**ConnectSD Broadband Development Program**

**2023 December Grant Application**

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| **Name & Address of Legal Entity Name:**  **SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (UEI):**  **Name & Address of DBA/Company name to be referenced publicly:** | **Due Data and Delivery Information:**  Applications are due and must be e-mailed to [Broadband@state.sd.us](mailto:Broadband@state.sd.us) no later than: **December 1, 2023,** at 4:00 pm (16:00) Central Time. A receipt acknowledgment reply e-mail will be sent.  *Make sure you have received this reply e-mail.* |
| **Application/Grant Manager:**  For questions, updates, or further information:  Mike Waldner  State Broadband Program Manager  Governor’s Office of Economic Development  711 E Wells Ave  Pierre, SD 57501  Office: 605-773-2483  Cell: 605-295-0821 (text/voice)  [Mike.Waldner@state.sd.us](mailto:Mike.Waldner@state.sd.us) |
| Date of application submission: |
| The State’s vision is that, through strategic investments, South Dakota will connect every rural and urban resident, agricultural and commercial business, and community anchor institution to high-speed broadband internet across all locations in the State, allowing every South Dakota citizen to fulfil their economic and social pursuits.  The ConnectSD program enables public-private partnerships with telecommunication companies (Providers) to bring broadband to unserved and underserved South Dakotans.  Applicants requesting a grant under the ConnectSD Broadband Development Program are required to submit this application which will enable the Governor’s Office of Economic Development (GOED) to analyze separate evaluation criteria to score the application. This program will reimburse successful applicants up to their maximum awarded amount with reimbursements based on actual receipts and costs incurred.  Areas qualifying for grant projects are those lacking access to fiber or cable modem broadband speeds of 100 megabits per second download and 20 megabits per second upload. Primarily, ConnectSD is looking to partner with providers to help connect locations in the Black Hills region, including north and south of I-90 from Rapid City to Spearfish or south of Sioux Falls in the southeast corner of the state in the rural Vermillion/Yankton areas.  The program does not intend to overbuild areas that are currently being served by 100 / 20 terrestrial broadband. However, if from our research, it is our determination and in the best interest of our citizens, some unintended/perceived overbuild or overlap may occur.  We invite all providers across the state to share their near-term and long-term broadband expansion plans and timelines to bolster the accuracy of our review. This can be done by contacting the Grant Manager (info above) or in the narrative section of this application.  **Schedule of Activities (Subject to Change)**  12/01/23 Applications are due prior to 4:00 PM Central Time  *Awards for projects will be announced after a full review.* ***(Some projects may be awarded on a rolling basis)*** | |

**DETAILS/GUIDELINES and CONSIDERATIONS for GRANT APPLICATION**

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| **Areas qualifying for grant projects:**  Areas qualifying for grant projects are those lacking access to fiber or cable modem broadband speeds of 100 megabits per second download and 20 megabits per second upload.  Primarily, ConnectSD is looking to partner with providers to help connect locations in the Black Hills region, including north and south of I-90 from Rapid City to Spearfish or south of Sioux Falls in the southeast corner of the state in the rural Vermillion/Yankton area.  **Methods of Review for Project Areas:**  The State will utilize various methods to evaluate applications and the availability of broadband in a proposed project area. We will use all available tools that may help in the accuracy of our review. We invite all providers across the state to share their near-term and long-term broadband expansion plans and timelines to bolster the accuracy of our review.  The State will primarily utilize the South Dakota Public Broadband map. We plan to include utilizing additional maps such as the FCC Location Based (BDC) Map, and NTIA National Broadband Availability Map (NBAM), along with various mapping capacities built in-house over the years, including trusted provider-submitted data. We are aware of the census block issues that cause the inaccuracy of Form 477 data, and the inaccuracy of the FCC BDC map and will work around those inaccuracies as much as possible.  **Links to maps we will utilize in our review (Not inclusive):**  State Map: <https://sdbit.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/fc84d92a97dd48598d46d1db420853b1>  NTIA Map: <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/resources/data-and-mapping>  FCC Map: <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/>  Areas where companies have been awarded public funds, but have not yet constructed high-speed broadband, and have a minimal history of successful high-speed, program-standard broadband deployments, may be considered underserved.  Other evaluation methods may include speed test data (our own, purchased, or citizen-based) and the state may also utilize outreach with providers, citizens, and local experts. Our goal is to strengthen the accuracy of our review by any available methods. This will only enhance our ability to maximize this program to help us do what is in the best interest of our citizens.  **Since 2019, the ConnectSD Broadband Development Program has been a fiber-first program.**  Across the broadband industry, experts have long argued policies around what is considered underserved locations, what speed is a minimum, and what technologies should be used, etc. South Dakota is not satisfied with the “good enough” mentality that would utilize a technology that most often only barely reaches minimum speeds. Rather, the state has made the policy decision to approve and fund future-proof fiber projects that are the gold standard for broadband deployment. Other technologies such as DSL copper, fixed wireless, and satellite, while they have their place in the ecosystem, are considered temporary “stop-gap” or “the only option” technologies. These technologies are undesirable to the end user experience and will be avoided when possible, and utilized only when all other options are exhausted.  ***High-speed future-proof reliable broadband that meets the needs of the 21st century*** |

