

Applicant Information

Company Name	ZITO WEST HOLDING, LLC
Address	Zito Media 102 South Main Street Coudersport, PA 16915
Website	https://www.zitomedia.net/
Federal Tax ID	
DUNS #	117551629
System Award Management (SAM.Gov) ID	96FV5

Authorized Representative		Authorized Representative (Alternative)	
Full Name	James Rigas	Full Name	
Contact Title	Co-President	Contact Title	
Phone Number	(814)260-9575	Phone Number	
E-Mail	james.rigas@zitomedia.com	E-Mail	

Grant Administrator & Company Name(if applicable):

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

Project Information

Project Title	Swain County Broadband Expansion 2022		
Project Cost	\$4,686,777.99		
County	Swain	Tier #	001
Estimated # of Households with improved access	1,573		
Estimated # of businesses with improved access	51		
Base Speed - Minimum Download/Upload	Greater than 100:100 Mbps		

Project Description (provide a brief summary of the project)

Zito is proposing to deploy GPON optical fiber broadband service to underserved areas in Swain County. This project will connect 1,624 unserved and underserved locations in Swain County, providing each location with access to broadband speeds of 1000:1000 Mbps, which far exceeds the State's minimum requirement of 100:100 Mbps. These locations include 1,573 households, 24 businesses, 10 churches, 6 clubs, 5 municipal government buildings, 4 homes for the aged, one public school, and one community building (51 businesses and/or community anchor points total).

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

Yes

Checklist Details

1) Statement of Qualifications (Please provide a detailed description of qualifications and experience with the deployment of broadband):

Zito and its affiliates have been providing broadband services to residential and business customers since 2005. Zito is based in rural Pennsylvania and currently serves approximately 55,000 residential internet customers with broadband connections in nineteen states. About 50,000 of those customers are currently served with fiber/coax networks while about 5,000 customers are served with fiber to the home technology.

Zito has focused on providing high bandwidth, cost effective services to rural areas throughout the country. In order to do that, Zito has deployed a 10 gigabit, nationwide, MPLS backbone with a presence in many of the most important internet points of presence in the country. The Zito backbone provides the basis for a range of residential data, video, and voice products. In addition, Zito provides a wide range of commercial services including internet access, many varieties of transport and WAN services, and a full range of hosted PBX and other commercial voice products. Zito's customers include a number of 911 centers, hospitals, ambulance service companies, cell carriers, and other customers with mission critical communication needs. In 2021, Zito won the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) bid, together with Comtech Safety & Security Technologies to construct Pennsylvania's NextGen 911 system. This system, currently under construction, will serve all 67 counties in the Commonwealth. Zito is also a licensed provider of telecommunication services with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Zito and its affiliates have over 400 employees, many of whom have decades of experience in IP engineering, fiber optic design and operation, RF network design and operation, call center operation, management of residential and commercial communications networks, and finance and accounting for those businesses. Zito has a call center which is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week so that residential customers can contact us at any time to request service, to place an order, or to ask a billing question. In addition, Zito has a network operations center which monitors all of our major network components 24 hours

Checklist Details

a day. In addition, the network operations center is available at any hour to respond to commercial customer tickets or answer commercial customer inquiries. From a financial perspective, Zito maintains a very stable financial structure by maintaining a conservative debt to operating cash flow ratio. The company's financing is with a consortium of regional banks, and that facility provides liquidity which is more than adequate to meet the requirements of this grant project.

2) Assessment of the current level of broadband access in the proposed deployment area – supporting data may be uploaded if applicable:

Zito Media is proposing to deploy broadband service to underserved areas in Swain County. According to December 2020 FCC form 477 data for Swain County, 32.33% of homes in the County are unserved at 25/3 service, or an estimated 2,820 households. Through this grant, Zito proposes to provide service to 1,624 unserved locations.

These locations include 1,573 households, 24 businesses, 10 churches, 6 clubs, 5 municipal government buildings, 4 homes for the aged, one public school, and one community building (51 businesses and/or community anchor points total). These anchor institutions are included in the same dataset as the commercial locations (NC Locations in Swain Expansion Areas COMMERCIAL.zip).

