



**Invitation to Qualify (ITQ)
(Exhibit A)**

Broadband Intervention Zones

**Pre-Publication Version
(DRAFT)**

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Purpose Statement

Since 2018, Governor Reynolds' Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant Program has issued seven funding opportunities for broadband expansion in Iowa. Collectively, grant funding exceeding \$350 million has been awarded to provide new broadband service to Unserved and Underserved Locations in Iowa. Upon completion, these broadband projects will result in over \$680 million in new broadband investment, serving an expected 109,000 homes, schools, and businesses in Iowa.

As the Department of Management, Office of the Chief Information Officer (“OCIO” or “Office”) prepares for future grant opportunities to expand Broadband access within the remaining Unserved or Underserved Locations in the State of Iowa, new strategies driven by collaboration with Iowa communities will be required to (1) align with federal program guidelines and, (2) help prioritize future broadband funding to communities of greatest need:

Concerning (1) above, new requirements for local coordination have been established within future federal funding programs for which Iowa must demonstrate compliance.¹

Concerning (2) above, Iowa recently released its updated Broadband Availability Map published at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband-availability-map-version-5>. The Broadband Availability Map demonstrates the presence of Broadband as reported by communication service providers operating in Iowa at the location (i.e., address) level. As noted on the Broadband Availability Map, many locations within the State of Iowa lack access to Broadband service. Given the geographic diversity of these locations, the number of locations, and the varying complexity of Broadband construction in Unserved and Underserved Locations of the State, the OCIO seeks to prioritize these areas within future Broadband funding opportunities.

The Map underwent a challenge process that will result in the final Map being published in the coming weeks. Please note that the eligibility of locations on the Map today may change when the final Map is published.

To address these interests, the OCIO is issuing this Invitation to Qualify (“ITQ”)(“Exhibit A”). The purpose of this ITQ is to solicit Applications from Communities lacking Broadband. Successful Applications to this ITQ will be used by the OCIO to establish Broadband Intervention Zones that may be used to prioritize areas for future broadband funding.

NOTE: This ITQ is NOT a grant opportunity. No funds are being offered in connection with this ITQ, nor does a successful application to this ITQ guarantee funding will be made available for any Broadband Intervention Zone in the future.

¹ The Broadband Intervention Zones established through this ITQ, and any information submitted by Applicants in response to this ITQ, may be used by OCIO to develop future publicly-available plans, reports, and activities as may be required by applicable federal programs incorporating local or regional collaboration requirements. The OCIO may also use data submitted as part of Applications to this ITQ as evidence of compliance with any requirements established by applicable federal programs for community or political subdivision coordination.

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In response to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the federal government made available to states various funding streams in an effort to address pandemic needs and to incentivize investment in infrastructure, including buildout of broadband in Geographic Areas of Concern. This ITQ seeks to establish Geographic Areas of Concern that may be eligible to receive funding in connection with future funding opportunities issued by the Office. Several funding streams, including the American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund, America Rescue Plan Act Capital Projects Fund, and the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act Division F, Title I (“Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program” or “BEAD”) have all been established to support the deployment of broadband to unserved and underserved locations in the United States. **This ITQ anticipates certain requirements that may be attached to state or federal funding sources selected by the State of Iowa for future broadband grant opportunities, but prospective Community Applicants should take into consideration that data solicited through this ITQ may be insufficient to warrant the allocation of funds under all future state or federal program funding opportunities that may be issued by the Office.** Accordingly, the information solicited through this ITQ may require supplementation for Broadband Intervention Zones to be eligible for a specific funding source made available in connection with future grant opportunities issued by the Office. Successful Community Applicants may be required to periodically submit new data to the Office to remain on a list of Broadband Intervention Zones that are eligible to receive funding in conformance with guidelines for various state or federal funding sources that introduce additional requirements beyond the information solicited here.

Until now, all NOFA offerings allowed broadband providers to select where they wanted to build based on available OCIO mapping data that identified areas lacking broadband. Although this process has resulted in significant buildout throughout the state, there remains a perception that certain areas perpetually go unserved for a variety of reasons.

This ITQ seeks to change the approach, first by identifying Broadband Intervention Zones in the state most in need of funding for Broadband buildout, followed by one or more Notices of Funding Availability that will prioritize applications to construct Broadband networks within the Broadband Intervention Zones.

The federal funding sources contemplated for upcoming NOFA offerings may require completion of all work and launch of service as early as the end of 2026. Therefore, it is anticipated that this ITQ/NOFA process will result in rapid deployment of broadband service in areas within the state that have a demonstrated need in a Geographic Area of Concern. Note: This ITQ does not contemplate any one specific funding source but may be used to support grant opportunities in connection with any number of funding sources available to Iowa in the future.

Community Applicants successfully meeting the ITQ requirements and criteria, in the

sole opinion of the evaluation committee, will be placed on the Broadband Intervention Zone list in rank order. OCIO may then issue one or more future NOFAs that prioritize buildout of Broadband in the Broadband Intervention Zones. However, the establishment of a Broadband Intervention Zone does not guarantee any future Broadband build in the zone.

Community Applicants applying for inclusion on the Broadband Intervention Zone list may elect to work with a communications service provider or some other organization in developing an application for submission to this ITQ. However, the Community Application must be submitted by a Community Applicant and supported by the Community. In addition, inclusion on the Broadband Intervention Zone list will not guarantee (1) a funding opportunity will be offered for any Broadband Intervention Zone, (2) a future award will be made to any particular provider to build in any particular Broadband Intervention Zone, or (3) that buildout of broadband service in the Broadband Intervention Zone will occur. Also, submissions must focus on the circumstances of the specific Community associated with the Applications. Therefore, formulaic or “stock” text submissions will likely score poorly and result in a lower ranking or exclusion from the Broadband Intervention Zones List.

1.2 ITQ Timetable

There are no exceptions to any deadlines for the Community Applicants; however, the Office reserves the right to change the dates. Refer to Section 2 - Administrative Information for more details concerning each event.

| Section | Event | Date |
|---------|---|--------------------------------|
| 2.3 | ITQ Pre-Publication | Feb. 2, 2023 |
| 2.5 | Pre-Application Conference | Feb. 15, 2023, 2:00 pm CDT |
| 2.6 | Written Questions due by | Feb. 22, 2023, 5:00 pm CDT |
| 2.6 | Written Responses to Questions posted by | Feb. 28, 2023 |
| 2.7 | ITQ Issuance and Application Acceptance Window Opens | March 1, 2023 |
| 2.8 | Application Acceptance Window Closes/Applications Due | March 31, 2023, 5:00 pm CST |
| 2.9 | Office Announces Broadband Intervention Zones | April 28, 2023 |

Pre-Issuance Note: Dates for the ITQ Timetable will be established upon final publication of the ITQ.