**DETAILS and CONSIDERATIONS for GRANT APPLICATION**

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| **GENERAL EXPECTATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS:**   * Applications, questions, related documents, and application deadline documentation must be submitted via e-mail to the ConnectSD Broadband Team at: [Broadband@state.sd.us](mailto:Broadband@state.sd.us) * Projects must have construction completed and provide service to customers by **December 31, 2026**.   + Preference points if completed sooner.   + Note: The State will consider December 31, 2027, to be the completion date for projects in the Black Hills. * Applicants may submit multiple applications for consideration of different projects. * Applicants may submit projects with multiple phases, but the initial phase must be capable of standing on its’ own. * Technologies utilized must be *capable* of delivering:   + A minimum of 250 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload service upon project completion     - The provider may offer consumer services below this threshold, but the broadband service must be capable of 250/20 upon project completion.     - Preference points are awarded if initial speeds are beyond the minimum.   + A minimum of 500 Mbps download service by December 31, 2028 * Broadband speeds must be certified by a professional engineer within the application. (**Network Design Certification**) * Applicants agree to provide the proposed service area to the State in .kmz or shapefile file format.   + The file ***must*** show the specific locations to be served as points and lines and should include a shaded polygon giving the outline of the proposed funded service area. * The state is expecting all residences and businesses (who take service) within an awarded area to be served at the ConnectSD program standards. * With limited funding available and the high cost of broadband deployment:   + The state may fund the award using SLFRF/ARPA funds. (Will discuss with successful applicants)   + The state may ask the applicant to “hold” their project until future funding becomes available * The application must include your company’s experience delivering high-speed broadband. (**About Applicant section**)   **DURING THE AWARD PERIOD:**   * Provide a quarterly report/update to the State to include but not limited to: *(The state may provide a spreadsheet/form)*   + A schedule update including disclosure of any known potential delay-causing issues along with their potential impact and the applicant’s proposed workarounds.   + Financial update including any budget concerns.   + Provide photos, stories, anecdotes, and data you feel shows progress and highlights examples of the program. * Awardees must be available and willing to participate in surveys, questionnaires, or information-gathering e-mails from the state periodically (if/as needed) to contribute to the overall success and efficiencies of the program. * Reimbursements are based on actual receipts and costs incurred thus requests need at a minimum:   + Listing of project costs incurred to date, canceled checks or proof of electronic funds transfer, invoices for all expenses, a listing of staff time, work performed, and total cost.   + Reasonable reimbursement amounts only. (i.e.: We will not accept monthly reimbursements)   + Sent via e-mail to [Broadband@state.sd.us](mailto:Broadband@state.sd.us)   + The state may provide spreadsheets or online locations for this information to be transferred   **UPON COMPLETION OF AWARD:**   * Provide the service area to the State in .kmz or shapefile file format. The file must show the specific locations passed, built, and/or served as points and lines and should include a shaded polygon giving the outline of the funded service area. * Provide close-out report/documentation to demonstrate successful project completion to include at a minimum:   + Data about the funded technology and services, such as available speeds (download/upload), technologies in use, advertised speeds, average subscribed speeds, and pricing of advertised speeds. List new subscribers.   + A final report detailing the complete cost of the project, company financial contribution   + Provide information from a technical perspective to guarantee the buildout meets industry standards.   + Provide photos, stories, anecdotes, and data you feel highlight examples of the program usage.     - These may include stories from the perspective of your new customers. * The state may provide spreadsheets or online locations for this information to be transferred |

