

NC DIT GREAT Program
Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Program

Applicant Information	
Company Name	ERC BROADBAND LLC
Address	ERC Broadband 1 Haywood St, Suite 448 Asheville, NC 28801
Website	www.ercbroadband.com
Federal Tax ID	
DUNS #	117835966
System Award Management (SAM.Gov) ID	CJAKJINTZUS3

Authorized Representative		Authorized Representative (Alternative)	
Full Name	Bradley Cain	Full Name	Ellen Stallings
Contact Title	General Manager	Contact Title	President RiverWave Broadband
Phone Number	828 350 2412	Phone Number	828 674 6087
E Mail	bcain@ercbroadband.com	E Mail	ellen@rideriverwave.com

Grant Administrator & Company Name(if applicable):

Full Name	
Contact Title	
Telephone	
E Mail	
Website	
Federal Tax ID	
Address	

Project Information			
Project Title	Mills River Extremity		
Project Cost	\$3,977,673.2		
County	Henderson	Tier #	003
Estimated # of Households with improved access			736
Estimated # of businesses with improved access			30
Base Speed Minimum Download/Upload			Greater than 100:100 Mbp

Project Description (provide a brief summary of the project)
The Mills River Extremity will utilize existing trunk fiber owned by ERC Broadband and expand needed access to Broadband in this unserved/underserved area of Henderson County. This project will also allow future expansion to areas in close proximity that are unserved and underserved. Henderson County has designated ARPA funds for this project, 100 percent of the funds delegated by Henderson County towards this project are ARPA Funds (see attached letter from Henderson County). Henderson County, Mills River Town Council, and Land of Sky Regional Council have each submitted letters of support for this area of need. (See Attached)

Has the applicant entered into a partnership for this project as defined in S.L. 2019 230?	Yes
--	-----

Please Identify Partner
RiverWave LLC (dba Riverwave Broadband)

Checklist Details
1) Statement of Qualifications (Please provide a detailed description of qualifications and experience with the deployment of broadband):
The ERC Broadband ("ERC") network has been serving WNC with fiber optic infrastructure for 20 years. The fiber network has been led by Bradley Cain, a 24 year veteran of the telecom industry, for the last 10+ years. With highly qualified network and plant engineering teams, ERC has led the community development of a resilient, redundant network that has primarily served community anchor institutions throughout the area. Outside Plant Engineering and project management will be performed in house by telecom veterans; with fiber construction, splicing and being performed by ERC's long time master fiber contractor, MC Communications. RiverWave Broadband is a fully owned subsidiary of ERC created to serve the small business and residential customers that are on or near net the existing ERC network. RiverWave is focused on an exceptional end user experience. ERC, through RiverWave, has invested extensively in the most current industry leading technology to ensure that the services provided to customers in not only up to date, but fully scalable. We will offer packages from 100 Mbps symmetrical up to 1Gbps symmetrical service from the first day of service. In addition, the network will be fully Fiber to the Premise and therefore adaptable as bandwidth needs expand.
2) Assessment of the current level of broadband access in the proposed deployment area supporting data may be uploaded if applicable:

NC DIT GREAT Program

Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Program

Checklist Details

The area of proposed service is in high need as illustrated by the polygon of the Great Grant Map attached. We have directly surveyed over 10% of this population and found that the need is even greater than illustrated. The majority of the residents have less than 25 x 3 with many of them reporting 0x0 on the Ookla speed test, while paying as much as \$125 per month. In addition, large sections of this area also lacks cell phone service. Many of the residents surveyed report having to drive 1 2 miles to be able to make a phone call, perhaps making connectivity a life safety issue. In addition to offering Fiber to the Premises service, our packages will also include the ability to have a home phone via VOIP at a cost of \$26 (plus applicable tax and fees as required.) per month per line. This area is at the extreme end of multiple carriers' service areas, all who have not found a business case to expand further or provide the needed service. It is reported AT&T has even stopped provisioning new service in the area (and without a replacement service); Addresses that were previously served with AT&T DSL are no longer able to be connected once ownership changes. This leaves many finding that the home they purchased, assuming they would have some connection, are left with no service and no options. Per direction from the Broadband Infrastructure Office the estimated Households have been reduced to the number of addresses included the .CSV file Great MR Addresses as collected via the Great Grant Online Mapping Tool. Several addresses that are improved and do have residential homes on site, are not included within the Great Grant Online Mapping Tool. We have removed these addresses from the count on the application, which has reduced our serviceable addresses to 766. This is an understated amount. Please see the attached additional addressed in .CSV File Great MR Parcels. This list includes several parcels of which many are improved and have homes/businesses but are not correctly addressed in the Great Grant Online Mapping Tool. See attached Maps, Address data, and statement of needs from local residents. Two additional files have been updated and uploaded to reflect this change Please see Project Cost Methodology Updated and Cost Detail Analysis Mills River Extremity Updated. These files replace the previously uploaded files Project Cost Methodology and Cost Detail Analysis files.

