middle mile, to efficiently deliver high speed broadband services. As the State of Kansas provides funding programs to address the last mile cost component, the middle mile cost component still needs to be solved. Additionally, given the current data consumption patterns of existing broadband users and anticipated data consumption patterns of soon to be connected Kansans, the State of Kansas desires to increase Internet Exchange Point capabilities within the state to meet the future demands of increased internet traffic. Coupling improved Internet Exchange Point (IXP) capabilities with additional, high speed broadband connection will improve the broadband end user experience through faster and more resilient connectivity. The LINC Internet Exchange Point and Middle Mile Program is the first step taken to provide funding for middle mile solutions, address the high-cost middle mile component of rural broadband services and improve the overall internet access service quality for all Kansans.

### **A. Internet Exchange Point Program**

#### **Program Overview**

The objective of the LINC Internet Exchange Point Program administered through the Kansas Office of Broadband Development (KOBD) is to improve the broadband end user experience through faster and more resilient connectivity to the internet. Key information for the program is as follows:

- The LINC Internet Exchange Point Program total funding: \$5M to \$10M (Shared Between IXP And Middle Mile)
- Required applicant match: 25% of the total project cost
- Solicitation date: May 5, 2023\*
- Application window: six (6) weeks
- September 2023: Awards Announced
- Project period: thirty-six (36) months from award
- Maximum individual award: between \$5M and \$10M (Shared Between IXP And Middle Mile)

\* - Note: This is a tentative date until final guidelines are published.

#### **Guidelines**

The Internet Exchange Point (IXP) Program is intended to address the following priorities:

- Must physically reside in the State of Kansas
- Can be a new facility or an augmentation to an existing facility
- Public, private and government entities must be able to purchase IXP services from selected grantee(s)
- Carrier neutral
- Not owned by existing broadband network operator
- Commits to not charging monthly recurring cross-connect fees



- Demonstrated professional experience having owned or operated IXP facilities (a minimum of three years)

### Grant Timeline\*

The application window will be open for six (6) weeks. A Public Comment and Application Response period will follow the application window. Applicant interviews will follow applicant response windows, followed by the Kansas Department of Commerce leadership grant selection and award announcements.

**Table 7: LINC Internet Exchange Point Grant Program Timeline**

Week #																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Application Window						Public Comment Window			Applicant Response to Public Comment Window			Grant Evaluations Completion		Applicant Interviews		Final Review	KDC Leadership Review
Grant Evaluation Period																	

- May 4, 2023: Grant Webinar, Guidelines Posted
- May 5, 2023: Application Window Open (6 weeks)
- June 19, 2023: Application Window Closes (5pm CST)
- June 27, 2023: Public Comment Window Opens (3 weeks)
- July 19, 2023: Public Comment Window Closes (5pm CST)
- July 27, 2023: Applicant Response to Public Comment Window Opens (2 weeks)
- August 10, 2023: Applicant Response to Public Comment Window Closes
- September 7, 2023: Applicant Interviews and Final Applicant Deliberations (4 weeks)
- September 2023: Awards Announced

\* - Note: This is a tentative timeline until final guidelines are published.

### Eligibility

#### Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants will demonstrate the following attributes to be considered for IXP funding:

- Demonstrated professional experience having owned or operated IXP facilities (a minimum of three years of experience must be demonstrated)
- Carrier neutral
- Not owned by existing broadband network operator
- Commits to not charging monthly recurring cross-connect fees

Eligible applicants include:

- Tribal governments
- Private entities
- Co-operatives
- Electric Utilities
- Non-profit organizations/associations
- Academic networks, universities, research centers
- Co-location providers

- Commercial companies
- Government bodies/units of government

Applicants are encouraged to partner with state and local stakeholders to demonstrate support and the overall need for the solution.

### *Eligible Costs*

Eligible project expenses are capital expenses directly related to the development, implementation, and building of IXP facilities, including 5% of pre-project development costs and uses, including data gathering, feasibility studies, and engineering design. This includes work related to environmental, historical, and cultural reviews and permitting. All remaining pre-project costs are eligible under matching funds. Eligible costs include materials, supplies, equipment, and construction of “IXP” real estate, building, and equipment infrastructure expenses. Additional eligible infrastructure expenses will include construction of fiber duct banks from the IXP facility to the edge of the public right-of-way, including the necessary hand holes and manholes. Long term transport Indefeasible Rights of Use (IRUs) are also grant eligible when in support of remote peering connectivity between the edge Internet Exchange ethernet switch in the Internet Exchange provider and a remote Internet Exchange.

### *Ineligible Costs*

Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Operating expenses
- Short-term operation leases
- Satisfaction of any obligation
- Payment of interest or principal on outstanding debt instruments
- Maintenance expenses related to the project
- Infrastructure not directly connected to the IXP facilities, real estate or supporting equipment
- Indirect labor costs (fringe/benefits, travel, meals, lodging, paid time off, etc.)
- Long term capital asset purchases/leases, although cost allocation for use during the project period will be considered on a case-by-case basis

### *Ineligible Solutions*

- New enterprise data centers or augmentation to existing enterprise data centers will be ineligible for funding
- Investments in Capital Projects must be carried out in ways that comply with applicable federal laws, including the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Among other requirements contained in [2 CFR Part 200](#), [2 CFR 200.216](#) implements certain provisions of the NDAA and contains prohibitions on the use of grant funds to procure or obtain certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment provided or produced by designated entities, including certain entities owned or controlled by the People’s Republic of China. In addition, [2 CFR 200.471](#) provides that certain telecommunications and video surveillance costs associated with [2 CFR 200.216](#) are unallowable. In addition, [2 CFR 200.471](#) provides that certain telecommunications and video surveillance costs associated with [2 CFR 200.216](#) are unallowable

## Application Process

The KOBD will conduct a webinar informing potential applicants of the LINC Program grant opportunity, and the guidelines will be posted online for applicants to review. To apply for the grant award, applicants will be invited to submit information on an established online portal. An executive committee will then review this information. This process will evaluate the project proposal, the technical project plan, and the proposed budget. Business, economic, and community development professionals and technical experts will be enlisted to review project submissions. Applicants being considered for the award will participate in a final interview to be held via an interactive meeting platform. Once the final recommendation has been developed, the Kansas Department of Commerce leadership will review and finalize the award recommendations.

