

August 25, 2022

Report to the General Assembly

Indiana Code 4-4-38.5-13(a) 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 Rural Areas program. The following report includes information required under the statute from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

Staff members

- Rokshana Shireen, Former Project Manager/OCRA Broadband Program Director
- Jodi Golden, Broadband Executive
- Isaiah Lyons, NLC Project Manager
- Emmanuel Olofinkua, NLC Data Analyst
- Roberto Gallardo, Acting Program Director
- Drew Duncan, Former GSI Administrator
- Matt Crouch, Former OCRA Deputy Director
- Adam Servies, Former Grant Services Program Manager
- Lydia Kirschner, OCRA Communications Manager
- Denny Spinner, OCRA Executive Director
- Megan Zarazee, OCRA Director of Operations

1. The number, amounts, and recipients of grants awarded from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

Round 3 of NLC Agreements are in process and have not been finalized due to the decision to use the federal Capital Projects Fund as the funding source. This funding was approved in August of 2022. The grant details will be included in the report for fiscal year 2023.

2. The status of any funded qualified broadband projects as of July 2022:

Applicant	Round	On track- (project is currently planned to be completed in 24-month period)	Completed- (Provider has completed construction and submitted closeout documents)	Delayed- (Provider has received an approval for time extension)
LigTel Communications Inc. (Noble County) NLC-20-101	Round 1		Completed	
Miles Communications (Southeastern Indiana) NLC-20-102	Round 1		Completed	
New Lisbon Broadband (Wayne County) NLC-20-103	Round 1		Completed	
Washington County Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (Starlight, IN) NLC-20-111	Round 1	On Track		

Perry Spencer Rural Telephone Cooperative (Spencer County Rural Areas) NLC-20-104	Round 1		Delayed
Perry Spencer Rural Telephone Cooperative (Perry County) NLC-20-105	Round 1		Delayed
Perry Spencer Rural Telephone Cooperative (Spencer County Unserved Towns) NLC-20-106	Round 1		Completed
Perry Spencer Rural Telephone Cooperative (Unserved SIP Areas) NLC-20-107	Round 1		Delayed
Smithville (Monroe County) NLC-20-108	Round 1	On Track	
Smithville (Sharpsville area) NLC-20-109	Round 1		Completed
Tipmont REMC (Tippecanoe County) NLC-20-110	Round 1		Completed
Mainstream Fiber Networks, LLC (Floyd County) NLC-20-112	Round 1	On Track	
Mainstream Fiber Networks, LLC (Benton County) NLC-20-113	Round 1	On Track	
Jackson County REMC (Jackson County) NLC-20-114	Round 1	On Track	
Jackson County REMC NLC-21-104_2020-0001	Round 2	On Track	
Jackson County REMC NLC-21-104_2020-0002	Round 2	On Track	
SCI REMC NLC-21-113_2020-0003	Round 2	On Track	
SCI REMC NLC-21-113_2020-0004	Round 2		Delayed
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0005	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0006	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0007	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0008	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0009	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0010	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0011	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0012	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0015	Round 2	On Track	

Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0016	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0017	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0018	Round 2	On Track	
SEI Communications NLC-21-114_2020-0022	Round 2	On Track	
SEI Communications NLC-21-114_2020-0023	Round 2	On Track	
SEI Communications NLC-21-114_2020-0025	Round 2	On Track	
Eastern Indiana Wifi NLC-21-102_2020_0027	Round 2	On Track	
Eastern Indiana Wifi NLC-21-102_2020_0028	Round 2	On Track	
SEI Communications NLC-21-114_2020-0029	Round 2	On Track	
Lakeland Internet NLC-21-107_2020-0031	Round 2		Completed
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0034	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0035	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0036	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0037	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0038	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0039	Round 2	On Track	
Tipmont REMC NLC-21-115_2020-0041	Round 2	On Track	
Comcast NLC-21-100_2020_0043	Round 2	On Track	
Endeavor Communications NLC-21-103_2020_0048	Round 2	On Track	
Johnson County REMC NLC-21-105_2020-0060	Round 2	On Track	
Mercury Wireless NLC-21-109_2020-0064	Round 2	On Track	
Joink NLC-21-106_2020-0065	Round 2		Delayed
Joink NLC-21-106_2020-0067	Round 2	On Track	
Joink NLC-21-106_2020-0069	Round 2	On Track	
Joink NLC-21-106_2020-0070	Round 2	On Track	
Joink NLC-21-106_2020-0072	Round 2	On Track	
Joink NLC-21-106_2020-0074	Round 2	On Track	