3)Description of Proposed Services, Advertised Speeds, and Pricing Structure for proposed broadband recipients in the eligible project area:

Residential Service Tiers: 100x100 Mbps @ \$45 per month with data caps of 150 Gb per month. Once the data cap is exceeded the customer will be charged \$30 and no further data caps will apply. Our system is programmed to send an alert when this happens more than one month, to allow the customer to be proactively contacted regarding moving to the next tier with higher speeds and no data caps. 500x500 Mbps @ \$65 per month no data caps. 1Gbpsx1Gbps @ \$95 per month no data caps. VOIP (Voice over Internet) phone service (R1 equivalent) available at \$26 (plus applicable tax and fees as required) per month per line. Small Business Service Tiers: 200x200 Mbps @ \$75 per month; 500x500 @ Mbps \$150 per month; 1Gbps @ \$275 per month. VOIP services available for \$26 (plus applicable tax and fees as required) per month per line (phone services other than B1 equivalent available at respective other charges). All residential and business packages will include a best in industry U4 or U6 Wi Fi 6 router. This will provide adequate coverage to the entire home or business from the installed fiber. In addition each package comes standard with Parental Controls, Network Controls and 24/7 advanced internet protection for the entire home/business network. We offer a free App that is downloadable in the Apple Store and Google Store that provides simple / intuitive control over the home network. In addition the Wi Fi router is provisioned with in the network system, allowing the majority of technical issues when they arise inside the home network to be diagnosed and corrected virtually with out the need for the customer to wait for a technician to be dispatched. This will increase the efficiency of service, as well as improve the customer experience.

4) Description of Adoption Plan:

ERC Broadband currently has an active trunk fiber ring installed that bisects the proposed area. There will be simultaneous deployments that will begin immediately upon the receipt of the grant. The existing trunk infrastructure will permit service to nearby homes and businesses to be installed quickly. At the same time, construction will begin to extend the existing trunk fiber to the heart of the unserved areas, allowing us to install services to these homes and businesses as the network extends, permitting the quickest possible access to this needed service. Riverwave will actively market the availability to fiber broadband to the to the areas that are currently near net and will announce the upcoming availability to the addresses that will become available with the new fiber construction. See proposed Marketing Plan and Marketing Assets attached.

By checking the appropriate box, you will upload the following documents:

5) Description of Project Area, Identification of locations to be served, relevant maps and mapping files:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6)If submitting other data sources, including field data, to identify unserved locations (households and businesses) outside of the fully unserved census blocks provided on the NC One Map, please provide a narrative describing your methodology for determining the proposed funding area is unserved and eligible for funding in this round.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7) Excel Spreadsheet (NO PDF) that itemizes the eligible activities and cost estimates. Please provide an explanation of how you estimated the costs:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8) Please provide your methodology or explanation of how you calculated cost per location (Households/Businesses):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
9) Proof of Financial Solvency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10) Technical Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
11) Evidence of Support for the Project (i.e. Letter of Support)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
12) Evidence or proof a partnership based on the definition in the guidance document and the authorizing legislation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SCORING

The GREAT Program is a competitive grant program. Applications shall be scored based upon a system that awards a single point for criteria considered to be the minimum level for the provision of broadband service, with additional points awarded to criteria that exceed minimum levels. Applications receiving the highest score shall receive priority status for the awarding of grants.

The tool below is being provided to Applicants so that they may estimate their score to determine estimated match requirements. All final and official scores will be determined by the BIO during the review process.

	Reviewer	Score
a1) Partnership - One point shall be given for a proposed partnership that will make available existing infrastructure that has been installed for the partner's enterprise, non consumer broadband purposes, or any other property, buildings, or structures owned by the partner, for a proposed project.	Choose One	0

