REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
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.

PURPOSES
Very high speed broadband is the starting point for innovation in many areas of our society. Higher-capacity broadband offers the opportunity to spark the creativity of Illinois entrepreneurs, energize community organzations, and stimulate the brainpower of our academics. Communities deploying broadband need solutions so that high speed networks have the broadest and deepest impacts possible. Applicants must provide performance measures to include deliverables such as number of residents reached, number of community broadband centers connected, number of training sessions provided or other metrics of project sustainability. Proposals need to show how the project stimulates the best possible use of broadband networks. Examples of proposals that might be funded under the Broadband Innovation Fund include:

- Efforts to connect health-care professionals with patients in a particular Illinois region.
- Programs designed to spur greater use of telework or telecommuting, saving on gas costs.
- Smart grid applications designed to improve reliability and promote energy saving.
- Training high-school students to think entrepreneurially and use technology for growth.
- "AgEd," or the ability to connect the university agriculture knowledge to local farmer needs.
- New forms of participatory technology and workplace skills development.
- Training for low income and/or seniors to better use broadband technology.
- Collaborative computer training programs between libraries and community colleges.
- Programs designed to enhance citizen participation in the civic life of their communities.
- Streamlining complex government processes to enhance service delivery with broadband.
- Faster and more efficient fire and police response through better use of internet networks.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any private or public entity is eligible to apply for an Illinois Broadband Innovation Fund grant. Applicants may request between $10,000 and $100,000 from PCI to use broadband to stimulate job creation, education, healthcare, agriculture, public safety, energy conservation or eGovernment.

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND DEADLINE

Applicants should complete the application below. The complete application should be submitted at the website OR emailed to innovation@broadbandillinois.org by 5 p.m. CT, Tuesday, September 11, 2012. Supplementary support materials, including maps, videos and letters are welcome but not required. Applications submitted after 5 p.m. CT on September 11 will not be accepted.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions regarding this application should be submitted to innovation@broadbandillinois.org. Frequently asked questions will be answered on the http://broadbandillinois.org/innovation page.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Companies, organizations, researchers, entrepreneurs and innovators will be able to enhance products, services and technologies that utilize boadband 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 will be notified of funding decisions by Friday, September 29, 2012. If any part of the application or process is unclear, a written request for for clarification may be sent to innovation@broadbandillinois.org.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF APPLICANT INFORMATION

PCI will protect information labled 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.

APPLICANT ENTITY			
Organization/Company Name:		**Telephone Number:**	
Address:		**Fax Number:**	
City:	**Zip Code:**	**Federal Taxpayer Number:**	
KEY CONTACT INFORMATION			
Salutation:	**First Name:**	**Last Name:**	
Title:	**Telephone Number:**	**Fax Number:**	
Address:			
City:	**State:**	**Zip Code:**	
E-mail Address:			
ESTIMATED PROJECT BUDGET			
PCI Funds Sought: $	**Private Funds Sought:** $	**Cash on Hand for Project:** $	**Total Project Cost Estimate:** $

1. Describe your vision for using broadband in your project. (500 words max.)

2. How is your proposal innovative? (250 words max.)

3. How will the Broadband Innovation Fund enable your proposal to innovate more effectively? (250 words max.)

4. List your efforts to stimulate: education/learning, healthcare, agriculture, economic development, energy-efficiency, public safety or eGovernment. (500 words max.)

5. How do you plan to publicize and raise awareness for your program? (250 words max.)

6. Describe the background and experience of your team. (500 words max.)

7. Can your program engage network providers and economic development officials? (250 words max.)

8. How do you propose to measure progress toward achieving the goals of your proposal (250 words)

9. How can others generalize from the model in your propsal(250 word max.)

10. Provide your proposed budget and proposed timeline. (no word limit)

11. If you were to send a Tweet about your application, what would it say? (140 character max)