**APPLICANT INFORMATION for GRANT APPLICATION**

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| Company Name (*to be referenced by and used in various documents and publications*). |  |
| Primary Contact Name and Title |  |
| Telephone Number(s)  *Cell / Office* |  |
| E-mail Address(es) and titles |  |
| Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant  *This person will be the Point of Contact for the state regarding any questions on the grant application and throughout the performance of the grant period.* | Note: If different from the above address, applicants should provide the address and contact information for their in-state South Dakota representatives. |
| Grant Manager E-mail Address |  |
| Telephone Number(s) |  |
| Additional contacts and titles  *If you’d like us to have additional contacts, you may list them here. i.e. Financial Officer, etc.* |  |

**COST/FUNDING INFORMATION for GRANT APPLICATION**

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| Funding is limited and strictly for capital expenditures of building out broadband networks directly serving homes, consumers, businesses, and critical community facilities.  Reimbursements are made based on actual invoices submitted for reimbursement at or below the grant agreement amount. | |
|  | ConnectSD Broadband Grant Award Request (round to nearest dollar) |
|  | Local Match / Provider Investment (round to nearest dollar) |
|  | Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) |
|  |  |
| % | Percentage of Project Funding by the State |
| % | Percentage of Project Funding by the Provider |

**MISC INFORMATION**

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| **YES** | **NO** |  |
|  |  | Does the applicant participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and will apply for the ACP program in the proposed funding area? Information at: https://www.fcc.gov/acp. |
|  |  | Has the applicant received a ConnectSD award in previous grant rounds?  If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  |  | Is the applicant willing to discuss with the state the possibility of utilizing SLFRF/ARPA funds? |
|  |  | Does the applicant host digital literacy events? If yes, provide more information in the “About Applicant” section |
|  |  | Will the applicant use South Dakota-based contractors/installers? |

**PROJECT INFORMATION for GRANT APPLICATION**

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| Project Title: | | |
| Project Start Date: | | Project Scheduled Completion Date: |
| A brief one-paragraph summary of the project. *(Note: This may be used publicly to quickly identify your project for the grant program in the event your application is accepted.)* | | |
| As descriptive as possible describe where the coverage area will be. *(close to xyz town, N of Hwy ##, rural area N of town).* | | |
| To the best of your abilities, list the broadband service providers (if any) that are currently delivering service in the proposed service area.  List their broadband technologies & speeds/services known in the area. *(Both Upload and Download)* | | |
| Who is the ILEC for the proposed service area? | | List all counties served by this project. |
| List any federal grant projects and recipients, if any, that are also funding this same area the applicant proposes to serve.  (**Note**: If the proposed service area is being funded by any federal sources (USDA ReConnect, Connect America Fund, Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, etc.) – please identify to the extent possible the area impacted and what funds. Federal funding of a project area **does not exclude that area from potential ConnectSD funding**. Areas where companies have been awarded public funds but have not yet constructed high-speed broadband, and have a minimal history of successful high-speed, program-standard broadband deployments, may be considered underserved.) | | |
| If federal, state, or tribal permits are required for your project, please indicate which permits and the expected times to receive approval. | | List the maximum resulting speed/services available upon project completion. *(Both Upload and Download - i.e., 1Gig Symmetrical)* |
| Number of Locations | | |
|  | Households | |
|  | Businesses | |
|  | Farms / Ranches | |
|  | Critical Community Facilities / Anchor Institutions (i.e., Schools, hospitals, Fire station, Police, Library, etc.) | |
|  | **TOTAL Locations Proposed** | |
| Metric Numbers | | |
|  | Miles of Fiber | |
|  | Square miles of coverage area | |

**PROJECT NARRATIVE / DESCRIPTION for GRANT APPLICATION**

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| Write your own narrative below describing the unique need, discussions you’ve had, if any, with current residents, and any other information you wish the application review team to know about your proposed application. Please include any strategies you may have to ensure the success of this project as it relates to supply chain considerations, and availability of items such as construction crew, electronic equipment, Fiber, conduit, etc. Clearly explain any extenuating circumstances for the level of match your application proposes. |