1.3 Definitions

For the purposes of this ITQ, the following terms shall mean:

“Broadband” means the transmission of wide bandwidth data to a particular address location at 100 megabits per second download and 20 megabits per second upload wireline service (“100/20”) or faster.

“Broadband Availability Map” means the map that identifies whether any Communications Service Provider facilitates Broadband as of August 2, 2022 and

whether that address location is eligible to receive incentives under various federal funding sources. The Broadband Availability Map is published at: <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband-availability-map-version-5>. Different funding sources establish different eligibility criteria. The Broadband Availability Map may contain one or more eligibility layers, each of which establish different eligibility determinations based on the criteria of the funding source.

“Broadband Intervention Zone” or **“Zone”** means a geographic area comprised of Eligible Service Locations selected by the OCIO upon completion of the evaluation of Applications to this ITQ. Successful applications to the ITQ will result in a Broadband Intervention Zone.

“Broadband Readiness” means a measure of the readiness of a Geographic Area of Concern to receive broadband funding in connection with future grant opportunities issued by the Office as measured by the weighted score assigned to a Community Application submitted to this ITQ. This factor indicates the degree to which the Geographic Area of Concern should be prioritized as a Broadband Intervention Zone for possible funding in the future.

“Broadband Units” means broadband serviceable locations identified on the Broadband Availability Map which may include homes, anchor institutions, businesses, and other locations generated from the Iowa NextGen 911 structures database, National Address Database, and local data. Each Broadband Unit will be identified on the Broadband Availability Map as an Unserved Location, Underserved Location, Served Location, or Previous Incentive Location.

“Community” means a gathering of individuals representing households, schools, and/or businesses in a particular area in the State of Iowa with a shared interest in eliminating Unserved or Underserved Locations within a Geographic Area of Concern. A Community may consist of widely dispersed rural populations, small towns, or even more densely populated areas that are defined by a Geographic Area of Concern submitted as part of an Application to this ITQ.

“Community Applicant” or **“Applicant”** means an entity submitting an Application to this ITQ on behalf of a Community. Community Applicants may include city governments, county governments, school districts, consortia of political subdivisions, non-profit organizations representing communities (e.g., councils of governments), and regional entities with an economic development or educational mission (e.g., Area Education Agencies, Iowa State University Extension Field Offices). Applicants to this ITQ may not include: (1) individuals, (2) communication service providers, or (3) consultants working on behalf of Communities.

“Community Application” or **“Application”** means the Community Applicant’s submission in response to this ITQ.

“Covered Population” means Covered Populations as defined under the Infrastructure

Investments and Jobs Act Digital Equity Act 47 U.S.C. § 1721(8).

“Eligible Service Location” means an Unserved Location or Underserved Location that has been identified by the OCIO on an eligibility layer published by OCIO on the Broadband Availability Map as not subject to existing enforceable state or federal funding obligations that would be disqualifying for future federal funding opportunities. Note: Each federal program establishes different criteria for prohibited duplication with prior state and federal funding. Therefore, Eligible Service Locations may vary based on the funding source in scope for any future NOFAs.

“Geographic Area of Concern” means a geographic area comprised of a list of addresses submitted by Applicants to this ITQ that have the following properties:

- Selected by the Community Applicant using the selection tool provided by the Office on the Broadband Availability Map;
- Comprised of Eligible Service Locations;
- Converted by the Office into a minimum bounding polygon or convex hull formed by enclosing/circumscribing the list of addresses within the area selected by the Community Applicant; and
- Not exceeding 200 square miles in area².

A Geographic Area of Concern may or may not align with geographic jurisdictional boundaries of a political subdivision.

“Geographic Area of Concern Selection Tool” means the online map and selection tool published at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/invitation-qualify-001>. This data is derived from the Broadband Availability Map. Community Applicants must use the Geographic Area of Concern Selection Tool to identify their Geographic Area of Concern as part of their Application to this ITQ.

“ITQ” means this Invitation to Qualify and any attachments, exhibits, schedules or addenda hereto.

“Previous Incentive Location” means a location identified on the Broadband Availability Map as having been associated with disqualifying previous state or federal incentives including those locations associated with enforceable agreements to build out 100/20 as identified on the Broadband Availability Map.

“Responsive Application” means an Application that complies with the material provisions of this ITQ.

“Served Location” means a location at which at least one provider offers Broadband that has speeds greater than or equal to 100/20 wireline service as identified on the Broadband Availability Map.

² The Office recognizes that this limitation may not conform to the desires of some Community Applicants or communication service providers. However, this limitation is imposed to reduce the risk that projects comprising larger and geographically dispersed areas may be more difficult for communication service providers to complete buildout as a part of a single project and within the timeframes established by applicable federal programs, and therefore less likely to receive applications for buildout in that area.

“**State**” means the State of Iowa, acting by and through the OCIO.

“**Underserved Location**” means a location that is not an Unserved Location but at which no provider offers wireline Broadband that has speeds of greater than or equal to 100/20 as identified on the Broadband Availability Map.

“**Unserved Location**” means a location at which no provider offers Broadband at speeds greater than or equal to 25 megabits per second download and 3 megabits per second upload as identified on the Broadband Availability Map.

SECTION 2 - ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

2.1. Overview of the ITQ Process.

This ITQ is designed to provide Community Applicants with the information necessary for the preparation of competitive Community Applications. Each Community Applicant is responsible for determining all factors necessary for submission of a comprehensive Application. It is OCIO’s intention to evaluate Applications from all Community Applicants that submit timely Responsive Applications.

2.2. Issuing Officer & Communication.

Communication with the state concerning this ITQ should be directed to the Issuing Officer, who may refer the issue to staff or contractors to address. Email contact should be made at ociogrants@iowa.gov from the date of issuance until OCIO publishes the prequalification list of Broadband Intervention Zones. Communication made outside of this method will be deemed unauthorized.

2.3. ITQ Pre-Publication.

The Office will provide notice of the upcoming invitation to qualify by posting this ITQ online at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband> on the date specified in the ITQ Timetable. The ITQ Pre-Publication does not commence the start of the Application Acceptance Window. The Office anticipates that the pre-published ITQ may be amended to reflect any clarifications or questions received during the period for Written Questions and Responses (see Section 2.6). As a result, prospective Community Applicants should ensure they download the most recent ITQ published at the time of ITQ issuance and opening of the Application Acceptance Window (see Section 2.7).

