



## PROCEDURES FOR CONTESTING AN AWARD ILLINOIS BROADBAND INNOVATION FUND

### CHALLENGE

Submit a plan to promote the adoption and use of high-speed internet services to stimulate job creation, education, healthcare, agriculture, public safety, energy conservation or eGovernment.

### BACKGROUND

The U.S. Small Business Administration allocated funds to the Partnership for a Connected Illinois (PCI) for the development and implementation of a plan, in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, to increase computer adoption and usage across Illinois. Of these funds, PCI is investing up to \$500,000 for the **Broadband Innovation Fund**.

The Governor's Illinois Gigabit Communities Challenge promoted **broadband deployment** as a tool for economic development, stimulating 40 applicants for funding by June 30, 2012. The Illinois Broadband Innovation Fund aims to stimulate applications for **broadband adoption and usage**.

Another portion of PCI's Small Business Administration grant is devoted to funding affordable computers, basic and advanced internet training, and broadband connections through the "Better Broadband, Better Lifeline" program in partnership with the Federal Communications Commission, seven Eligible Telecommunications Carriers across the rural portions of Illinois, and others. PCI is a non-profit organization based in Springfield, Illinois, with a vision of Better Broadband, Better Lives. We collect broadband data, collaborate on deployment, and maximize broadband's impact.

### AWARDS

The Broadband Innovation Fund awardees were announced on Tuesday, October 2, 2012. Contracts, reporting requirements, and funding instruments will be made available beginning October 3. Organizations wishing to contest an award may follow the procedures outlined below.

### EVALUATION PROCESS

The Partnership for a Connected Illinois established an independent Review Committee to evaluate, score and probe the particulars of the 113 applications that were received by Tuesday, September 18, 2012. Each of the applications received an evaluation from multiple Review Committee members, and those with the highest average scores were evaluated as a Review Committee. Additional meetings of Review Committee members solidified the judgment of the committee, together with the dollar amounts to be awarded.

Evaluators followed the criteria identified in the "Evaluation and Selection Process" of the RFP, which were broken into the following four categories:

- Economic Development on a Broadband Platform
- Innovation
- Experience and Track Record
- Cost/Benefit

Evaluators considered the strengths and weaknesses of applicants in each of the four above-mentioned categories, and applicants generally needed to be strong or excellent in most categories.



### **CONTESTING AWARDS**

Organizations seeking to contest an award must submit their contest in writing by e-mail, to the Partnership for a Connected Illinois at [contests@broadbandillinois.org](mailto:contests@broadbandillinois.org) by Friday, October 12, at 5 p.m. CT. Organizations should state their issue of concern with the RFP process or its result. PCI will reply in writing to contests by Monday, October 22, at 5 p.m. CT, and will respond only to the issues identified in the contest.

### **EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS**

Companies, organizations, researchers, entrepreneurs and innovators will be able to enhance products, services and technologies that utilize broadband as a platform through the Broadband Innovation Fund. Preference will go to creative proposals that demonstrate support from public and private organizations in the community to be served, including entities not heretofore engaged in broadband issues. Consideration will be given to applicants who have applied for State-wide grants such as the Illinois Gigabit Communities Challenge. Other important criteria will include:

- Maximum financial leverage through private, state or local resources.
- Proven experience and success in leading Illinois initiatives.
- How proposals utilize a broadband platform to enhance their mission and effectiveness.
- Enhancing job creation and economic impact in the proposed area of service.
- Experience with Illinois-based projects, processes, tools, and in working with stakeholders.
- Development of rural regional innovation and entrepreneurship systems with broadband.
- Key relationships with broadband providers and rural development stakeholders.
- Sound project milestones and deliverables.
- The maximum cost-benefit analysis.
- Expertise of project team.
- How others can generalize from the model proposed by your application.
- How the proposed plan stimulates the best use of broadband networks.

The final funding commitment will be made by PCI. Applicants were notified of finalist decisions by Friday, September 28, 2012, and of funding decisions by October 2, 2012.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY OF APPLICANT INFORMATION**

PCI will protect information labeled confidential and proprietary information from public disclosure, except that PCI may make publicly available a list of each entity that has applied for a grant, a description of each application, the status of each application, the name of each entity receiving funds, the purpose for which the entity is receiving the funds, the amount of the award, the project location, the number of jobs created and retained, and other information.