

July 26, 2021

To: The OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER OF THE STATE OF IOWA

Re: Broadband Grants Program – NOFA 6

We are aware of the State of Iowa's NOFA 6 Broadband Grant Program and as a business with interests across the State of Iowa in both urban and rural markets, we want to reiterate the strong need to improve rural broadband service holistically across Iowa. Our customers are dependent on quality high speed broadband at reasonable speeds to facilitate access to our products and services to the marketplace and the need to improve existing internet service is broadly needed across rural Iowa.

Our experience with Nextlink Internet as an internet service provider across the rural markets of the Central United States including Iowa makes them qualified and capable to roll out improved internet service in rural Iowa in an expedited manner pursuant to NOFA 6.

In closing, the Iowa NOFA 6 program should continue to enable competent and capable internet service providers, like Nextlink, to improve the effectiveness and viability of Iowa rural residents to access the internet with a reliable service provider.

Best Regards,



Terry Frahm  
EVP of Administration



July 23, 2021

Annette Dunn  
Chief Information Officer, State of Iowa  
200 E. Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50309

Dear Ms. Dunn:

Please accept this letter in support of Nextlink Internet's proposal to apply for the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant Program.

The Microsoft Airband Initiative is a project of Microsoft's Technology and Corporate Responsibility organization, created to close the broadband gap worldwide. We partner with internet service providers, equipment manufacturers, and local entrepreneurs to make affordable broadband access a reality for disconnected communities around the world. Through our partnerships with Internet Service Providers (ISPs), we are well on the way to our goal of bringing broadband connectivity to 3 million unserved rural customers across the US. Currently, the Federal Communications Commission indicates that broadband is not available to over 127,000 people in Iowa, whereas Microsoft anonymized data indicates that 1.6 million people in the state do not use the internet at broadband speeds of 25/3 Mbps.

Nextlink Internet has been providing telecommunications services to rural communities for 9 years and is an important Airband ISP Partner. In 2019, we launched our partnership to bring broadband availability to over 1.3 million unserved rural customers in 6 states. Airband works with Nextlink Internet to provide digital skills training and a free technical hotline through PCs for People, another Airband partner, for customers. Further, we support Nextlink Internet's efforts to drive business impact in broadband-enabled verticals, including small business, education, telemedicine, and precision agriculture, as highlighted by its work with Land O'Lakes. We are working collaboratively to maximize the impact of broadband connectivity in rural communities.

Microsoft Airband is committed to providing support for Nextlink Internet as it seeks to address broadband accessibility, affordability, and adoption in several rural communities in Iowa. We believe that Nextlink Internet, with its extensive industry experience, is well-positioned to expand broadband connectivity to unserved and underserved communities in Iowa, that also stand to benefit from the digital equity programming offered by Microsoft Airband.

Please accept our wholehearted support for Nextlink Internet's application for the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant Program to enable competent and capable internet service providers, like Nextlink Internet, to improve the effectiveness and viability of Iowa residents to access essential technology.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vickie S. Robinson".

Vickie S. Robinson  
General Manager, Microsoft Airband Initiative

Microsoft Corporation is an equal opportunity employer.