2.4. Downloading the ITQ from the Internet.

The ITQ document and any addenda to the ITQ will be posted at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband>. The Community Applicant is advised to check the website periodically for addenda to this ITQ, particularly if the Community Applicant downloaded the ITQ from the website or Iowa Grants System as the Community Applicant may not automatically receive addenda. It is the Community Applicant’s sole

responsibility to check for ITQ updates.

2.5. Pre-Application Conference.

A Pre-Application Conference will be held virtually at the date and time listed in Section 1.2. The purpose of the Pre-Application Conference is to discuss with prospective Applicants the requirements prescribed by this ITQ and allow prospective Applicants an opportunity to ask questions. Oral responses given during the Pre-Application Conference shall not be considered binding on the Office. The conference may be recorded. Questions asked at the conference that cannot be adequately answered during the conference may be deferred. Participation in the Pre-Application Conference is optional. To join the Pre-Application conference, please register at the following link: <https://forms.gle/VkdZugz2roHmRsRe7>.

2.6. Written Questions and Responses.

Questions regarding the scope, interpretation, application, or contents of this ITQ may be addressed during the Pre-Application Conference or as part of the formal Written Question and Response process. While the Office will make available administrative support throughout the process to Applicants, only written communications made in response to questions submitted through this process shall be binding on the Office.

2.6.1. Written questions related to this ITQ must be submitted to the Office via a Google Form found at <https://forms.gle/N5zoAwhOZXna1Ct4A>. Written questions must be submitted no later than the date and time specified in Section 1.2.

2.6.2. The Office will prepare written responses to all pertinent, timely, and properly submitted questions and post such responses as an addendum to the ITQ online at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband>. The Office's written responses will be considered part of the ITQ. Verbal responses to any questions will not be binding on the Office. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to check <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband> for written questions and responses to this ITQ.

2.6.3. Failure to raise a question or issue regarding the scope, interpretation, application, or contents of this ITQ as part of the written question and response process shall be deemed a waiver or failure to exhaust administrative remedies for purposes of an appeal of an Award; such waiver is intended to ensure the Office is able to correct any material issues or errors in an efficient fashion and in a manner that is fair to all prospective Applicants.

2.7. ITQ Issuance and Application Acceptance Window Opens.

The Office will provide notice to Community Applicants of this ITQ by posting the final version of this ITQ and all accompanying materials online at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband> on the date specified in Section 1.2. Applicants must submit Applications through [Iowa Grants](#) in accordance with the date and time specified in Section 1.2. Applications submitted prior to the opening of the Application Acceptance Window will not be considered by the Office.

2.8. Application Acceptance Window Closes/Applications Due.

Applications must be submitted through [Iowa Grants](#) no later than the date and time specified in Section 1.2. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered

by the Office.

Applicants are solely responsible for ensuring Applications are timely submitted by the deadline. The date and time as recorded by [Iowa Grants](#) shall serve as the official regulator for the submission date and time of Applications. Applications submitted to the Office in any manner other than through [Iowa Grants](#) will not be considered.

2.9. Office Announces Broadband Intervention Zones.

The Office will review all Applications received in accordance with the terms, conditions, and requirements of Applicable Law and this ITQ, and make a final agency decision regarding whether and to which Geographic Area of Concern to publish as a Broadband Intervention Zone. The Office will publish the rank-ordered list of Broadband Intervention Zones on its website at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband>.

2.10. Amendment to the ITQ.

OCIO reserves the right to amend the ITQ at any time using an addendum. If OCIO issues an addendum after the due date for receipt of Applications, OCIO may, in its sole discretion, allow Community Applicants to amend their Applications in response to the addendum.

2.11. Amendment and Withdrawal of Application.

The Community Applicant may amend, or withdraw and resubmit its Application at any time before the Applications are due.

2.12. Application Opening.

OCIO may review Applications for clarifications prior to the deadline for submission. However, quantitative and qualitative review will not begin until after the deadline for submission. Applications will be published to <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband> upon completion of an initial review and screening by the OCIO, including the resolution of any requests for clarification submitted by the OCIO to Applicants. The announcement of Community Applicants who timely submitted Applications does not mean that an individual Application has been deemed technically compliant or accepted for evaluation.

2.13. Costs of Preparing the Application.

The costs of preparation of the Application are solely the responsibility of the Community Applicant.

2.14. No Commitment to Ensure Buildout.

OCIO reserves the right to reject any or all Applications received in response to this ITQ at any time. Issuance of this ITQ in no way constitutes a commitment by OCIO to make an award or to ensure buildout within any Broadband Intervention Zone.

2.15. Rejection/Disqualification or Cancellation of ITQ. The Office reserves the right to reject, in whole or in part, any or all Applications, disqualify an Applicant, to advertise for new Applications, or to cancel this ITQ at any time for any reason, including when in the best interests of the Office or the State of Iowa to do so. Any Application may be rejected outright and not evaluated, or an Applicant disqualified, for any of the following reasons:

- 2.15.1. The Applicant is not a Community Applicant.
- 2.15.2. The Geographic Area of Concern is greater than 200 square miles.
- 2.15.3. The Geographic Area of Concern is not selected by the Community Applicant using the selection tools provided by the Office.
- 2.15.4. The Geographic Area of Concern contains no Eligible Service Locations.
- 2.15.5. The Geographic Area of Concern is designed in a manner that is not reasonably conducive to Broadband buildout.
- 2.15.6. An Applicant does not respond to an element of this ITQ.
- 2.15.7. An Application is submitted in a manner other than through Iowa Grants.
- 2.15.8. An Applicant fails to include required information or fails to include sufficient information to determine whether a requirement of the ITQ has been satisfied.
- 2.15.9. An Applicant fails to follow the Application instructions or presents information requested by this ITQ in a manner inconsistent with the instructions of the ITQ.
- 2.15.10. An Applicant provides misleading or inaccurate answers.
- 2.15.11. An Applicant states that a requirement of this ITQ cannot be satisfied.
- 2.15.12. An Applicant's response materially changes a requirement of this ITQ.
- 2.15.13. An Applicant's response limits or attempts to limit any right(s) of the Office.
- 2.15.14. An Applicant fails to respond to the Office's request for information, documents, or references.
- 2.15.15. An Applicant fails to include any signature, certification, authorization, or stipulation required by this ITQ.
- 2.15.16. An Applicant alters the language in any exhibit, certification, authorization, or other form required to be submitted in connection with this ITQ.
- 2.15.17. An Applicant initiates unauthorized contact concerning or related to this ITQ with an officer, employee, or independent contractor of the Office.
- 2.15.18. A communication service provider or consultant forms an entity for the sole purpose of becoming a Community Applicant.