The applicant will be required to submit plans showing it complies with applicable employment laws and to ensure that its workforce is appropriately skilled. All applicants will be required to sign an agreement stating that they are in compliance with applicable employment laws.

## Application Submission

The application information allows potential applicants to begin formulating a response to the grant opportunity. The application window will be open for six (6) weeks. KOBD reserves the right to modify the program guidelines as needed to generate adequate viable projects.

The application contains three primary sections: Project Proposal, Technical Project Plan, and Project Budget. The submission will include documents designated for public posting during a public comment period. Citizens will be provided with the opportunity to comment on proposed projects during the Public Comment Period.

## Public Comment Period

To ensure transparency and the best use of taxpayer funds, the application and selection process will include a three (3) week public comment period followed by a two (2) week applicant response period. This period is intended to provide an opportunity for Kansans, elected officials, and constituents to either express support or inform KOBD of any issues or concerns with an application. All comments expressing concern collected during the public comment period will be considered “challenges” and are subject to public disclosure. Public comment submitters will be deemed as “challengers”.

## Applicant Response

Upon completion of the public comment period, KOBD will notify each applicant of such challenge(s). The applicant shall have two (2) weeks after notification to provide any supplemental information regarding the challenged application to KOBD (known as Applicant Response Period).

The KOBD will evaluate the information submitted in a challenge and will not award a grant if the information presented is credible.

## Program Inquiries

Questions regarding the application process will be accepted from the start of the application window (May 5, 2023) for two (2) weeks (May 18, 2023), after which time no additional questions will be accepted. KOBD will review all submitted questions and provide a written response, which will be posted to the KOBD webpage for viewing one (1) week from submission.

## Key Project Data

Key project data will be captured for the applicant and the project, including:

- Primary Organizational Contacts (Project and Technical)
- Total Project Amount, Grant Funds Requested, and Matching Amount
- City(s) and County(s) where facilities will be built or augmented
- Square Footage of Facility
- Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) and/or Interconnection Policies that best describe applicant's approach to interconnection that captures how it supports providing interconnection on a nondiscriminatory basis to the public Internet (directly or indirectly) and providing physical interconnection for the exchange of traffic openly to any and all network operators
- Anticipated Capabilities

KOBD will accept good-faith estimates regarding the following capabilities given that interconnections and associated traffic will change over time

- Number of Autonomous System Numbers (ASNs) interconnecting
- Total port capacity
- Peak traffic
- Average traffic
- Average latency for purchased services
- Aggregate ingress and egress bandwidth
- Number of direct interconnects supported

## General Project Information

- Project Contact Information
- Project Name (Organization Name + Program Identifier)
- Requested Grant Amount
- Total Project Amount

## Project Proposal

Applicants must upload a zipped file (.zip) containing the Project Proposal to be published on the program website for public comment. Submission will include the following:

- An executive summary of the project including the goals of the project, needs addressed, community partners, stakeholders involved, and the intended impact
- A description of the location where facilities will be built, partners involved and anticipated improvements or new capabilities
- The short and long-term investment benefit to the community and Kansans

## Community Partners, Roles And Letters of Commitment

The Applicant will provide a narrative describing any community partners/stakeholders associated with the projects' planning, promotion, or use. Describe each party's commitment and role in the project.

### Justification For The Project

Applicant will provide a narrative to justify the need for this project and relevant data indicators to support the effort. Applicant must provide evidence to make a compelling case for the project relative to the expected improvement of broadband quality for Kansans.

### Pricing

Pricing available to the network operators will be a key component in selecting the grantee(s). The applicant will provide pricing and associated offers that include, but are not limited to the following parameters:

- Recurring Charges:
  - Co-location space
  - Rack units (RU) in the Meet Me Area
  - Duct/innerduct space at the point of entry
  - Home run cabling
  - Power markup
  - Interconnect Exchange (IX) port
  - Interconnect Exchange (IX) VLAN connectivity
  - Other recurring charges
- Non-Recurring Charges:
  - Co-location space setup
  - Rack units (RU) in the Meet Me Area
  - Point of entry setup
  - Home run cabling
  - Cross-connect cabling
  - Interconnect Exchange (IX) port
  - Other non-recurring charges or set up fees
- Other required or optional offer features that are recurring or non-recurring, including but not limited to, the following:
  - Incident technical support
  - Support contracts
  - Other

### Technical Project Plan

Applicant will provide a technical summary of the proposed project to include:

- Overview of proposed project scope
- Explanation of why the specific location was selected
- Explanation of why set of capabilities are included in the project

### Service Partners

Describe any service partners or subcontractors associated with the project's deliverables related to deployment and service delivery, including each partner's role in the project.

### Interconnection Architecture Diagram

A high-level interconnection architecture diagram shall be provided to document the proposed solution. The interconnection architecture diagram for the project must be uploaded on a single .pdf or .zip file. At a minimum, the diagram must include the following:

- Internet exchange connection point/connection to point of presence
- Core computing equipment such as computers, servers, racks
- Equipment including routers, switches, firewalls
- Storage equipment such as hard drives and backup resources
- Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) Model layer at which connection is occurring within the building
- Interconnect media and associated speeds
- Any other key component of the architecture not addressed in the categories above

### Physical Location Diagram

The proposed internet exchange point can be a new facility or an augmentation of an existing facility. A diagram must be provided with the following details:

- Provide a comprehensive high-level building diagram for the project, including building/real estate/property dimensions, physical floor(s) layout, HVAC infrastructure, commercial power entrance locations, emergency generator power, UPS battery backup systems, power generation/grid access, physical security features and upload a single .pdf or .zip file
- Entrance facility access points
- Include total square footage of actual facility space to house internet connection capability and power requirements
- Other items as requested

### Project Plan And Milestones

A project plan and associated milestones must be developed to assess the overall timeline and project scope. The project plan in .xls or .pdf format shall include details relevant to each stage of the project and milestones for each phase of the project, cover the entire project period, and align with the proposed project budget. Though not an exhaustive list, the plan should incorporate the following:

- Preconstruction Planning - Engineering
- Permitting - Leasing - Licensing
- Construction
- Equipment Installation
- Project Implementation
- Operational Validation Plan

### Long Term Investment Viability/Scalability

KOBD is interested in making long-term broadband investments that will prevent near-term upgrades from occurring. Scalability and future-proofing are defined as the ability to achieve additional ASN, direct peering, hosting, storage, rack space, fiber capacity, bandwidth capacity, and pathway to zero carbon emissions with initial deployment or capability to upgrade with minimal incremental investment. The applicant must demonstrate the scalability and capabilities of the proposed project's technology and overall solution. Submission must include current technology levels, ability to upgrade, and latency levels. The applicant must provide details regarding the ability to support the

following, now or in the future. If supporting in the future, provide an estimated date of implementation:

- Artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML)
- Services that are secure by design and configurable through software
- Sustainability
- Roadmap to net-zero carbon emissions

## Financial And Legal

### *Required Applicant Match*

KOBD is implementing a required applicant match at a 25% matching rate. Matching funds may include an in-kind match of up to 100% of the total match. An in-kind match requires valuation documentation and is subject to KOBD's approval.

### *Budget And Financial Requirements*

Please provide a budget narrative that includes the following information:

- Provide explanation of costs that correspond with the information included in the project budget spreadsheet
- The necessity and basis for costs
- Reflect only allowable costs consistent with project scope

### *Project Budget And Bill Of Materials*

All applicants must complete and submit a budget. Given that the source of grant funding originates from federal sources, the State of Kansas has an obligation to ensure electronics being placed in service do not put end users at risk from unauthorized surveillance or unlawful activities. As such, all electronics to be used in the internet service exchange solution must be documented within the Bill of Materials and reviewed for approval. The Bill of Materials will include, at a minimum, the following categories:

- Co-location space
- Ethernet switch and peering fabric
- Core computing equipment
- Networking equipment
- Storage equipment
- Security/firewall equipment
- Underlying software/operating systems enabling the internet service exchange ecosystem
- Other – any other equipment or software not specifically identified in the above categories that are key to an internet connection exchange ecosystem

## Funding Levels

The current level of funding opportunity is a 75% match of the total project cost.

## Budget And Financial Requirements

Project budget and financial submission requirements include:

- Budget Narrative



- Provide an explanation of costs that correspond with the information included in the project budget spreadsheet
- The necessity and basis for costs
- Reflect only allowable costs consistent with project scope
- Project Budget and Bill of Materials [Upload]
  - Upload a project budget and bill of materials according to the appropriate infrastructure template (IXP). All applicants must complete and submit a budget using the Budget Template provided on the program website, including the associated bill of materials. Please also include the Required Applicant Match. Submissions that do not meet the minimum required applicant match may not be reviewed
    - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_BudgetFinancial validation documentation
  - Bank verification letter that proves there are sufficient funds for the minimum required applicant match amount. Other acceptable proof demonstrating sufficient funds are noted below:
    - Companies (Public or Private) providing a bond rating from Moody's, Standard and Poor's, or Fitch of Investment Grade at the time an application is submitted
    - Companies may provide financial information of parent organization if audited financials for operating subsidiary are not available.
    - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_BankVerification
  - Last two years of the applicant's income statement
    - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_FinancialStatement

### Applicant Attestations

All applicant attestations must include the following:

- The grant applicant is in good financial standing with the State of Kansas
- The grant applicant is not currently involved in pending litigation in association with previous Kansas-sponsored broadband infrastructure grant projects
- The grant applicant is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participating in covered transactions by any federal department or agency
- The grant applicant has not, within a three-year period preceding this proposal, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for the commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements or receiving stolen property
- The grant applicant is not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state, or local)
- The grant applicant has not, within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal, had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default
- The grant applicant agrees that if awarded funds through the LINC program, the grant agreement will be executed within 60 days of receipt from Commerce. If the agreement is not executed within 60 days, the Kansas Department of Commerce reserves the right to reallocate funds
- All applicants will be required to sign the Department of Commerce Confidentiality Agreement at the time of application submission



## Application Evaluation Criteria

Application evaluation will be based on the overall quality of the application, including the Project Proposal, Technical Project Plan, and financial information presented. KOBD will be evaluating applications based on projects that optimize stewardship of public infrastructure dollars through collective investment and other factors, including:

- Anticipated impact to Kansans
- Project scope of anticipated ASN and carrier presence
- Scalability
- Ability to achieve net zero carbon emissions in the future
- Speeds delivered and associated latency
- Cost reasonableness
- Affordability of Services/Offer Pricing
- Technical viability
- Partnerships/community support
- Nonredundant power, cooling, and network connectivity with a single, non-redundant distribution path serving IT equipment and non-redundant capacity components
- Redundant capacity components which include at least some redundancy for power and cooling
- Multiple independent distribution paths serving IT equipment (with one distribution path serving equipment at any one time typically)
- All IT equipment is dual-powered and fully compatible within the topology of a site's architecture
- The facility is fully fault-tolerant, through electrical, storage, and distribution networks
- All cooling equipment is independently dual-powered, including HVAC systems
- The co-location data center should be able to withstand a 48, 72 and 96-hour power outage
- Redundancy capabilities for access, security and overall infrastructure
- Physical security which includes 24/7 monitoring of building facilities, identity and access management and intrusion detection
- Deploying servers/blade servers that require less power when not being used
- Demonstrated co-location customer base of major carriers
- Designed reliability exceeding 99.999% availability
- Demonstrated emergency recovery procedures, disaster recovery plans, hot-site capabilities, failover, etc.
- Sufficient security posture implemented to ensure digital infrastructure remains operational and provide the ability to remotely access and monitor equipment

## Applicant Interview

KOBD will interview final grant candidates and provide an opportunity to 'make their case'. This meeting should include organization and financial contacts, key project personnel, and partners critical to the overall success of the application. Co-investment projects should include partner investors in the interview. Participants should be prepared to speak about specific aspects of the proposed project, the technical project plan, the financials submitted, and the demonstrated need that

supports the project. This interactive meeting will provide an opportunity for grantees to call into focus key aspects of the project, compelling needs of the proposal and answer the question: “Why should the State of Kansas invest in this project?”