Joink NLC-21-106_2020-0075	Round 2	On Track	
New Lisbon Broadband NLC-21-110_2020-0088	Round 2		Completed
PSC NLC-21-112_2020-0094	Round 2		Delayed
Mainstream Fiber Networks NLC-21-108_2020-0103	Round 2	On Track	
Mainstream Fiber Networks NLC-21-108_2020-0107	Round 2	On Track	
Central Indiana Communications NLC-21-100_2020-0110	Round 2		Completed
Orange County REMC NLC-21-111_2020-0111	Round 2		Delayed
Orange County REMC NLC-21-111_2020-0112	Round 2		Delayed
Orange County REMC NLC-21-111_2020-0116	Round 2		Delayed
Totals		44	11
			9

Each funded project is provided a 24-month period as part of the grant agreement to complete the approved scope of work including engineering, acquiring site control, construction, and providing service to customers. While all funded projects are within the original grant period, many of the grantees are facing challenges due to supply chain and work force issues. These issues are likely to require the grantees to request time extensions. OCRA has a procedure in place to accept and review time extension requests for the program.

3. Expenses incurred and funds spent by the office in administering the program:

OCRA and Grant Services have spent \$282,541.24 in administrative staff time for the Next Level Connections Program during FY22. The following staff have contributed to this total including the Executive Director, Operations Director, Program Director, Program Managers, Community Liaisons and Grant services staff.

4. A list of entities that the office collaborated in administering the program:

OCRA has consulted with partners at Governor's Office, Lt. Governor's Office, Indiana Economic Development Corporation, Indiana Department of Transportation, Indiana Rural Health Association, Indiana Department of Health, State Budget Agency, Indiana Office of Technology, Indiana Department of Education, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, and the Indiana Broadband Office.

5. Accounting of funds including funds awarded as grants:

An accounting of funds for Next Level Connections fund includes the following expenses for the fiscal year, \$23,765,695.96 on grants to providers and \$282,541.24 spent on salary and fringe benefits for

staffing for FY22. A total of \$572,036.63 has been spent on administrative expenses for FY 20-22 with a total of \$41,395,570.45 has been paid out in claims to providers for FY 20-22.

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:

Currently, the 9 projects in closure have connected 1147 new addresses across the state, mostly at 1 Gbps/1Gbps speeds with fiber connections.

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

The NLC grant program is a component of Gov. Holcomb's Next Level Connections initiative, a \$1 billion statewide infrastructure program announced in 2019. The first round of the program awarded 14 projects, with grants totaling \$28.41 million, \$23.27 million in local match contributions, for a total project value of \$51.68 million. All projects will provide service of up to 1 GB download and upload speeds to end users. A total of 18 counties were represented.

The second round of funding awarded 49 projects \$51 million in grants with \$53.39 million in matching contributions resulting in more than \$104 million in total investment. A total of 32 counties were represented.

We are seeing some more projects closing or approaching closure, especially in the first round, however, there have been recurring issues with service providers stemming from labor shortages, material costs, and other factors associated with the Covid-19 Pandemic. Because of this, we have seen a large number of providers request time extensions for their projects.

OCRA has worked with the Governor's Office and Lt. Governors Office to develop the following goals and metrics for the program. A dashboard to share the status towards meeting the goals is currently being researched and will be displayed on the agency's website once complete.

Indiana Broadband Goals

- Increase access to unserved or underserved households, businesses, health clinics and schools.
- Increase adoption of school buildings and rural health clinics receiving 1GB of service.
- Increase adoption of households and businesses receiving greater than 25/3.
- Create a public dashboard demonstrating metrics used to measure goals.
- Increase public sector/philanthropic engagement in broadband service deployment projects.

Indiana Broadband Metrics

- Number of Locations served: 1,147 new addresses connected
- Private/local dollars leveraged/invested. -N/A
- Number of Schools with new access. -N/A
- Number of schools increased to 1GB. -N/A

Number of Rural health clinics with new access. -N/A
Number of Rural health clinics increased to 1 GB. -N/A

Some of the clinics data might have been included in the business sections, we cannot differentiate them. The 3 metrics reported by the providers are: **Household, Business and Anchor institutions**