2.16. Nonmaterial Variances.

OCIO reserves the right to waive or permit cure of nonmaterial variances in the Application if, in the judgment of OCIO, it is in the State's best interest to do so. Nonmaterial variances include, but are not limited to, minor failures to comply that: do not affect overall responsiveness, are merely a matter of form or format, do not change

the relative standing or otherwise prejudice other Community Applicants, do not change the meaning or scope of the ITQ, or do not reflect a material change in the requirements of the ITQ. In the event OCIO waives or permits cure of nonmaterial variances, such waiver or cure will not modify the ITQ requirements or excuse the Community Applicant from full compliance with ITQ requirements. The determination of materiality is in the sole discretion of OCIO.

2.17. Reference Checks.

OCIO reserves the right to contact any reference or resource to assist in the evaluation of the Application to verify information contained in the Application.

2.18. Information from Other Sources.

OCIO reserves the right to obtain and consider information from other sources concerning an Application.

2.19. Verification of Application Contents.

The content of an Application submitted by a Community Applicant is subject to verification. If OCIO determines in its sole discretion that the content is in any way misleading or inaccurate, OCIO may reject the Application.

2.20. Application Clarification Process.

OCIO reserves the right to contact a Community Applicant after the submission of Applications for the purpose of clarifying a Application. This contact may include written questions, interviews, or requests for corrective pages in an Application. An individual authorized to legally bind the Community Applicant shall sign responses to any request for clarification. Responses shall be submitted to OCIO within the time specified in OCIO's request. Failure to comply with requests for additional information may result in rejection of the Application.

2.21. Re-opening the ITQ Process. The State reserves the right to open up the ITQ process at any time to enable additional Communities to apply to qualify as Broadband Intervention Zones. Successful Community Applicants from this ITQ may be required to supplement their Applications to remain on the list of Broadband Intervention Zones in connection with any subsequent ITQ, or re-apply in full to a subsequent ITQ depending on the requirements of future funding opportunities. The Broadband Intervention Zone may remain on the Broadband Intervention Zone list until the Zone has been funded, provided that the Community Application remains qualified for the ITQ per the requirements.

2.22. Disposition of Applications.

All Applications become the property of the State and shall not be returned to the Community Applicant. Applications will be published to <https://ocio.iowa.gov/invitation-qualify-001> upon completion of an initial review and screening by the OCIO, including the resolution of any requests for clarification submitted by the OCIO to Applicants.

2.23. Public Records.

OCIO's release of public records is governed by Iowa Code chapter 22. Community Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with Chapter 22 before submitting an Application. OCIO will copy and produce public records upon request as required to

comply with Chapter 22 and will treat all information submitted by a Community Applicant as non-confidential records.

2.24. Copyright Permission.

By submitting an Application, the Community Applicant agrees that OCIO may copy the Application for purposes of facilitating the evaluation of the Application or to respond to requests for public records. By submitting an Application, the Community Applicant consents to such copying and warrants that such copying will not violate the rights of any third party. OCIO shall have the right to use ideas or adaptations of ideas that are presented in Applications.

2.25. Release of Claims.

By submitting an Application, the Community Applicant agrees that it will not bring any claim or cause of action against OCIO based on any misunderstanding concerning the information provided in the ITQ or concerning OCIO's failure, negligent or otherwise, to provide the Community Applicant with pertinent information in this ITQ.

2.26. Evaluation of Applications Submitted.

Applications that are timely submitted and are not rejected will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with Section 5 of the ITQ.

2.27. Broadband Intervention Zone List Publication.

The final Broadband Intervention Zone list will be sent to all Community Applicants submitting a timely Application and posted at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband>. Thereafter, future NOFAs issued by OCIO may utilize the Broadband Intervention Zone list to incentivize Broadband providers to build out service in these zones.

2.28. Choice of Law and Forum.

This ITQ shall be governed by the laws of the State of Iowa, without giving effect to the conflicts of law provisions of Iowa law. Any and all litigation or actions commenced in connection with this ITQ shall be brought and maintained in the appropriate Iowa forum.

2.29. Restrictions on Gifts and Activities.

Iowa Code Chapter 68B restricts gifts which may be given or received by State employees and requires certain individuals to disclose information concerning their activities with State government. Community Applicants are responsible for determining the applicability of this Chapter 68B to their activities and to comply with its requirements. In addition, pursuant to Iowa Code section 722.1, it is a felony offense to bribe or attempt to bribe a public official.

2.30. Appeals.

A Community Applicant whose Application has been timely filed and who is aggrieved at the end of the ITQ process may seek an appeal pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code ch. 129-6 no later than 14 days after the OCIO's decision giving rise to the right to appeal.

2.31. Administrative and Technical Support.

The Office will make available administrative support throughout the application process to Community Applicants. Such support includes assisting Community Applicants in navigating and completing required forms or attachments associated with the application

process, including but not limited to transposing information from the Broadband Availability Map to Community Applications or corresponding forms and attachments. This is a service made available to Community Applicants to assist in navigating the more complex aspects of the Community Application process. Contact ociogrants@iowa.gov for further information. Communications made in response to questions submitted through this process shall not be binding on the Office.

2.32. Limitation on ITQ Broadband Intervention Zone Listings.

Although a Community Applicant may submit more than one Application for inclusion in the Broadband Intervention Zone listing, the Office will limit the number of Broadband Intervention Zones that are contiguous, adjacent, or close to each other. In considering which Applications to disqualify due to geographic proximity, the Office will prioritize disqualifying Applications with lower Broadband Readiness scores.

2.33. Overlapping Applications.

When multiple Applicants submit an Application that include duplicative address locations, those address locations appearing in both Applications will be allocated to the Application having a higher Broadband Readiness Score. One Applicant may not submit multiple Applications that include duplicative address locations. If an Applicant submits Applications that have duplicative address locations, only the initial Application will be scored; subsequent Applications will be rejected and disqualified.

SECTION 3 - FORM AND CONTENT OF APPLICATION

3.1. Purpose. These instructions prescribe the submission, format, and content requirements of the ITQ Application. They are designed to facilitate a uniform review process. Failure to adhere to these instructions may result in rejection of an Application. Applicants must complete each Application form required by this ITQ following the instructions herein and within Iowa Grants at <https://www.iowagrants.gov>. Some forms may be in the format of web forms, otherwise, uploaded forms must be in a pdf, or in the case of the location data, an Excel (CSV) file, as part of this application process. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 of this ITQ provides greater detail as to the requirements of each form or submission.