### **Funds Disbursement**

The LINC Program will provide structured reimbursements for validated grant expenditures submitted. Grantees must submit supporting documentation for expenditures (i.e., invoices, receipts) and proof of payment. Grantees must submit all required legal and contractual agreements/documents prior to funds disbursement. Quarterly reimbursements will be paid to grantees.

Project extensions will be considered in light of current supply chain delays on a case-by-case basis. Should actual project costs exceed the proposed/approved budget, grantees will be responsible for completing the proposed project without an increase in the grant award. KOBD reserves the right to partially fund projects that are not completed during the approved project period.

### **Compliance**

KOBD will provide a collaborative partnership and overall support for the LINC Program by offering technical support related to reporting and compliance requirements as listed in the following paragraphs.

#### *Monthly Reporting*

In addition to periodic Grantee meetings, KOBD will streamline reporting by providing baseline reporting templates and clear expectations for grantees participating in the program. The monthly reporting includes:

- A narrative update on the status of the project, including notification of any delays
- A monthly budget expenditure report of the project
- A monthly .pdf containing supporting project expenditure documentation for reimbursement requested (i.e., invoices/receipts)
- Quarterly reimbursements will be paid to grantees

#### *Closeout Reporting*

Closeout reporting will be required within 45 days of project completion. Project completion and submission of the closeout report are required prior to the final payment. Closeout reporting includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Validation that the project has been completed
- Grantees will be required to submit latency and network performance validation upon completion of the project
- KOBD will require validation of as-built drawings versus the final drawings submitted with the application through field validation
- Grantees must complete/submit the required financial documents, legal agreements, and reports
- KOBD reserves the right to amend the scope of grant awards or partially fund applications

### *Accountability*

Grantee shall create, maintain, and preserve sufficient records to demonstrate their compliance with the requirements of this program. The grantee shall provide such records to KOBD promptly upon written request. KOBD requests may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Information regarding offer service at the pricing specified in the application
- The right to recoup funding for incomplete projects or for lack of adherence to program guidelines
- The right to desk or field audit the project at any time. The project may be subject to state or federal audits
- Grantees are required to retain all records for up to five (5) years after project completion.

## **B. Middle Mile Program**

### **Program Overview**

The intent of this program is to reduce transport costs connecting last mile solutions to the underlying internet carriers points of presence, thereby reducing the overall service provider connectivity costs which are preventing rural broadband deployments. The program will also encourage the expansion and extension of middle mile infrastructure to reduce the cost of connecting, in general, unserved areas to the backbone of the internet. It will also promote broadband connection resiliency through the creation of alternative network connection paths that can be designed to prevent single points of failure on a broadband network. Key attributes of the program are as follows:

- The LINC Middle Mile Program total funding: \$5M to \$10M (Shared Between IXP And Middle Mile)
- Required applicant match: 20% of total project cost. State of Kansas will match 80% of total cost up to the maximum program funding limit
- Solicitation date: May 5, 2023\*
- Application window: six (6) weeks
- Potential award date: September 2023
- Project period: twenty-four (24) months from award
- Maximum individual award: between \$5M and \$10M (Shared Between IXP And Middle Mile)

\* - Note: This is a tentative date until final guidelines are published.

### **Guidelines**

The Middle Mile Program is intended to address the following priorities:

- Facilitate deployment of high-speed broadband networks to currently unserved areas
- Improve affordability in already served markets
- Offer access to the funded middle mile infrastructure, in perpetuity, on an open access basis. Open access requirements would only apply to the portion funded by the State of Kansas if any project crosses state boundaries

### **Grant Timeline\***

The application window will be open for six (6) weeks. A Public Comment and Application Response period will follow the application window. Applicant interviews will follow applicant response windows, followed by Kansas Department of Commerce leadership grant selection and award announcements.

**Table 8: LINC Middle Mile Grant Program Timeline**

Week #																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Application Window						Public Comment Window			Applicant Response to Public Comment Window			Grant Evaluations Completion		Applicant Interviews		Final Review	KDC Leadership Review
Grant Evaluation Period																	

- May 4, 2023: Grant Webinar, Guidelines Posted
- May 5, 2023: Application Window Open (6 weeks)
- June 19, 2023: Application Window Closes (5pm CST)
- June 27, 2023: Public Comment Window Opens (3 weeks)
- July 19, 2023: Public Comment Window Closes (5pm CST)
- July 27, 2023: Applicant Response to Public Comment Window Opens (2 weeks)
- August 10, 2023: Applicant Response to Public Comment Window Closes
- September 7, 2023: Applicant Interviews and Final Applicant Deliberations (4 weeks)
- September 2023: Awards Announced

\* - Note: This is a tentative timeline until final guidelines are published.

## Eligibility

### *Eligible Applicants*

Eligible applicants will demonstrate the following attributes to be considered for middle mile funding:

- Ability to carry out the proposed project in a competent manner, including a plan to attract, train, or retain an appropriately skilled and credentialed workforce
- Has the financial, managerial, technical, and operational capability to carry out the proposed project and operate the resulting middle mile broadband network
- Must submit a network design diagram, project costs, build-out timeline and milestones for project implementation, and a capital investment schedule evidencing that the applicant will complete build-out and the initiation of service within five years

Eligible applicants include:

- Levels or units of government (i.e., municipalities or counties)
- Tribal governments
- Private entities
- Co-operatives
- Electric utilities
- Non-profit organizations
- Those authorized to provide broadband services in the State of Kansas

Applicants are encouraged to partner with state and local stakeholders to demonstrate support and overall need for the solution. The applicant must be an established service provider that has been operating for a minimum of three years in the State of Kansas.

### *Eligible Costs*

Eligible project expenses are capital expenses directly related to the development, implementation, and building of middle mile facilities, including 5% of pre-project development costs and uses, including data gathering, feasibility studies, engineering design, work related to environmental historical and cultural reviews, and permitting. All remaining pre-project costs are eligible under matching funds.