**PROJECT SCORING for GRANT APPLICATION**

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| **1. Maximum Service Performance of the Offered Service (20 points maximum)** | |
|  | Any subscriber of broadband funded under ConnectSD should be able to receive no less than 250 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload during peak hours, accounting for the expected usage of other customers on the network.  Points will be awarded for speeds beyond the minimum. The provider may offer consumer services below this threshold, but the broadband must be capable of 250/20 upon project completion for similar market rates.  The technology installed must be expandable into the future. A certification from a licensed Professional Engineer must declare that the proposed system will deliver these speeds to every premise in the proposed funded service area.  ***The included certification form must be signed by a Professional Engineer.***  Points are assigned as follows for services available upon project completion:    250 Mbps Download x 20 Mbps Upload = 0 points, the application qualifies for the program  250 Mbps Download x 100 Mbps Upload = 5 points  250 Mbps Download x 250 Mbps Upload = 10 points  500 Mbps Download x 500 Mbps Upload = 15 points  1,000 Mbps Download x 1,000 Mbps Upload = 20 points |
| **2. Financial Support / % of Funding by Provider (25 points maximum)** | |
|  | Applicants are encouraged to provide a minimum of 50 percent funding. Applicants will receive 1 point for every percentage point beyond 50%. All applicants must attach a summary of audited financials to demonstrate their ability to fund at the above levels.  Note: Any project proposing less than a 50% applicant match must clearly explain (in the above narrative) the extenuating circumstances for consideration.  **Points are assigned as follows:**  Applicants with greater than 50% funding will receive 1 point for every percentage point beyond 50%, up to 25 points. |
| **3. Citizen Interest Level: Farms/Business/Home Employment pre-subscribed/Interest (10 points maximum)** | |
|  | Applicants will receive a point for each citizen (individual or business) that demonstrates interest or pre-subscribes for broadband service, up to a maximum of 10 points.  Applicant needs to include (up to 10) forms (below), e-mails, letters, etc. from citizens that indicate proof there is interest in the proposed funded service area for this applicant to provide broadband. Be prepared to share names if asked.  Enter the number of citizens (up to 10) you have documentation of their interest or have pre-subscribed to your service.  **Note: The Pre-Subscription forms below are NOT required in this round. A simple e-mail or letter will suffice.** |

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| **4. Critical Community Facilities (5 points maximum).** | |
|  | Critical community facility served (defined as law enforcement, fire stations, emergency operations centers, healthcare, military, state, or local government).  5 points will be awarded for any (even one) critical community facility connected in the proposed service area. |
| **5. Reservation Lands (5 points maximum)** | |
|  | For applications where ***any*** location in the geographical area of the proposed funded service area(s) is to provide service on a South Dakota Reservation, five points shall be awarded.  Points are assigned as follows:  Any location (even one) in the geographical area is reservation lands = 5 points |
| **6. Project Timelines (15 points)** | |
|  | The mandatory completion date for all projects is **December 31, 2026.**  For applications where the project will be completed earlier, the following points will be assigned:  **Points are assigned as follows:**  Project completed by December 31, 2024 = 15 points  Project completed by December 31, 2025 = 10 points |



South Dakota Broadband Development Program Network Design Certification

We the undersigned, certify that the proposed network will be designed and constructed to deliver broadband services to all the premises and can provide the desired performance during normal and peak usage times.

1. Explain your broadband services to be offered to consumers or businesses.

(upload/download speeds, packages with pricing).

1. Describe the proposed broadband technology. Including a description of the overall network design insuring performance levels during peak usage at a given location. Include in your description the degree of network oversubscription, if any. Additionally, include the provider’s upstream network speeds to the Internet.

1. What is the average expected performance level during peak usage at each location, given the total network design?

Moreover, the network, as designed, can meet the proposed build-out timeline, milestones and construction schedule within the costs specified in the application.

(Date) Certified Engineer’s Signature

Certified Engineer’s Name (Printed)

Registration Number

State of Registration

**ENGINEERING COMPANY (If applicable):**

(Date) Certified Engineer’s Signature

Certified Engineer’s Name (Printed)

Name of Engineering Company



# Exhibit A, Summary of Applicant’s Financials

# (Most Current Available)



Exhibit B, Proposed Funding Service Area Map

*Please provide a Proposed Funding Service Area map in .kmz or shapefile file compatible format with the application. The file(s) must show via points and lines the specific locations to be served as well as include a shaded polygon giving the outline of the proposed funded service area.*

You must send the .KMZ file with your application but we would like you to please include one or more picture(s)/image(s) of the proposed service area here.



# Exhibit C, Proposed Timeline and/or Map Timeline



# Exhibit D, Proposed Cost Breakdown

*Please provide the greatest detail possible.*



# Exhibit E, About Applicant

*Along with your company history and background, please also provide:*

*Your company’s experience delivering high-speed broadband*

*If you have past ConnectSD awards, include any insights or experiences*