3.2. Iowa Grants Instructions. All Applications and corresponding forms and attachments must be submitted through [Iowa Grants](#). Registration and Application Instructions are outlined in the “**Iowa Grants Registration and Application Instructions**,” labeled “**Exhibit C.**”

3.3. Required Forms and Submissions.

3.3.1. General Information. This form requires an Applicant to identify the name, address, telephone number, email address, and other general information of the Authorized Official to respond to inquiries regarding the Application and other required information. The Authorized Official represents the Community Applicant.

3.3.2. Cover Letter. This section of the Iowa Grants system requires the Applicant to

upload a cover letter as a Word doc or pdf on the Applicant's letterhead to provide a high-level overview of the Application describing the community's Broadband need in the area and the community's interest in obtaining programmatic funding in the Geographic Area of Concern. The Cover Letter is not scored.

3.3.3. *Application Checklist.* This form, labeled “**Exhibit C,**” is designed to ensure the Applicant has completed and submitted all forms, materials, and information required by this ITQ. Applicant is not expected to return this form to the Office with its Application.

3.3.4. *Eligible Service Locations Spreadsheet.* The Applicant must upload a spreadsheet of locations obtained from the Broadband Availability Map. The system will allow you to download the locations as a CSV formatted spreadsheet. The Eligible Service Locations Spreadsheet must then be uploaded by the Community Applicant to the Iowa Grants system.

Note: Reference the “**Geographic Area of Concern Selection Tool and Data Export/Import Instructions,**” labeled “Exhibit D,” for instructions regarding how to properly complete this aspect of the Application.

3.3.5. *Minority Impact Statement.* This form collects information about the potential impact on minority groups within the Geographic Area of Concern.

3.4. Optional Forms and Submissions

3.4.1. *Work, Education, and Health Monitoring.* This section in the Iowa Grants System permits the Applicant to optionally provide a narrative response to explain in which ways the population identified in its Geographic Area of Concern encounters impediments to participation in the areas of education, telework, and health monitoring.

3.4.2. *Community Support.* This section in the Iowa Grants System permits the Applicant to optionally upload testimonials or letters of support from the Community; statements concerning the quality, speed, or affordability of current Broadband service available in the area; and/or surveys of residents concerning interest in subscribing to Broadband service in the future.

3.4.3. *Community Broadband Capital.* This section in the Iowa Grants System permits the Applicant to indicate any in-kind or financial contributions that could be made by the Community to support the construction of Broadband infrastructure in the Geographic Area of Concern. Here, the Applicant will identify the type of contribution as well as a short description. This may include an upload of supplemental evidence.

3.4.4. *Barriers to Broadband Infrastructure Installation.* This section in the Iowa Grants System permits the Applicant to provide a narrative response that identifies barriers to the buildout of infrastructure that will likely not be overcome without the use of grant monies. This may include an upload of supplemental evidence.

SECTION 4 - SCORING

Scoring and ranking Applications submitted in response to this ITQ will occur through the consideration of a combination of both mandatory quantitative and optional qualitative factors, more fully outlined below. The Scoring Rubric in Section 4.3 identifies the specific point values assigned to each evaluation factor set forth in Section 4.1 (Quantitative Factors) and 4.2 (Qualitative Factors).

Collectively, the factors set forth in Section 4.1 (Quantitative Factors) and 4.2 (Qualitative Factors) establish a Broadband Readiness score. Each Applicant will be assigned a Broadband Readiness score by the OCIO, pursuant to Section 2.26 (Evaluation of Applications Submitted) with a **maximum of 100 points available**. Applications will then be rank ordered by the OCIO on the basis of Broadband Readiness.

Submitted Applications may be subject to two further processes:

Broadband Intervention Zone Modification: Any Broadband Intervention Zone designated by the OCIO may deviate in its geographic boundaries from the Geographic Area of Concern identified by a Community Applicant in its Application to this ITQ. Broadband Intervention Zones may only be established under this ITQ if Community Applicants successfully meet the State's requirements and evaluation criteria and are designated by the State's evaluation committee as a Broadband Intervention Zone. The Office reserves the right to establish Broadband Intervention Zones in areas where no Application to this ITQ was received. Modification to a Broadband Intervention Zone does not impact scoring.

Previous Wireless Incentive Screening Procedure: Once the Office has completed its review of all Community Applications and established a preliminary rank-ordered list of all Broadband Intervention Zones by Broadband Readiness score, the Office reserves the right to reorder the Broadband Intervention Zone list to lower rankings of Zones that have preexisting enforceable state or federal agreements in place to construct wireless 100/20 Broadband or faster to 20% or more of the Eligible Service Locations in the Zone.

Any Broadband Intervention Zone created by the Office will be identified with reference to the Broadband Availability Map, prior state or federal incentives, and any other information the Office deems relevant in making eligibility determinations consistent with the guidelines established by relevant federal programs. Broadband Intervention Zones created by the OCIO will not be ranked higher than any Broadband Intervention Zone created on behalf of a successful Community Application.

The final Broadband Intervention Zone list may be used to prioritize funding in future grant opportunities issued by the OCIO.

While the Office will utilize the points system described herein as a tool to assist in initially determining the relative merits of each Community Application, such scores are in no way binding on the Office, and the Office will ultimately make a decision regarding whether and which Applications establish the greatest Broadband Readiness, and thus which Broadband Intervention Zones may be the most suitable candidates for funding in connection with future

applicable Broadband grant opportunities issued by the Office.

4.1 Quantitative Factors. The following factors identified below will be evaluated through the quantitative portion of this ITQ. Any required inputs for this Section are to be supplied by the Applicant in the Iowa Grants system, and as may otherwise be sourced from information otherwise obtained as part of the application process or the data sources underlying the Broadband Availability Map.

4.1.1 Eligible Service Locations. This factor operates on the premise that Geographic Areas of Concern incorporating a greater quantity of Unserved Locations help to achieve the core goals of the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant program and applicable federal funding sources. Accordingly, Community Applicants must identify the total number of Unserved Locations within the Geographic Area of Concern. The totals of each Community Application will be compared against each other to calculate the Unserved Locations score for each Community Application. See Section 2.15.4 for more information concerning the disqualifying minimum thresholds for Eligible Service Locations that must exist within any Geographic Area of Concern submitted by a Community Applicant.

4.1.1.1 Unserved Locations. This subfactor operates on the premise that Geographic Areas of Concern incorporating a greater quantity of Unserved Locations help to achieve the core goals of the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant program and applicable federal funding sources. Accordingly, Community Applicants must identify the total number of Unserved Locations within the Geographic Area of Concern. The totals of each Community Application will be compared against each other to calculate the Unserved Locations score for each Community Application. **This subfactor shall receive 75% of the total points allocated to the Eligible Service Locations factor.**

4.1.1.2. Underserved Locations. This subfactor operates on the premise that Geographic Areas of Concern incorporating a greater quantity of Underserved Locations help to achieve the core goals of the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Program and applicable federal funding sources. Accordingly, Community Applicants must identify the total number of Underserved Locations within the Geographic Area of Concern. The totals of each Community Application will be compared against each other to calculate the Underserved Locations score for each Community Application. **This subfactor shall receive 25% of the total points allocated to the Eligible Service Locations factor.**

4.1.2 Geographic Diversity. This factor operates on the premise that the State has an interest in ensuring that Projects are reasonably spread out across the entire State.