The middle mile facilities being proposed in the application must be located in the State of Kansas. If proposed end to end middle mile facilities cross state boundaries, funding may only be used for the total project amount within the State of Kansas portion and applicant must demonstrate:

- That a significant benefit is provided to Kansans for the portion that is being proposed within Kansas and,
- What the overall benefit is of the total project

### *Ineligible Costs*

Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Operating expenses
- Short-term operation leases
- Satisfaction of any obligation
- Payment of interest or principal on outstanding debt instruments
- Maintenance expenses related to the project
- Infrastructure not directly connected to the middle mile facilities or supporting equipment
- Indirect labor costs (fringe/benefits, travel, meals, lodging, paid time off, etc.)
- Long term capital asset purchases/leases, although cost allocation for use during the project period will be considered on a case-by-case basis
- Costs associated with any middle mile infrastructure build outside of state boundaries

### *Ineligible Solutions*

Investments in capital projects must be carried out in ways that comply with applicable federal laws, including the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Among other requirements contained in [2 CFR Part 200](#), [2 CFR 200.216](#) implements certain provisions of the NDAA and contains prohibitions on the use of grant funds to procure or obtain certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment provided or produced by designated entities, including certain entities owned or controlled by the People's Republic of China. In addition, [2 CFR 200.471](#) provides that certain telecommunications and video surveillance costs associated with [2 CFR 200.216](#) are unallowable. In addition, [2 CFR 200.471](#) provides that certain telecommunications and video surveillance costs associated with [2 CFR 200.216](#) are unallowable.

### *Application Process*

The Kansas Office of Broadband Development (KOBBD) will conduct a webinar informing potential applicants of the LINC Program grant opportunity, and the guidelines will be posted online for applicants to review. Applicants will be invited to submit information on an established online portal. This process will evaluate the project proposal, the technical project plan, and the proposed budget. Business, economic, and community development professionals and technical experts will be enlisted

to review project submissions. Applicants being considered for the award will participate in a final interview with the Executive Committee to be held via an interactive meeting platform. Once the final recommendation has been developed, the Kansas Department of Commerce leadership will review and finalize the award recommendations.

The applicant will be required to submit plans showing it complies with applicable employment laws and to ensure that its workforce is appropriately skilled. All applicants will be required to sign an agreement stating that they are in compliance with applicable employment laws.

### **Application Submission**

The application information allows potential applicants to begin formulating a response to the grant opportunity. The application window will be open for six (6) weeks. KOBD reserves the right to modify the program guidelines as needed to generate viable projects.

The application contains three primary sections: Project Proposal, Technical Project Plan, and Project Budget. The submission will include documents designated for public posting during a public comment period. Citizens will be provided with the opportunity to comment on proposed projects during the Public Comment Period.

### **Public Comment Period**

To ensure transparency and the best use of taxpayer funds, the application and selection process will include a three (3) week public comment period followed by a two (2) week applicant response period. This period is intended to provide an opportunity for Kansans, elected officials, and constituents to either express support or inform KOBD of any issues or concerns with an application. All comments expressing concern collected during the public comment period will be considered “challenges” and are subject to public disclosure. Public comment submitters will be deemed as “challengers”.

### ***Public Comments Regarding Middle Mile Projects Underway***

The public comment shall contain information demonstrating that the provider has begun construction activities for middle mile projects that are already underway. The service provider must submit proof that work has started on a project to complete middle mile infrastructure in the applicant’s proposed middle mile route. Examples of evidence to prove that a middle mile project is underway would be:

- Planning and/or engineering plans and associated drawings
- Permitting requests
- Generated bill of materials
- Purchase orders for equipment on the bill of materials
- Invoices for engineering or construction activities for building broadband infrastructure in the proposed service area
- A network map showing specific locations of planned transport segments, start and end points, and proposed internet points with internet backbone providers. The network map will be submitted in .kmz format
- Additional information as requested by KOBD to assess project viability and the ability to meet program goals

Additionally, the public comment must demonstrate that the challenger's project complies with items in this documents Assessment Criteria, Scalability, and Cost Reduction to ensure cost structure and program goals are met through the middle mile project underway. Failure to do so will negate the public comment so that a cost-effective middle mile solution can be awarded which meets the program goals. The provider must also commit that the stated project will be completed no later than twelve (12) months after grant awards are made under the program and would be funded by the service provider.

#### *Public Comments Regarding Middle Mile Projects Planned But Not Underway*

For middle mile projects that are proposed where projects are planned but not underway, the public comment shall contain information demonstrating that the service provider has begun the projects planning phase. If these conditions are met, the KOBD will consider denying the applicant's proposal. However, to do so, public comment from the challenger must include the following information as noted for consideration:

- Provider commitment that the stated project will would be completed no later than eighteen (18) months after the date the grant award is made under the program and will be funded by the service provider
- A network map showing specific locations of planned transport segments, start and end points, and proposed internet points with internet backbone providers. The network map will be submitted in .kmz format
- Additional information as requested by KOBD to assess project viability and the ability to meet program goals

Additionally, the public comment must demonstrate that the challenger's project complies with items in this document's Assessment Criteria, Scalability, and Cost Reduction to ensure cost structure and program goals are met through the middle mile project underway. Failure to do so will negate the public comment so that a cost-effective middle mile solution can be awarded which meets the program goals.

#### *Public Comments For Areas Where Middle Mile Service Already Exists*

For public comments that are submitted for areas where middle mile infrastructure already exists, KOBD will require the challenger to provide the following information:

- A network map showing specific locations of current transport segments, start and end points, speeds enabled between transport segment(s) and proposed internet connection points, and associated port speeds with internet backbone providers. The network map will be submitted in .kmz format
- Current cost structure and middle mile transport pricing
- Proposed actions to substantially reduce transport costs compared to current costs and timeline to implement

#### *Applicant Response*

Upon completing the public comment period, KOBD will notify each applicant of such challenge(s). The applicant shall have two (2) weeks after notification to provide any supplemental information regarding the challenged application to KOBD (known as Applicant Response Period).

The KOBD will evaluate the information submitted in a challenge and will not award a grant if the information submitted is credible.



