

Demonstrated Experience

This section requires information about Applicant's demonstrated experience in provisioning Broadband across the State of Iowa. Applicant shall include relevant information about their experience that has prepared them to deploy their Project, such as, for example, community partnerships and services; history of organization; number of years in business; number of years of experience providing the types of services sought by this NOFA #008; if the Applicant is a relatively new provider/market entrant, an explanation of the benefits, if any, of being a newer provider/market entrant; the level of technical experience in providing the types of services sought by this NOFA #008..

Citizens Mutual Telephone Cooperative (Citizens Mutual) has been in business providing telecommunications services for almost 120 years. Citizens Mutual has been providing high speed broadband services over a FTTP network for over 20 years and has extensive experience building and operating fiber networks. We are a local, Iowa community based broadband provider that is invested in improving the access to broadband in southeastern Iowa and has made tremendous progress with previous federal, state and local financial support to expand our fiber network to areas neglected by other providers.

The projects that have funded our fiber expansion in rural areas of southeastern Iowa include:

NOFA #002 is 100% complete and has connected nearly 200 subscribers to Citizen Mutual's state-of-the-art network.

Citizens Mutual's award from Empower Rural Iowa, Emergency Broadband Expansion Grant Program – NOFA #005 was completed within the required timeframe. Citizens Mutual has connected 49 out of the 84 locations that the project has facilitated broadband availability. This project is significant in that it demonstrated Citizens Mutual's capability to build and implement a project within a short period of time.

USDA ReConnect Round 2 Grant Award - Citizens Mutual is nearly complete with the construction and turn-up of services in southern Wapello County. All the mainline fiber is constructed and we are currently connecting customers. The project is anticipated to be fully complete within the next 12 months. Currently, we have connected 51 out of 202 locations with new installations occurring daily.

Citizens Mutual's award from Empower Rural Iowa, Emergency Broadband Expansion Grant Program – NOFA #006 is over 80% complete and anticipated to be completed by the end of the year. We are connecting customers in the areas in which the fiber construction is complete. Citizens Mutual has connected 155 customers out of the 599 locations that, when complete, will facilitate broadband availability.

Citizens Mutual's award from Empower Rural Iowa, Emergency Broadband Expansion Grant Program – NOFA #007 (two awards) – Citizens Mutual is starting to build in the NOFA 7 funded project areas this summer. We anticipate completing the project ahead of schedule with the productivity of our construction contractor resources. This project will facilitate broadband to 885 locations and expect to start connecting customers this fall in areas where the first phase of construction is complete.

Citizens Mutual has a long history of working with the State of Iowa DOT, local counties, and municipalities to ensure a smooth construction process. We understand the value of building trust and relationships that help us expedite the permitting and construction progress. All the contractors we use are local to Iowa and are equally committed to a high standard of quality to ensure that the residents and community leaders are satisfied with the conditions we leave in the areas of construction.

The resumes of key Citizens Mutual team members are included to provide further evidence of Citizens Mutual's ability to successfully implement the proposed FTTH Expansion projects in the proposed grant application. The specific broadband project team experience, which is most relevant to the proposed project, is as follows:

Management Bios:

Vince Tyson: General Manager

Vince Tyson manages the daily activities of Citizens Mutual Telephone Cooperative, a regional communication company in southern Iowa that provides services to residents throughout Davis and southern Wapello counties. Prior to Citizens Mutual, Mr. Tyson was Chief Operating Officer at Eastern New Mexico Rural Telephone Cooperative. Previously, Mr. Tyson has served as Senior Vice President - Engineering and System Integration for CHR Solutions, Chief Technical Officer for Paul Bunyan Telephone Cooperative in Minnesota and served eight years in the US Air Force. Mr. Tyson's background includes a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from Texas Tech University and an MBA from the University of Minnesota.

Mr. Tyson has spent the majority of his career working for community based telecommunications cooperatives that have sought to upgrade their networks to deliver advanced broadband services as well as expand the availability of their services to under and unserved areas within their region. His management experience includes overseeing the construction and operation of networks that have expanded over 500 miles of fiber per year to meet customer demands. He has been involved in projects that, in total, have facilitated broadband availability to over 50,000 locations.

Trent Gregory: Outside Plant Superintendent

Trent Gregory, OSP Superintendent of Citizens Mutual Telephone Cooperative, served 4 years in the United States Air Force as a Telephone Cable Installation and Maintenance Specialist. In 1990, Mr. Gregory accepted an Installer/Repairman position with Citizens Mutual Telephone Cooperative in Bloomfield, IA. He was promoted to Combination Technician a few years later and was responsible for over 30 Business Key systems and PBX phone systems. In 1999, Mr. Gregory took a position with US West in Ottumwa, IA. He worked as a Network Technician for US West for 10 years.

In 2009, Mr. Gregory returned to Citizens Mutual Telephone Cooperative at his current position of Outside Plant Superintendent. During his role as OSP Superintendent, Mr. Gregory has been responsible for 10 fiber optic build out projects totaling over 600 miles as well as maintaining both a legacy copper and a new fiber network infrastructure. In his current role as the Operations Manager, Mr. Gregory oversees the construction and operations of both the OSP network and core backbone network. He supervises Citizens Mutual's internal construction crew, installation and repair technicians, and IT services technicians. He also manages the outside contractor resources responsible for the mainline fiber network builds.