Zito Media determined the project area for this application using a variety of data sources. The first was the state's broadband datasets available in conjunction with the GREAT Grant Mapping Tool (NC OneMap/State of North Carolina). The second was the NC Broadband Survey data for Swain County, in which 506 respondents in Swain County out of 1,000 (49%) indicated that they did not have internet (excluding cellular and satellite). Zito has included multiple locations identified through the NC Broadband Survey as having service below 25/3 as the fastest available service. This data is included as an attachment.

The third data source utilized for this project was a survey conducted by the Swain County Public School System (uploaded as an attachment). This survey resulted in 303 additional data points.

In addition, Zito has identified locations that are currently identified as having service over 25/3 Mbps according to FCC Form 477 data submitted by a Wireless Internet Service Provider, but Zito has documented its argument as to why it believes these locations are not receiving service at this level and should therefore be considered eligible for GREAT Grant funding. Zito's methodology for determining additional unserved locations is explained in detail in the document "Swain County Additional Unserved Locations Selection and Methodology", uploaded as an attachment to this application.

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

Zito will provide a range of data, video, and voice products. These services in funded expansion areas will be all Fiber To The Home (FTTH)/Fiber To The Premise (FTTP). For residential customers, Zito will offer a minimum internet speed of 100x100 megabits/second and a maximum speed of up to 1000x1000 megabits/second. Standard cable television programming will be available through Zito's streaming app which can be installed on a variety of platforms including Roku, FireTV, and Android television or streaming devices. Unlimited domestic and fully featured residential IP based residential phone service will also be available to consumers.

For commercial customers, Zito will offer a range of internet speed options as well as point to point transport and various forms of WAN services. Zito offers a full range of voice services to commercial customers including Hosted PBX, PRI's, SIP trunks, and POTS trunks. In addition, Zito can incorporate various forms of redundancy or failover for voice customers.

Residential:

Fiber To The Home (FTTH)/Fiber To The Premise (FTTP). For residential customers, Zito will offer a minimum internet speed of 100x100 megabits/second and a maximum speed of up to 1000x1000 megabits/second.

Zito's low pricing for the high-quality service of its extremely robust Fiber To The Home service means broadband access is affordable to most (see pricing below).

For our low-income customers, Zito is a participant in the FCC's new Affordable Connectivity Program. This means that Zito's powerful, fast and future-proof Fiber To The Home internet access is affordable to all!

Residential monthly pricing is as follows:

100 Mbps x 100 Mbps \$80.35 included WiFi ONU

1000 Mbps x 1000 Mbps \$99.95 included WiFi ONU

Commercial:

Fiber To The Premise (GPON, non-dedicated Internet access): 100x100 Mbps, 1000x1000 Mbps

The following services are full commercial grade, dedicated, fiber services typically used by medium to larger businesses, enterprises, medical systems, school districts, and community anchor institutions:

Dedicated Internet Access: symmetrical speeds from 100 x 100 Mbps to multiple gigabits.

WAN (Wide Area Network)/E-Line – private line telecommunication service on fiber. Bandwidths symmetrical, ranging from 100x100 Mbps to multiple gigabits

Voice communications: ranging from analog (POTS) trunks, to PRI, to SIP trunks. Additionally, Zito Virtual PBX offers customers a PBX-based solution, with the PBX hosted on Zito servers ("in the cloud"), as opposed to a local PBX on customer premise. Zito utilizes Polycom phones, which are the workhorse in the IP phone space.

4) Description of Adoption Plan:

Zito Media's adoption plan consists of multiple marketing strategies, including printed materials, such as door hangers and direct mail campaigns to residences, businesses, and community anchors within the area. Zito will also utilize multimedia advertising opportunities, including Facebook and Google advertising and billboards. This outreach will inform users about our services and their benefits. Additionally, we operate a full-featured and informational website to inform and educate users about our services and how they can be used to the fullest benefit by the user.

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"/>

NC DIT GREAT Program

Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Program

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

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
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	

NC DIT GREAT Program

Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Program

Final Score	3
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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:		\$2,343,389	
Total Project Cost:	\$4,686,777.99	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
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?	Yes
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

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:	James Rigas	Title:	Co-President	Date:	05/04/2022
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