Additionally, the public comment must demonstrate that the challenger's existing middle mile infrastructure complies with items in this document's Assessment Criteria, Scalability, and Cost Reduction to ensure cost structure and program goals are met through the middle mile project underway. Failure to do so will negate the public comment so that a cost-effective middle mile solution can be awarded which meets the program goals.

### Program Inquiries

Questions regarding the application process will be accepted from the start of the application window (May 5, 2023) for two (2) weeks (May 18, 2023), after which time no additional questions will be accepted. KOBD will review all submitted questions and provide a written response, which will be posted to the KOBD webpage for viewing 1 week from submission.

### Key Project Data

Key project data will be captured for the applicant and the project including the following:

- Primary Organizational Contacts (Project and Technical)
- Total Project Amount, Grant Funds Requested and Matching Amount
- City(s) and County(s) where middle mile facilities will be built or augmented
- Fiber strands enabled end-to-end
- Initial middle mile capacity to be enabled
- Number of internet backbone providers targeted for interconnection
- Miles of fiber cable to be placed in service
- Estimated cost reduction for proposed middle mile transport services versus existing middle mile carrier pricing

### General Project Information

- Project Contact Information
- Project Name (Organization Name + Program Identifier)
- Requested Grant Amount
- Total Project Amount

### Project Proposal

Applicants must upload a zipped file containing the Project Proposal to be published on the program website for public comment. Submission will include:

- An executive summary of the project including the goals of the project, needs addressed, community partners, stakeholders involved, and the intended impact
- A description of the location where facilities will be built, partners involved and anticipated improvements or new capabilities
- The short and long-term investment benefits to the community and Kansans

### Community Partners, Roles And Letters Of Commitment

The applicant will provide a narrative describing any community partners/stakeholders associated with the projects' planning, promotion, or use. Describe each party's commitment and role in the project.



### Justification For The Project

The applicant will provide a narrative to justify the need for this project and relevant data indicators to support the effort. Applicant must provide evidence to make a compelling case for the project relative to the expected improvement of middle mile cost structure, infrastructure resiliency, and broadband quality for Kansans.

### Technical Project Plan

Applicant will provide a technical summary of the proposed project including the following:

- Overview of proposed project scope
- Explanation of why the specific middle mile segment(s) was selected
- Explanation of why the specific set of capabilities is included in the project

### Service Partners

Describe any service partners or subcontractors associated with the project's deliverables related to deployment and service delivery, including each partner's role in the project.

### Network Architecture Diagram

A high-level network architecture diagram shall be provided to document the proposed overall middle mile solution. The network architecture diagram for the project must be uploaded on a single .pdf or .zip file. At a minimum, the diagram must include:

- Network connection points/connection to point of presence
- Network equipment including optical network and switching devices, routers, switches, and firewalls
- Any other key component of the architecture not addressed in the categories above

### Climate Resilience

Applicants must demonstrate that they have sufficiently accounted for current and future weather- and climate-related risks to middle mile infrastructure projects. This includes all weather- and climate-related risks to broadband networks including wildfires, extreme heat and cold, and the extreme winds produced by weather events such as tornadoes. Because retrofitted and new infrastructure for broadband might be expected to have a lifetime of 20 years or more, applicants must account not only for current risks but also for how the frequency, severity, and nature of these extreme events may plausibly evolve as our climate continues to change over the coming decades.

Communities that lack broadband are also often the most vulnerable to extreme weather and climate events. This combination often results in a lack of a crucial communication infrastructure to respond to during these emergencies. Building climate-resilient broadband infrastructure for such communities provides emergency response preparedness and, thus, greater climate resilience for the community itself. The applicant is expected to design a climate-resilient middle mile solution and describe how the solution demonstrates climate resiliency within the application.

### Physical Location Diagram

A network map documenting the proposed middle mile solution must be provided with the following details:

- Physical location of each segment and end to end path

- Internet connection point with all internet backbone providers
- Central office or head end origination and/or termination points
- Other items as requested
- Label new fiber routes in yellow and existing fiber routes in red with opacity of the shaded proposed service area at 50%

### Project Plan And Milestones

A project plan and associated milestones must be developed to assess the overall timeline and project scope. The project plan in .xls or .pdf format shall include details relevant to each stage of the project and milestones as well as for each phase of the project, cover the entire project period, and align to the proposed project budget.

Though not an exhaustive list, the plan should incorporate the following:

- Preconstruction Planning - Engineering
- Permitting - Leasing - Licensing
- Construction
- Equipment Installation
- Project Implementation
- Operational Validation Plan

### Long Term Investment Viability/Scalability

KOBD is interested in making long-term broadband investments that will prevent near-term upgrades from occurring. The applicant must demonstrate the scalability and capabilities of the proposed project's technology and overall solution. The submission must include current technology levels, the ability to upgrade, and latency levels. Scalability and future-proofing are defined as the ability to achieve incremental bandwidth capacity with initial deployment or the capability to upgrade with minimal incremental investment. The State of Kansas desires to ensure that the grantee(s) are preparing for the future and design scalability into the initial middle mile solution(s). The applicant must provide details regarding the ability to support the following, now or in the future. If supporting in the future, provide an estimated date of implementation:

- Scalability up to and beyond 10 Gbps middle mile segments
- Resiliency and failover
- Ease of middle mile segment expansion beyond funded application(s)
- Ability to support or offer incremental broadband services post implementation

### Financial And Legal

#### *Required Applicant Match*

This program provides for an 80% grant with a 20% applicant match. Matching funds may include an in-kind match of up to 50% of the total match. An in-kind match requires valuation documentation and is subject to KOBD's approval.

#### *Budget And Financial Requirements*

Please provide a budget narrative that includes the following information:

- Provide explanation of costs that correspond with the information included in the project budget spreadsheet
- The necessity and basis for costs
- Reflect only allowable costs consistent with project scope

### *Project Budget And Bill Of Materials*

All applicants must complete and submit a budget. Given that the source of grant funding originates from federal sources, the State of Kansas has an obligation to ensure electronics being placed in service do not put end users at risk from unauthorized surveillance or unlawful activities. As such, all electronics to be used in the middle mile solution must be documented within the Bill of Materials and reviewed for approval. The Bill of Materials will include, at a minimum, the following categories:

- Network connection points/connection to point of presence
- Network equipment including optical network and switching devices, routers, switches, and firewalls
- Other – any other equipment not specifically identified in the above categories that are key to a middle mile ecosystem

### **Funding Levels**

The current level of funding opportunity is an 80% grant award with a corresponding 20% applicant match of the total project cost.