Formula:

Baseline: Geographic Areas of Concern will first be mapped to their current respective U.S. Congressional Districts as provided by the State of Iowa Legislative Services Agency. If a proposed Geographic Area of Concern is located in two or more congressional districts, the proposed Geographic Area of Concern will be deemed to be located in the congressional district in which the

highest number of Eligible Service Locations forming the basis of the proposed Geographic Area of Concern are located. From there, the total number of points available within this category will be divided by (\div) the total number of Geographic Areas of Concern proposed within that congressional district. Each Application within a respective congressional district will receive the number of points that result from that calculation.

Downward Adjustment: After the Baseline score is calculated, proposed Geographic Areas of Concern that directly overlap more than a de minimis amount with one or more other proposed Geographic Areas of Concern will receive a downward adjustment of 10% of the total number of points available within this category. A de minimis overlap means five percent (5%) or less of the area forming the basis of one or more proposed Geographic Areas of Concern is the same, excluding areas that overlap on the boundaries of any overlapping proposed Intervention Zone. However, proposed Geographic Areas of Concern cannot receive a score of less than zero (0) in this category.

4.1.3 Community Characteristics. This factor takes into consideration the unique characteristics of the community associated with the Geographic Area of Concern that support the justification for future Broadband investment. Geographic Areas of Concern that demonstrate the closest alignment with the following subfactors are judged to have greater Broadband Readiness, and thus receive higher points for this factor.

4.1.3.1 Covered Populations. To help advance digital equity in the State of Iowa, this subfactor considers whether investments in Broadband infrastructure in a Geographic Area of Concern will serve historically disadvantaged populations for which special emphasis should be afforded under relevant federal programs. *See, e.g.,* Digital Equity Act of 2021, 47 U.S.C. § 1721(8). In addition, this factor demonstrates that this ITQ considers equity in connection with the U.S. Department of Treasury’s Capital Project Fund Best Practices Guide (p. 5). The Office will calculate the score of the Geographic Area of Concern for each of the groups within the Covered Population, and aggregate the scores to create a score for this subfactor. Each characteristic in this subfactor will receive an equal portion of the total points available for this subfactor. **This subfactor shall receive 75% of the total points allocated to the Community Characteristics factor.**

The data informing these calculations is derived from various data sources as further identified in the Covered Populations Criteria table below. The points awarded for each Community Characteristic will be generated with reference to an Iowa Average, unless otherwise noted, provided for each Community Characteristic. The Applicant is not responsible for providing this information.

Covered Populations Criteria

| Characteristic | Description | Iowa Average | Formula |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| 4.1.3.1.1. Poverty Level | Households under the national poverty threshold | 11.1% ³ | <p>Percent of households in the Geographic Area of Concern under the Poverty Level divided by (÷) the Percent of households in Iowa under the Poverty Level (Iowa Average).</p> <p>This results in a Poverty Level Measure for the Geographic Area of Concern. Geographic Areas of Concern with a Poverty Level Measure greater than or equal to the Iowa Average will receive 100% of the points allocated to this Community Characteristic. Geographic Areas of Concern with a Poverty Level Measure less than the Iowa Measure will receive points equal to the Poverty Level Measure multiplied by (x) the total points allocated to this Community Characteristic.</p> |
| 4.1.3.1.2. Aging Individuals | Individuals 60 or over | 23.5% ³ | <p>Percent of individuals 60 years old and over in the Geographic Area of Concern divided by (÷) the Percent of individuals 60 years and over in Iowa (Iowa Average).</p> <p>This results in an Aging Individuals Measure for the Geographic Area of Concern. Geographic Areas of Concern with Aging Individuals Measure greater than or equal to the Iowa Measure will receive 100% of the points allocated to this Community Characteristic. Geographic Areas of Concern with an Aging Individuals Measure less than the Iowa Average will receive points equal to the Aging Individuals Measure multiplied by (x) the total points allocated to this Community Characteristic.</p> |
| 4.1.3.1.3 Veterans | Individuals with Veteran Status | 7.41% ³ | <p>Percent of individuals with Veteran Status in the Geographic Area of Concern divided by (÷) the Percent of individuals with Veteran Status in Iowa (Iowa Average).</p> <p>This results in a Veterans Measure for the Geographic Area of Concern. Geographic Areas of Concern with Veterans Measure greater than or equal to the Iowa Average will receive 100% of the points allocated to this Community Characteristic. Geographic Areas of Concern with a Veterans Measure less than the Iowa Average will receive points equal to the Veterans Measure</p> |

³ Source: American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimate using data aggregation and apportionment methods that intersects Census ACS data and an identified broadband intervention zone

| | | | |
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| | | | multiplied by (x) the total points allocated to this Community Characteristic. |
| 4.1.3.1.4. Individuals with a Disability | Estimate of individuals that have: 1. A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual; 2. A record of such an impairment; or 3. Being regarded as having such an impairment | 11.8% ³ | Percent of individuals with a disability in the Geographic Area of Concern divided by (÷) the Percent of individuals with a disability in Iowa (Iowa Average). This results in an Individuals with a Disability Measure for the Geographic Area of Concern. Geographic Areas of Concern with Individuals with a Disability Measure greater than or equal to the Iowa Average will receive 100% of the points allocated to this Community Characteristic. Geographic Areas of Concern with a Individuals with a Disability Measure less than the Iowa Average will receive points equal to the Individuals with a Disability Measure multiplied by (x) the total points allocated to this Community Characteristic. |
| 4.1.3.1.5. English Learners | Households that speak a language other than English at home | 8.4% ³ | Percent of households that speak a language other than English at home in the Geographic Area of Concern divided by (÷) the Percent of Households that speak a language other than English at home in Iowa (Iowa Average). This results in an English Learners Measure for the Geographic Area of Concern. Geographic Areas of Concern with English Learners Measure greater than or equal to the Iowa Average will receive 100% of the points allocated to this Community Characteristic. Geographic Areas of Concern with an English Learners Measure less than the Iowa Average will receive points equal to the English Learners Measure multiplied by (x) the total points allocated to this Community Characteristic. |
| 4.1.3.1.6. Literacy | Literacy Proficiency Level calculated by the PIAAC at a county level. Adult education would consider anyone at level 1 in literacy or numeracy eligible for basic skill services. For the ITQ, only literacy is being considered. | 15.0% ⁴ | Percent of individuals at PIAAC Level 1 in the Geographic Area of Concern divided by (÷) Percent of individuals at PIAAC Level 1 in Iowa (Iowa Average) This results in a Literacy Measure for the Geographic Area of Concern. Geographic Areas of Concern with a Literacy Measure greater than or equal to the Iowa Average will receive 100% of the points allocated to this Community Characteristic. Broadband Intervention Zones with a Literacy Measure less than the Iowa Average will receive points equal to the Literacy Measure multiplied by (x) the total points allocated to this Community Characteristic. |

