

Office of Community and Rural Affairs

IC 4-4-38-10 Annual Report

8/27/19

Indiana Code 4-4-38-10 requires the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (“OCRA”) to submit an annual report to the Indiana General Assembly regarding activities during the most recent fiscal year associated with the Broadband Grants for Unserved Areas program. The following report includes information required under the statute from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

(1) The number, amounts, and recipients of grants awarded under this chapter.

From July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019, no grants were awarded under this chapter.

(2) The status of any funded qualified broadband projects.

From July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019, no qualified broadband projects were funded under this chapter.

(3) Expenses incurred and funds spent by the office in administering this chapter.

OCRA and Grant Services staff have dedicated a minimum of 600 hours of various staff members’ time, including the Executive Director, Deputy Director, Operations Director, Program Managers, Community Liaisons and Grant services staff.

(4) A list of the entities, if any, that the office collaborated with in administering this chapter.

OCRA has consulted with other states that have similar broadband infrastructure grant programs on best practices, program development, administration and implementation, including Virginia, Colorado, Tennessee, and Minnesota. We have also consulted with partners at Indiana Department of Transportation, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, the Department of Natural Resources, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture and the Director of Broadband Opportunities.

(5) An accounting of funds in the rural economic development fund established by IC 4-4-9.7-9, including funds awarded as grants under this chapter.

Approximately 56% of the rural economic development fund is used for grants, 15% on operations and 29% on contracts. Programs funded using rural economic development dollars include Quick Impact Placebased Grants, Stellar Communities Planning Grants, Downtown Development, Impact Main Street, Connecting Communities, PEER, and Promise Indiana Planning Grants. All funds have been allocated to specific grant programs, operations and contracts for fiscal year 2020. An accounting of funds in the Rural Broadband Fund established by IC 4-4-38.5-11, including funds awarded as grants, will be detailed in the 2020 report, per SEA 460 (2019).

(6) The number of locations in Indiana to which broadband infrastructure has been deployed with the use of grant funds under this chapter, including address-level information for newly connected locations.

From July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019, no broadband infrastructure was deployed under this chapter.

(7) The overall progress of the deployment of broadband infrastructure for the provision of qualified broadband service in unserved areas in Indiana.

A broadband symposium was held in October of 2018. A website has been created for the Next Level Connections Broadband Grant Program. Guidelines and applications for the program were accepted in May of 2019. Scoring commenced in June of 2019 as interpreted from HEA 1065 2018.