### **Budget And Financial Requirements**

Project budget and financial submission requirements include:

- Budget Narrative
  - Provide explanation of costs that correspond with the information included in the project budget spreadsheet
  - The necessity and basis for costs
  - Reflect only allowable costs consistent with project scope
- Project Budget and Bill of Materials [Upload]
  - Upload a project budget and bill of materials per the appropriate infrastructure template (MM). All applicants must complete and submit a budget using the Budget Template provided, located on the program website, which includes the associated bill of materials. Please also include the Required Applicant Match. Submissions that do not meet the minimum required applicant match may not be reviewed
    - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_BudgetFinancial validation documentation
  - Bank verification letter that proves there are sufficient funds for the minimum required applicant match amount. Other acceptable proof demonstrating sufficient funds are noted below:
    - Companies (Public or Private) providing a bond rating from Moody's, Standard and Poor's, or Fitch of Investment Grade at the time an application is submitted
    - Companies may provide financial information of parent organization if audited financials for operating subsidiary are not available.
    - NAMING CONVENTION: LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_BankVerification
  - Last two years of the applicant's income statement

- NAMING CONVENTION:  
LINC\_OrgName\_GeographicIdentifier\_FinancialStatement)

### Applicant Attestations

All applicant attestations must include the following:

- The grant applicant is in good financial standing with the State of Kansas
- The grant applicant is not currently involved in pending litigation in association with previous Kansas-sponsored broadband infrastructure grant projects
- The grant applicant is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participating in covered transactions by any federal department or agency
- If a private entity, the grant applicant has been operating in the State of Kansas for no fewer than three (3) years. The grant applicant has not, within a three-year period preceding this proposal, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for the commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements or receiving stolen property
- The grant applicant is not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state or local)
- The grant applicant has not, within a three (3) year period preceding this application/proposal, had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default
- The grant applicant is participating in subsidy programs to optimize digital inclusivity. (i.e., Lifeline, Affordable Connectivity Program, Emergency Connectivity Fund etc.)
- The grant applicant agrees that if awarded funds through the LINC program, the grant agreement will be executed within 60 days of receipt from Commerce. If the agreement is not executed within 60 days, the Kansas Department of Commerce reserves the right to reallocate funds
- All applicants will be required to sign the Department of Commerce Confidentiality Agreement at the time of application submission

### Application Evaluation Criteria

Application evaluation will be based on the application's overall quality, including the Project Proposal, Technical Project Plan, and financial information presented. KOBD will evaluate applications based on projects that optimize stewardship of public infrastructure dollars through collective investment. Proposal assessment criteria will include, but not be limited to, the ability to offer the following capabilities:

- Anticipated impact to Kansans
- Project scope of anticipated cost structure improvements and benefits to Kansans
- Scalability
- Speeds delivered and associated latency
- Cost reasonableness
- Impacts to last mile service affordability – current and anticipated middle mile price points for purchasing service providers
- Technical viability

- Partnerships/community support
- Benefit the proposed service area, including, but not limited to:
  - Facilitating development of carrier-neutral interconnection facilities
  - Improving the redundancy or resiliency of existing middle mile infrastructure
  - Including direct interconnect facilities that will facilitate the provision of broadband service to anchor institutions located within 1,000 feet of the middle mile infrastructure at speeds of at least 10 Gbps symmetrical
- Ability to serve anticipated last mile networks, and to meet the increasing needs of the households, businesses, and anchor institutions in the areas linked by the middle mile facilities at issue
- Reduced middle mile transport cost
- Build middle mile infrastructure using fiber-optic technology and certify that the proposed project, upon completion, will include direct interconnection facilities that will facilitate the provision of broadband service at speeds not less than 10 Gbps for downloads and 10 Gbps for uploads to anchor institutions located within 1,000 feet of the middle mile infrastructure
- Improved connectivity points for underlying service providers offering, or soon to be offering rural broadband services
- The applicant must submit a certification from an officer-level employee (or individual of comparable rank) that demonstrates professional experience having owned or operated a middle mile broadband network for at least three years or that it is a wholly owned subsidiary of such an entity and must specify the number of years the applicant or its parent company has been operating

### Cost Reduction

A key component for this program is to recognize a substantial reduction in middle mile transport costs. Applicants must demonstrate the likelihood of material reduction in end-user broadband prices resulting from funded middle mile infrastructure (i.e., by demonstrating decline in middle mile costs that are likely to flow through to consumer broadband prices). The applicant will provide before and after cost structure parameters associated with the current and proposed middle mile solution, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Port costs
- Mileage
- Transport bandwidth
- Set up fees
- Other

### Applicant Interview

KOBD will interview final grant candidates and give them an opportunity to ‘make their case’. This meeting should include organization and financial contacts, key project personnel, and partners critical to the overall success of the effort. Participants should be prepared to speak about specific aspects of the proposed project, the technical project plan, financials submitted and the demonstrated need that supports the project. This interactive meeting will provide an opportunity for grantees to call into focus key aspects of the project, compelling needs of the proposal and answer the question: “Why should the State of Kansas invest in this project?”

## Funds Disbursement

The middle mile Program will provide structured reimbursements for validated grant expenditures submitted. Grantees are expected to submit supporting documentation for expenditures (i.e., invoices, receipts) and proof of payment. Grantees must submit all required legal and contractual agreements/documents prior to funds disbursement. Quarterly reimbursements will be paid to grantees.

Project extensions will be considered in light of current supply chain delays on a case-by-case basis. Should actual project costs exceed the proposed/approved budget, grantees will be responsible to complete the proposed project without an increase in the grant award. KOBD reserves the right to partially fund projects that are not completed during the approved project period.

## Compliance

KOBD will provide a collaborative partnership, and overall support for middle mile Program Grantees by offering technical support related to reporting and compliance requirements as listed in the following paragraphs.