NC DIT GREAT Program

Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Program

a2) Partnership - A county or nonprofit entity that proposes to provide a financial match shall be given one point. Notwithstanding Article 8 of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes, or any provision of law to the contrary, a county may use unrestricted general funds or federal American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117 1) funds allocated to it for the purpose of improving broadband infrastructure for a financial match.	Choose One	0
a3) Partnership - An applicant shall receive two additional points for a proposed partnership where the county's financial match is comprised entirely from federal American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117 2) funds intended for broadband infrastructure.	Choose One	0
b) Unserved Households(HH) Using most recent FCC Data or other information or supporting data, estimated number of unserved households within the eligible county (TIER ONE)	500 or Less	1
c) Unserved Households (HH) to be Served Using most recent FCC Data or other information supporting data, the percentage of the total unserved households with the eligible project area	Less than 15%	1
d) Unserved Business Using most recent FCC Data or other information by NC BIO, provide broadband service to unserved business within eligible county (TIER ONE) and project area (Documentation)	1 and 4	1
e1) Piedmont or Coastal Plain Region	Choose One	
e2) Mountain Region	Choose One	
f) Base Speed - Min Download : Upload	100:20 Mbps to 100:100 Mbps	1.00
Total Score		3
g) Community Broadband Plan defined by NCBIO	No	0
h1) For counties that received an aggregate of eight million dollars (\$8,000,000) or more directly from the federal government, the following points shall be added to the application score:	Choose One	
h2) For counties that (i) received less than an aggregate of eight million dollars (\$8,000,000) directly from the federal government from the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L. 117 2) and (ii) are providing a portion of a project's matching funds using the entirety of the federal funds the county received, together with any other unrestricted general fund monies, if needed, the following points shall be added to the application score:	Choose One	
i1) Are the matching funds partially comprised of ARPA funds a county received directly from US Treasury?	Choose One	
i2) Are the matching funds entirely comprised of ARPA funds a county received directly from US Treasury?	Choose One	
Final Score		3

List all expenses related to the project, the amount of each expense, and the corresponding funding source(s) in the table below. The table should include all of the eligible costs such as: installation, acquiring or updating easements, equipment, fiber, construction, backhaul infrastructure for the end user, and testing costs. Ineligible costs should not be included in the project budget. The table should clearly show all planned expenditures and all funding sources for the project.

Reviewer Score:	3	Matching Requirement (%):	50%
Based on your scoring matrix, Your minimum match requirements:		\$1,988,836.6	
Total Project Cost:	\$3,977,673.2	Grant Amount Requested (\$):	\$0

Please indicate which documents were submitted with your application, by checking the appropriate box. ~ Reference guidelines booklet for document details ~	
1) Excel Spreadsheet (NO PDF) that itemizes the eligible activities and cost estimates. Please provide an explanation of how you estimated the costs	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) What is the total cost per location for the project? Please provide your methodology or explanation of how you calculated cost per location (Households/Businesses)	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Proof of Financial Solvency	<input type="checkbox"/>

Project Expense	GREAT Funds	Matching Funds	Total
-----------------	-------------	----------------	-------

NC DIT GREAT Program

Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Program

Easements (one time fees)			0
Materials (fiber, equipment, etc.)			0
Construction/Installation			0
Testing			0
Engineering			0
Lease/Collocation Fees (one time fees)			0
Other 1			0
Other 2			0
Other 3			0
Total Eligible Project Cost			0

Company Certifications

1	Overdue Tax Debts	Does the Company or the Related Member(s) currently have any overdue tax debts with any City, Town or County in, or with the State of North Carolina?	No
2	Occupational Safety and Health Act Violations	Does the Company, or the Related Member(s) have any citation under the Occupational Safety and Health Act that have become a final order within the past three years for willful serious violations or for failing to abate serious violations?	No
3	Loan Defaults	Is the Company, or the Related Member(s) currently in default on any loan or grant previously made by the State of North Carolina?	No
4	Incentive History	Has the Company, or Related Member(s) ever defaulted on an economic development grant or incentive or been sued by a grantor with respect to an economic development grant or incentive from the State of North Carolina?	No
5	Creditor Losses, Litigation, Government Investigations	Has any member of management or any principal of the Company, or the Related Member(s) been involved in a financial reorganization, a bankruptcy, or other situation that led to losses by creditors or bond buyers, investor lawsuits, or government investigation alleging fraud or impropriety?	No
6	Pending or Threatened Litigation	Is the Company, or Related Member(s) subject to any claim, suit, action, proceeding, or government investigation that is pending or threatened that, individually or in the aggregate, would reasonably be expected to have a material adverse effect on the proposed grantee's finances or operations or the ability to conduct the proposed project, or that would reasonably be expected to impact the NC DIT's decision to award a grant?	No

Internet Service Provider (ISP) Certification and Attestation

The attached statements and exhibits are hereby made part of this application, and the undersigned representative of the applicant certifies that the information in this application and the attached statements and exhibits are true, correct, and complete to the best of the signatory's knowledge and belief. The signatory further certifies:

1. as Authorized Representative, the signatory has been authorized to file this application by formal action of the governing body;
2. agrees that if a grant is awarded, the applicant will provide proper and timely submittal of all documentation requested by the Grantor Agency;
3. that the applicant has substantially complied with or will comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances as applicable to this project;
4. that the applicant certifies the financial and organizational strength regarding the ability to successfully meet the terms of the grant requirements and the ability to meet the potential for repayment of grant funds; and
5. attests that the proposed project area is eligible.

Authorized Representative

Name:	Bradley J Cain	Title:	General Manager	Date:	05/04/2022
-------	----------------	--------	-----------------	-------	------------