

**South Carolina 2022 ARPA Grant
Program
Application SFRF 1.0**



Section 1.1 - Applicant Information

Legal Entity/Organization Name	HTC (Horry Telephone Cooperative, Inc.)
Parent Organization	n/a
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Cooperative
Primary Contact Name	Von Todd
Title	Chief Executive, Corporate Strategy
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	PO Box 1820, Conway, SC 29528
Phone Number	843-369-8166
Email	von.todd@htcinc.net
FCC Registration Number (FRN):	1886944
Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number	9788811
Registered in the System for Award Management (SAM)	Yes
SAM Number	MTG7WKH9S965
SC State Vendor Number	7000058570

Section 1.2 - Project Name/Number

Project Number (Format XXX-XX)	MAR-01
Project Name	HTC Marion 1 ARPA SFRF Grant

Section 1.3 - Broadband Service Provider Context

Date of Applicant's Initial FCC Form 477 Submission	December 31, 2001
Date of Applicant's Most Recent FCC Form 477 Submission	12/31/2021
Applicant has experience delivering broadband service via fiber and/or hybrid fiber-coax infrastructure (YES/NO)	Yes

Section 1.4 - Broadband Infrastructure Information

Indicate the type(s) of broadband infrastructure technology to be deployed in the project service area.
 Projects must provide a minimum of 100/20 Mbps scalable to 100/100 Mbps. Applicant must explain in detail why the proposed project cannot provide 100/100 Mbps.

Fiber to the Premises Minimum Sustainable Download/Upload Speeds 100/100 Mbps
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Section 1.5 - Proposed Broadband Pricing Tiers

Rates less than \$10/month (YES/NO)	No
If yes to \$10 month plan what are the upload/download speeds	
Rates between \$10 - \$14.99 (YES/NO)	No
If yes to \$10-\$14.99 month plan what are the upload/download speeds	
Rates between \$15 - \$19.99 (YES/NO)	No
If yes to \$15-\$19.99 month plan what are the upload/download speeds	
Rates between \$20 - \$24.99 (YES/NO)	No
If yes to \$20-\$24.99 month plan what are the upload/download speeds	
Rates between \$25 - \$34.99 (YES/NO)	No
If yes to \$25-\$34.99 month plan what are the upload/download speeds	
Do the above speed tiers include unlimited data? (YES/NO)	Yes
Is a Consumer-based Contract Required? (YES/NO)	Yes
Is the pricing fixed? (YES/NO)	Yes
What's the duration of the pricing? (In Months)	12 months

Section 1.6 - Project Timeline
(Maximum Timeline Allotted is 24 months)

Project Start Date	November 14, 2022
Project Construction Activity Begins	January 1, 2023
Project Construction Activity Complete	January 1, 2024
Customer Premises	795
<i>Installations Begin</i>	April 1, 2023
<i>Installations End</i>	December 31, 2024
Overall Project Completion Date	December 31, 2024
Will the project be completed within 24 months of official Notice to Proceed (NTP)?	Yes

Section 1.7 - Project Service Area Information

Estimated Miles of Fiber to be Installed	128
Estimated Percentage Underground	55%
Estimated Percentage Aerial	45%
Number of Counties to be Impacted	1
County Names	Marion
Total Number of Census Blocks with Concentrations of K-12	66
Total number of Census Blocks in DDA's	60
Total number of Census Blocks NOT in DDA or K-12 Concentration	51
Total Number of unserved 2020 Census Blocks part of Proposed Project	151
Total number of housing units served	753
Total number of businesses served	37
Total number of other Public Facilities e.g. community centers, fire stations served	5
Total Structures Served	795
Average Cost Per Structure Served	\$ 10,528.98
Does the applicant plan to serve every structure in the proposed project service area?	Yes

If no, provide an explanation for why the Project will not Pass all Homes in the proposed project service area

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Section 2.2 - Funding Details

Description	Comment	Amount
South Carolina ARPA Broadband Grant Program Funds requested		\$ 4,185,269.08
Applicant-Provided Funding		\$ 4,185,269.08
Third-Party Funding Source (if applicable)		\$ -
Total Project Cost		\$ 8,370,538.15
Percentage Funds Requested from SC Broadband Office		50%
Percentage Funds from Applicant Match		50%
Percentage Funds from Third Party Funding Source		0%

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Section 3.1 Confirmations

Applicant participates in the Affordable Connective Program (ACP) and will participate in the ACP for the life of ACP for the Project Service Area.

Agree

Applicant will provide at least one low-cost option without data usage caps and at speeds sufficient for households with multiple users.

Agree

The Project will comply with the requirements set forth in ARPA, South Carolina Act No. ____ of 2022, and other federal, state, and local laws, including environmental and permitting laws and regulations.