⁴ Source: Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) at <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/skillsmap/>.

| | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|---|
| 4.1.3.1.7. Racial or Ethnic Minority Residents | Individuals who identify as non-white | 17.0% ³ | <p>Percent of individuals who identify as non-white in the Geographic Area of Concern divided by (÷) the Percent of Individuals who identify as non-white in Iowa (Iowa Average).</p> <p>This results in a Racial or Ethnic Minority Residents Measure for the Geographic Area of Concern. Geographic Areas of Concern with a Racial or Ethnic Minority Residents Measure greater than or equal to the Iowa Average will receive 100% of the points allocated to this Community Characteristic. Geographic Areas of Concern with a Racial or Ethnic Minority Residents Measure less than the Iowa Average will receive points equal to the Racial or Ethnic Minority Residents Measure multiplied by (x) the total points allocated to this Community Characteristic.</p> |
| 4.1.3.1.8. Rurality | Location density per square mile ⁵ | N/A | <p>The aggregate number of Broadband Units within the Geographic Area of Concern divided by (÷) the total square miles forming the Geographic Area of Concern. This results in a Rurality Measure. The lower the measure, the more “rural” the Project. The resulting measure of all Applicants will be compared against each other to calculate the Rurality score for each Community Applicant.</p> |

⁵ Source: Broadband Availability Map (State of Iowa Broadband Map v5)

4.1.3.2 Anchor Institutions. This sub-factor takes into consideration how providing Broadband funding for the proposed Geographic Area of Concern will positively affect any anchor institutions including (1) schools as reported by the Iowa Department of Education, (2) hospitals as reported by Homeland Infrastructure Field-Level Data published by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and (3) County or State Correctional Institutions that serve incarcerated individuals. Geographic Areas of Concern that contain more schools, hospitals, and correctional institutions as identified within these datasets will receive higher Anchor Institutions scores. The total number of anchor institutions within the Geographic Areas of Concern of all Applicants will be compared against each other to calculate the Anchor Institutions score for each Applicant. **This subfactor shall receive 25% of the total points allocated to the Community Characteristics factor.**

4.2 Optional Qualitative Factors. The following optional factors identified below will be evaluated through the qualitative portion of this ITQ. Any inputs for this Section are to be supplied by the Applicant in the Iowa Grants system, and as may otherwise be sourced from information otherwise obtained as part of the application process or the data sources underlying the Broadband Availability Map. NOTE: Responses to Qualitative Factors are optional, meaning that Community Applicants need not provide responses to any or all of these elements. Community Applicants that provide responses, may receive more points and thus increase the rank of any Broadband Intervention Zones established with reference to their Application. Higher ranking Broadband Intervention Zones are more likely to receive funding in future grant funding opportunities.

4.2.1 Work, Education, and Health Monitoring. This factor operates on the premise that Broadband funding should be allocated to Geographic Areas of Concern in which impediments exist to directly engage in work, education, and health monitoring that resulted from or were made apparent or exacerbated by the COVID-19 public health emergency. Applicants that express more specific and urgent impediments may be judged by the OCIO to have a greater need for Broadband funding, and thus receive higher scores for this factor. Applications that demonstrate that the Broadband investments within the Geographic Area of Concern will have a greater impact on work, education, and health monitoring will receive higher scores. Responses to this criteria may address any or all of the following subfactors:

4.2.1.1 Work. This subfactor takes into consideration whether Broadband investments in the proposed Geographic Area of Concern will help to facilitate community members' engagement in employment, search for employment, and/or development of the requisite skills and knowledge to become employed (e.g., participate in career counseling programs, workforce training programs, as well as gain access to internet websites to search for and apply to jobs).

4.2.1.2 Education. This subfactor takes into consideration whether Broadband investments in the proposed Geographic Area of Concern will help facilitate educational activities. Such education activities may be to acquire knowledge and/or skills undertaken as part of a person's participation in school, an academic program, extracurricular program, social-emotional development program for

students or youths, internship, or professional development program, or in another educational environment.

4.2.1.3 Health Monitoring. This subfactor takes into consideration whether Broadband investments in the proposed Geographic Area of Concern will help facilitate health monitoring services to monitor an individual's health, including with respect to either physical or behavioral health.

4.2.2. Community Support. This factor takes into consideration Community support for future Broadband investment within the proposed Geographic Area of Concern. Support may be evidenced by, but not limited to, testimonials or letters of support from the Community; statements concerning the quality, speed, or affordability of current Broadband service available in the area; and surveys of residents concerning interest in subscribing to Broadband service in the future. Applicants that provide greater evidence of community support will receive higher scores for this factor. To receive points for this factor, Community Support artifacts must evidence a geographic relationship to the Geographic Area of Concern. Such evidence may include, but is not limited to: (1) a physical mailing address affixed to a testimonial identifying that the submitter resides within the Geographic Area of Concern, (2) evidence that a letter of support is authored by a community-based organization or business operating within the Geographic Area of Concern, such as a letter of support authored by elected official who represents the Geographic Area of Concern, (3) or similar data demonstrating a geographic nexus between the Community Support artifact and the Geographic Area of Concern.

4.2.3 Community Broadband Capital. This factor takes into consideration in-kind or financial contributions identified by a Community Applicant that could be offered to directly support the construction of a Broadband infrastructure project within the Geographic Area of Concern identified within the Application. Such contributions could include eligible community matching funds, access to community-owned infrastructure for the installation of Broadband equipment (e.g., no-cost easement to site wireless broadcast equipment on a water tower or grain elevator), reductions of permitting requirements for the installation of fiber-optic cable, or other offers the Community Applicant may be able to extend to communication service providers interested in building within a Broadband Intervention Zone. Generally speaking, Community Applicants that provide greater evidence of Community Broadband Capital will receive higher points in this category.

