



October 14, 2009

Hon. Lawrence E. Strickling
Assistant Secretary for Communications & Technology
National Telecommunications and Information Agency
U.S. Department of Commerce
Herbert C. Hoover Building
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Assistant Secretary Strickling:

On behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide input to your review process for the awarding of Broadband Stimulus funding through the Broadband Technologies Opportunity Program (BTOP). This was a daunting task as there are roughly 130 applications that aim to serve some part of the commonwealth.

We take our role in the review process seriously. To get the benefit of perspectives from outside of state government, we assembled a team of subject matter experts with broad width and depth of experience in a variety of areas impacted by broadband. In addition, regional economic development partners were given the opportunity to weigh in on proposals affecting their areas. Because of the short review period of only 20 days, our review concentrated on the goals and priorities as identified in the commonwealth's Statewide Broadband Plan. We expect that the NTIA will perform a detailed analysis of each proposal's technical feasibility, financial feasibility, return on investment, and compliance with the NOFA.

We used the following process to evaluate the proposals:

Self-assessment by BTOP applicants – The commonwealth asked all 130 applicants supply a copy of the executive summary for their proposal and to complete a self-appraisal form to:

- (1) explain how their grant application supports the goals and priorities of the commonwealth's Statewide Broadband Plan;
- (2) explain the reasons its project best meets the needs and priorities of the state; and
- (3) select the desired predominant subject matter area from which the commonwealth would seek more detailed review.

Applicants who declined to complete this self-assessment did not progress further in the commonwealth's review process.

Regional reviews – The commonwealth then circulated copies of applicant self-assessments to ten Regional Partners (seven (7) Local Development Districts and three (3) economic development entities) that were given the opportunity to review and assess all projects within their respective regions.

Subject Matter Expert (SME) input – Concurrently, the commonwealth convened a panel of twelve (12) Subject Matter Experts (SME) and other select stakeholders. This allowed the commonwealth to gain input and perspectives from other public and private sector interests and disciplines (health care, public safety, local government, K-12 education, higher education, libraries, technical/industry, economic development, social services and community development, and regulatory).

Final review and prioritization by the commonwealth – After compiling all of the applicant and reviewer input, the commonwealth team (Office of Administration, Governor's Office, and Department of Community & Economic Development) held internal deliberations and finalized the official state response contained herein.

Of the 130 proposals identified in NTIA's online database as impacting Pennsylvania, 76 applicants responded to the commonwealth's request for the self-assessment and were reviewed by SME's, regional partners, and the commonwealth team. The remaining applicants declined to respond and were not further reviewed.

The outcome of the review process was to place favorable applications into one of the following categories:

- **Highly Recommend** – these projects align with the commonwealth Statewide Broadband Plan. They provide coverage and opportunities to identified and targeted populations as well as to wide cross sections of the population within the commonwealth with a good return on the proposed investment;
- **Support** – these projects are consistent with the commonwealth Statewide Broadband Plan. Their target populations are narrower in scope, though they would provide some benefits to the broader population of the commonwealth with a moderate return on investment.

There are 13 proposals which we **Highly Recommend** (listed alphabetically by applicant). These proposals best meet the goals and priorities identified in the commonwealth's Statewide Broadband Plan and will serve many parts of the state as well as the vulnerable populations targeted by the broadband stimulus grant program:

Highly Recommend	Easy Grant ID #	Project Type
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh	3124	Public computing center
Delaware County Library System	1513	Middle mile
DQE Communications, LLC	2608	Middle mile
Executive Office of the Commonwealth of PA (OA)	28	Middle mile
Executive Office of the Commonwealth of PA (OA) – Dept. of Education	2677	Middle mile
Geisinger Clinic	3892	Sustainable adoption
Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development	2511	Sustainable adoption
Philadelphia Housing Authority	3944	Public computing center
Technology Council of Northwest Pennsylvania	3004	Last mile – non remote
UPMC	2395	Sustainable adoption
Wilco Electronic Systems, Inc.	492	Sustainable adoption
Wireless Neighborhoods	1777	Public computing center
Zito Media Communications II, LLC (Northern)	1943	Middle mile

In addition to the above, there were another 12 proposals which we generally **Support** (listed alphabetically by applicant) though not to the degree of those listed above:

Support	Easy Grant ID #	Project Type
Advanced Regional Communication Cooperative, Inc.	884	Last mile - remote
ComPros, Inc.	2076	Middle mile
DigitalBridge Communications Corp.	672	Last mile – non remote
Executive Office of the Commonwealth of PA (OA) – Dept. of Education	2376	Public computing center
Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation	114	Sustainable adoption
Keystone Initiative for Network Based Education and Research	1029	Middle mile
Last Mile, Inc.	180	Middle mile

Mission Economic Development Agency	1097	Public computing center
Wilco Electronic Systems, Inc.	357	Middle mile
Wilco Electronic Systems, Inc.	486	Public computing center
Zito Media Communications II, LLC (Central)	580	Middle mile
Zito Media Communications II, LLC (Northwestern)	579	Middle mile

The remaining 51 proposals which we reviewed did not meet the objectives of the State Broadband plan and/or did not meet program eligibility criteria and/or did not provide tangible benefit to the commonwealth and its citizens.

We hope that you find our recommendations useful and weigh them accordingly in your deliberations and final decisions regarding which proposals to approve for this round of ARRA Broadband funding.

Sincerely,



Naomi Wyatt
Secretary of Administration