### *Monthly Reporting*

In addition to periodic Grantee meetings, KOBD will streamline reporting by providing baseline reporting templates and clear expectations for grantees participating in the program. The monthly reporting includes:

- A narrative update on the status of the project, including notification of any delays
- A monthly budget expenditure report of the project
- A monthly .pdf containing supporting project expenditure documentation for reimbursement requested (i.e., invoices/receipts)
- Quarterly reimbursements will be paid to grantees

### *Closeout Reporting*

Closeout reporting will be required within 45 days of project completion. Project completion and closeout report submission are required for the final payment. Closeout reporting includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Validation that the project has been completed
- Grantees will be required to submit latency, resiliency, and network performance validation upon completion of the project
- Grantees will be required to submit middle mile pricing being offered to internet service providers to validate actual cost savings realized
- KOBD will require validation of as-built drawings versus the final drawings submitted with the application through field validation
- Grantees must complete/submit the required financial documents, legal agreements, and reports
- KOBD reserves the right to amend the scope of grant awards or partially fund applications
- The KOBD reserves the right to request additional information that would demonstrate that the grantee met program requirements

### *Accountability*

- Grantee shall create, maintain, and preserve sufficient records to demonstrate their compliance with the requirements of this program. The grantee shall provide such records to KOBD promptly upon written request. KOBD requests may include, but not be limited to, the following:
- Information regarding middle mile service offering at the pricing specified in the application
- The right to recoup funding for incomplete projects or for lack of adherence to program guidelines
- The right to desk or field audit the project at any time. The project may be subject to state or federal audits
- Grantees are required to retain all records for up to five (5) years after project completion.



## Key Definitions

### **Adoption Efforts**

Adoption goes beyond access to high-speed internet and speaks to the ability of individuals and communities to harness access for quality-of-life implications. These efforts may include digital literacy training, low-income assistance programs (for equipment and/or broadband service), partnerships with co-working or entrepreneurship organizations, awareness or marketing campaigns, service provision to community anchor institutions and/or additional programming, and other programs designed to meet the needs of the local community.

### **Applicant Match**

At the time of application submission, the applicant must demonstrate available cash reserves in an account(s) of the applicant equal to at least the required amount specified in the sliding scale match table. Matching funds must be used solely for the Project and shall not include any financial assistance from federal sources unless there is a federal statutory exception specifically authorizing the federal financial assistance to be considered as such. An applicant must provide evidence of its ability to comply with this requirement in its application ([www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov)).

### **Broadband**

Broadband or high-speed internet access allows users to access the internet and internet-related services at significantly higher speeds than those available through “dial-up” services. Broadband speeds vary significantly depending on the technology and level of service ordered. For additional information, visit the source of this information: [Getting Broadband Q&A | Federal Communications Commission \(fcc.gov\)](http://www.fcc.gov).

### **Co-Investment**

Any funds provided by sources other than the applicant such as local, county, and eligible state programs or other contributors.

### **Community Anchor Institution**

Community anchor institution means schools, libraries, medical and healthcare providers, public safety entities, community colleges and other institutions of higher education, and other community support organizations and agencies that provide outreach, access, equipment, and support services to facilitate greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including low-income, unemployed, and the aged ([www.usac.org](http://www.usac.org)).

### **Covered Population**

Covered populations include aging individuals, incarcerated individuals, other than individuals who are incarcerated in a Federal correctional facility; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals with a language barrier, including individuals who (i) are English learners; and (ii) have low levels of literacy; individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group; and individuals who primarily reside in a rural area.

### **Economically Distressed Community**

KOBD will consider an area economically distressed if either the 2020 per capital BEA PCPI or PCMI metric is below the 80% threshold. The Kansas counties meeting this definition are in the table below:



Allen	Ellsworth	Lincoln	Riley
Anderson	Finney	Linn	Rooks
Atchison	Ford	Lyon	Russell
Barton	Franklin	Marion	Scott
Bourbon	Geary	Marshall	Seward
Brown	Graham	Mitchell	Smith
Chase	Grant	Montgomery	Stafford
Chautauqua	Greenwood	Morris	Stevens
Cherokee	Hamilton	Morton	Sumner
Clay	Harper	Neosho	Washington
Cloud	Harvey	Norton	Wichita
Cowley	Jackson	Osage	Wilson
Crawford	Jewell	Ottawa	Woodson
Dickinson	Kearny	Pawnee	Wyandotte
Doniphan	Kiowa	Reno	
Edwards	Labette	Republic	
Elk	Leavenworth	Rice	

The counties listed above can also be found at the Stats America website via <http://www.statsamerica.org/distress/distress.aspx>.

**Interconnect**

The physical linking of two networks for the mutual exchange of traffic on non-discriminatory terms and conditions.

**Internet Exchange Facility**

Physical infrastructure through which internet service providers and content delivery networks exchange internet traffic between their networks.

**Last Mile**

Last mile refers to the network infrastructure that carries signals from the network to and from the end-user premise. Depending on the network design and density of the area served, the actual distance of the last mile can be relatively short or maybe considerably longer than a mile.

**Middle Mile**

Middle mile refers to the portion of the telecommunications network that connects a network operator’s core network to the local network (last mile) plant. Middle mile facilities provide fast, large-capacity connections ranging from a few miles to a few hundred miles.

**Partnership**

A formal relationship between two or more parties that enter into an agreement for the sake of advancing broadband enablement.

**Project**

An applicant’s proposal to serve qualifying broadband speeds to unserved areas.

**Required Applicant Match**

The percentage of funds required by the applicant for the program.

**Scalability**

The capacity to change the size or scale of the broadband architecture to achieve substantially higher speeds (up to 10 Gbps) with minimal to no investment.

**Sliding Scale**

A measure to determine the contribution level required by the State of Kansas based on cost per location passed.

**Subsidy**

Assistance program applicants are enrolled in to assist with the monthly cost of services. Federal programs include the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB), or Lifeline.

**Unserved**

For purposes of the LINC Broadband Infrastructure Program, an unserved area is defined as a designated geographic area in which households or businesses are without a fixed, terrestrial connection supporting at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speeds.