Note: Declarations of community broadband capital may be attached to future Notices of Funding Availability if a Broadband Intervention Zone is selected for funding by the OCIO. Declarations of Community Broadband Capital submitted in response to this ITQ are non-binding, but Community Applicants must agree as a condition of applying to this ITQ to provide timely responses to inquiries from any communication service provider who works to prepare an application to a future NOFA and that offers of Community Broadband Capital made within any Community Application will be negotiated in good faith to ensure Community Broadband Capital can reasonably be committed to accelerate and streamline the implementation of a Broadband project in a Broadband Intervention Zone. Contributions of Community Broadband Capital shall be negotiated between the

offeror of Community Broadband Capital and the communication service provider responding to any NOFA issued by the Office at the time NOFA applications are under development. Applicants to future NOFAs that demonstrate the use of negotiated Community Broadband Capital in their project design will be responsible for proposing a valuation for such Community Broadband Capital. Future NOFA applicants that identify the use of Community Broadband Capital within applications to future NOFAs may receive more points in the scoring process. To be considered valid, any offer of Community Broadband Capital must be accompanied by a letter from an authorized official representing the offeror.

4.2.4 Barriers to Broadband Infrastructure Installation. This factor takes into consideration special barriers identified by the Community Applicant that complicate the installation of Broadband infrastructure within the Geographic Area of Concern and serve to further justify the OCIO’s determination that the Geographic Area of Concern should be prioritized for funding. Responses to this factor may include statements addressing low population density, unique geographic features such as topography or soil composition, higher proportion of low income households, and other factors that make the Geographic Area of Concern unlikely to receive Broadband service without the contribution of government funds. Generally speaking, Applicants that identify greater Barriers to Broadband Infrastructure Installation will receive higher points in this category.

4.3 Scoring Rubric.⁶ The Scoring Rubric identifies the specific point values assigned to each evaluation factor set forth in Section 4.1 Quantitative Factors and Section 4.2 Qualitative Factors. A total of 100 points is available.

| Scoring Categories | Weight (Percentage (%) of 100 points available) | Points (Total Points Available (100) * Weight = Points) |
|--|--|--|
| 4.1.1 Eligible Service Locations | 24.14% | 24.14 |
| 4.1.2 Geographic Diversity | 3.45% | 3.45 |
| 4.1.3 Community Characteristics | 17.24% | 17.24 |
| 4.2.1 Work, Education, and Health Monitoring | 13.79% | 13.79 |
| 4.2.2 Community Support | 6.90% | 6.90 |

⁶ While the Office will utilize the points system, weights, and values identified herein as a tool to assist in initial determinations as to the relative merits of each Community Application, such scores are in no way binding on the Office. The Office will ultimately make decisions in its sole discretion regarding whether and to which Community Applications it will identify as Broadband Intervention Zones. Such decisions will be based on which Geographic Areas of Concern are most likely to have the greatest impact in leveraging future funding opportunities and reducing Unserved or Underserved Eligible Areas in Iowa.

| | | |
|---|--------|-------|
| 4.2.3 Community Broadband Capital | 24.14% | 24.14 |
| 4.2.4 Barriers to Broadband Infrastructure Installation | 10.34% | 10.34 |

SECTION 5—REVIEW/AWARD PROCESS

Review and evaluation of Applications submitted to the Office are pursuant to this ITQ and qualification decisions will be conducted and made in the following phases:

5.1 Following the expiration of the deadline for the receipt of Applications, the Office will review timely-submitted Applications for completeness. This phase is called Technical Review. The Office reserves the right to seek correction of submissions or to disqualify Applications during the technical review. Thereafter, the Office will calculate an Applicant’s Quantitative Score in accordance with the terms of the ITQ.

5.2 After the Technical Review and Quantitative Scoring is complete, the Evaluation Committee will review and score qualitative aspects of Applications in accordance with the terms of the ITQ.

5.3 After the Evaluation Committee completes the Scoring process, the Evaluation Committee will make recommendations to the Office regarding the areas proposed for inclusion in the Broadband Intervention Zones listing. In formulating its final recommendations, the Evaluation Committee is not bound by the results of the scoring process but rather will be guided solely by the committee’s determination made in the best interests of the State.

5.4 The Office will publish the Broadband Intervention Zones on its website at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband> and notify Community Applicants via email. The Office is not bound by the recommendations of the Evaluation Committee. Unsuccessful Applicants are solely responsible for reviewing the OCIO website to determine their listing status.

SECTION 6— EXHIBITS

The following forms and reference documents can be found on the OCIO Broadband Grants website, available at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband>.

Exhibit A—Invitation to Qualify #001 (“ITQ”).

Exhibit B—Application Checklist. This form is designed to ensure the Applicant has completed and submitted all forms, materials, and information required by this ITQ. Applicant is not expected to return this form to the Office with its Application.

Exhibit C—Iowa Grants Registration and Application Instructions. These instructions help Applicants to register and navigate the [Iowa Grants](#) system. These instructions are applicable to this ITQ opportunity and help the Applicant complete the online application through the [Iowa Grants](#) system, including walking Applicant through the process of uploading required forms

referenced herein.

Exhibit D—Geographic Area of Concern Selection Tool and Data Export/Import Instructions (“Selection Tool”). These instructions show Applicant how to properly define the Geographic Area of Concern using the Broadband Availability Map and export the Eligible Service Location information forming the basis of the Geographic Area of Concern.

SECTION 7—APPLICATION CHECKLIST (Exhibit B)

| Exhibits | LOCATION WITHIN APPLICATION | RESPONSE COMPLETE |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Section 3.3.1 - General Information | Web Form | |
| Section 3.3.2 - Cover Letter | Applicant Created Upload | |
| Section 3.3.3 - Application Checklist (Exhibit B) | FOR APPLICANT'S INTERNAL USE ONLY <u>Do not return this form with the Application</u> | |
| Section 3.3.4 - Eligible Service Locations Spreadsheet | CSV File Downloaded From Map | |
| Section 3.3.5 - Minority Impact Statement | Web Form | |
| Section 3.3.6 - Work, Education, and Health Monitoring | Web Form | |
| Section 3.3.7 - Community Support | Web Form and Applicant Created Upload | |
| Section 3.3.8 - Community Broadband Capital | Web Form and Applicant Created Upload | |
| Section 3.3.9 - Barriers to Broadband Infrastructure Installation | Web Form | |
| Exhibit C - Iowa Grants Registration and Application Instructions | FOR APPLICANT'S INTERNAL USE ONLY <u>Do not return this form with the Application</u> | |
| Exhibit D - Geographic Area of Concern Selection Tool and Data Export/Import Instructions | FOR APPLICANT'S INTERNAL USE ONLY <u>Do not return this form with the Application</u> | |