



*Community Health Centers
of Southern Iowa*
an iowahealth⁺center

August 3, 2020

Subject: Broadband Grants Program – NOFA #003

To whom it may concern,

Please consider this letter to be a formal letter of support for Grand River Mutual Networks (GRM) and the Broadband Grants Program application they are submitting. This member owned cooperative supports its communities by providing community improvement grant programs, scholarship opportunities for high school seniors, and numerous donations to local festivals and events. GRM provides communication services to customers located within a 4,500 square mile radius that covers 44 exchanges in northern Missouri and southern Iowa.

Community Health Centers of Southern Iowa (CHCSI) considers GRM to be an excellent collaborative partner and a tremendous asset to our community. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, internet service has become more important than ever before for our rural communities. Telehealth and telemedicine services have been key ways to provide much needed medical and behavioral services to patients. Without reliable internet service, many patients may go untreated.

There is currently an extreme need for internet service, particularly for the low-income in our community. GRM provides quality communications services and is committed to providing opportunities for residents in our communities to have quality internet service. As such, CHCSI strongly supports the efforts of GRM Networks and encourages approval of their Broadband Grants Program application.

Sincerely,

Samantha Cannon, CEO
Community Health Centers of Southern Iowa



An Affiliate of **MERCYONE**

Dear State of Iowa OCIO Broadband Grant Program Review Committee:

Decatur County Hospital is the Critical Access Hospital that serves patients from Decatur County and the surrounding region. We offer emergency services, inpatient care, inpatient and outpatient surgery, rehabilitation therapy, specialized care through our Outpatient Clinics, laboratory services, and radiology. We are one of the largest employers in Decatur County, and have a significant impact on our local community. Without the broadband service from GRM Networks, our work would not be possible.

Each day, we utilize the broadband service to deliver exceptional care to our patients. Our patient record platform, Cerner, is cloud-based and accessed through our broadband connection. Not only do our staff members utilize this service each day, it allows our patients to remotely access their records utilizing their own broadband connection. However, not all of our patients have access to broadband, and therefore cannot take advantage of this service. If GRM Networks were to receive funding to further expand their broadband coverage, it would directly help our patients by allowing them to access their personal medical records through a broadband connection. With this access, they can better track their healthcare, and we can ensure they have access to necessary information.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we had many patients who required medical appointments with offsite providers who were not able to visit Decatur County Hospital to provide in person care. Due to the broadband access available in our facility, we were able to facilitate these patients by offering remote appointments through telemedicine technology. We were grateful to have the capability to avoid a lapse in service during this unprecedented time.

I strongly support GRM Networks' application for the OCIO Broadband Grant Program, and believe that the increased access to broadband in our community would boost our ability to provide exceptional care, close to home for our patients. I encourage you to support GRM Networks' effort to connect the residents of our rural community, so that they can experience our continued commitment to the best healthcare possible in Decatur County.

Sincerely,

Mike Johnston, CEO
Decatur County Hospital

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing this letter today to support Grand River Mutual (GRM) in the grant writing process for funding to increase our broadband access in the Wayne Community School District (CSD). When we were forced to offer online instruction only in the fall, this created many challenges including internet access. Throughout the spring and summer, I have been working with GRM to provide high quality internet to our students. This grant would help provide this service.

Wayne CSD has used most of the CARES Funding to purchase devices for each student. In March, we did not have a device for every student. The Wayne Board of Education has made it a priority to have a device for every student and we have been able to accomplish this. With that said, the majority of our CARES Funding is gone and we are not able to help with lowering the cost of broadband service. This grant funding would benefit GRM and Wayne CSD!

I hope GRM will be strongly considered to receive this grant funding to further our broadband service and cost in not only for Wayne CSD, but for all of southern Iowa. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 641-872-2184.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Still".

Mike Still
Superintendent of Wayne CSD



August 3, 2020

Dear State of Iowa OCIO Broadband Grant Program Review Committee:

As the Economic Development agency that serves Decatur County, Iowa, the Decatur County Development Corporation (DCDC) is tasked with recruiting businesses to Decatur County, and creating the future for our businesses and residents. A large part of our work is marketing our communities and their infrastructure to company executives and employees who would move to the area along with the business. Decatur County is fortunate to have a high-quality telephone and broadband provider who provides top-level service for their robust network. However, we still have homes and businesses that miss out on this great service due to the cost of expanding to remote areas of our county.

It is no secret that broadband is now on the list of “must-haves” for businesses looking to relocate, or employees looking to move to a new community. Because of the commitment to high-tech infrastructure by GRM Networks, we can tout a 1 Gbps fiber connection to almost all the homes and businesses in the area we serve, but we need to get to 100% service access to set ourselves apart from other communities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen an increase in Decatur County residents working from home, or using the Internet to search for new jobs that will allow them to enter into remote working opportunities. While the majority of our residents live in a location where they can receive broadband service from GRM Networks, there are still gaps. These gaps are holding back our residents, and the growth of our community. With expanded access to broadband in the remote areas of our county, we can ensure coverage for any family that wants to make Decatur County their home, while working remotely.

In addition to their commitment to an impressive level of broadband service, GRM Networks has been a committed partner to economic growth in Decatur County, Iowa; and all their service territories. Particularly in Decatur County, GRM Networks has invested \$75,000 over the past 2 years to allow us to provide low-interest alternative loans for startup businesses and entrepreneurs. By providing this investment, GRM Networks has helped support 1 large business expansion, 1 business purchase and renovation, and 1 start up business. These funds have created or retained over 10 jobs. This is evidence of their commitment to the future of the rural communities they serve.

I strongly support GRM Networks' application for the OCIO Broadband Grant Program, and encourage you to take this opportunity to help support residents in rural Iowa who need access to high quality broadband service that is just out of their reach.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Shannon M. Erb'.

Shannon Erb, Board Member
Decatur County Development Corporation