Agree

The Applicant will not use ARPA funds to procure or obtain certain telecom and video surveillance services or equipment as outlined in 2 CFR 200.216 and 2 CFR 200.471.

Agree

Applicant will not use ARPA funds to modernize cybersecurity for existing and new broadband networks.

Agree

Applicant will not procure telecommunications equipment or services from China.

Agree

The Project includes pre-project development uses or costs

Agree

If Yes to above, the pre-development uses or costs will be (1) tied to an eligible broadband project or reasonably expected to lead to such a project; and (2) obligated within the period between March 3, 2021, and December 31, 2024 and expended to cover such obligations by December 31, 2026.

Agree

Applicant will require its employees, contractors, and subcontractors to comply with the applicable requirements in the South Carolina Underground Facility Damage Prevention Act pursuant to Title 58, Chapter 36 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, as amended.

Agree

Applicant affirms that it will consult with the SC Department of Transportation, electric utilities as well as local water sewer utilities as to any possible efficiencies that can be achieved with a “dig once” approach.

Agree

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4.1 - Additional Information

(max 2000 character limit per item)

Provide a Summary Narrative that describes your project

HTC will use this proposed \$8.3 million project to deploy 128 miles of fiber-optic cable in the unserved areas of Marion County. This investment will reach an unserved area that includes more than 750 households, 35 businesses, and five anchor institutions, and it will serve both K-12 households and Difficult Development Areas. HTC will provide a 50% match to this project, and is requesting approximately \$4.1 million in ARPA funding. HTC is excited for the opportunity to build on its successful track record in Marion County and provide its state-of-the-art fiber-to-the-premise solution to more residents and businesses in need. Together, with this grant HTC and the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff will serve as a model for the rest of the state and country by nearly closing the digital divide in a county that was severely underserved at the start of the pandemic.

Describe how your proposal meets the needs of the community to be served as described in the "Guidelines."

This project meets the needs of the communities in our proposed project areas in several ways. Our fiber-to-the-home solution will deliver reliable broadband starting at speeds of 300Mbps/300Mbps to more than 750 households and more than 35 businesses. It will serve 66 census blocks with K-12 students, 60 census blocks in Difficult Development Areas, and 151 unserved census blocks total, all in areas without existing reliable internet service. We are committing to serving a minimum of 80% of the housing units in the entire census blocks, and 100% of the housing units in the entire project area. Access to HTC's state-of-the-art fiber network will allow the families in this community to finally participate in online learning, telehealth, and telework in ways they couldn't before. This project will allow HTC to reach the vast majority of the remaining unserved locations in the county.

If the proposed Project is in an area that is subject to an existing federal or state funding commitment for reliable speeds of 100/20 Mbps, explain why there is an identified need for additional broadband investment that is not met by existing federal or state funding commitments.

Our proposed project is in an area that is subject to an RDOF funding award; however, we can point to a number of reasons as to why there is an identified need for additional broadband investment not made by this award. Our project maximizes public benefit, deploys broadband as quickly as possible and supports a local cooperative with a track record in connecting rural South Carolinians. Our proposed project would be complete prior to the FCC's RDOF deadline.

The FCC's RDOF auction was deemed by many across the country and the industry as a flawed program. The national provider that won these areas in the RDOF auction was recently fined more than \$3 million for defaulting on 92 of the RDOF census block groups that it won across the state. While this same provider committed to completing construction in our proposed project area by October of 2022, our field data has shown that construction has not begun as of August 31, 2022. Additionally, we have heard from residents in these communities that they have not seen this provider in their area, and that when they call and request service, they cannot get an answer on service timeline.

HTC has a proven track record of delivering on its commitments in all of its grant programs to date. Residents in our proposed project area have been left without internet access for too long. Our application meets their delayed need of broadband access, and we are the most efficient and trusted option to bridge the digital divide in these communities. Additionally, we will deliver a fiber-to-the-home solution starting at 300Mbps/300Mbps.

Describe any plans or programs you have developed to improve adoption in the community described in this proposal.

HTC has already seen a high adoption rate in its adjacent rural grant areas. We have accomplished this through town halls, participation in community events, door-to-door sales efforts, direct mail campaigns, and ACP educational and outreach efforts. We will continue with these efforts in our proposed Project Service Area.

As part of the Project, explain how the Applicant will make efforts to increase digital literacy, for example, support through online training?

HTC has developed a five-week educational program designed with the goal of providing residents with the tools and knowledge to maximize their broadband experience and benefits. Curriculum includes but is not limited to internet safety, career development, financial planning, and healthcare. We have worked with community leaders and surveyed residents to help us develop this curriculum, and we will work with community stakeholders to help us spread the word about this program once it launches. We are currently developing a pilot program this fall and hope to deploy this program across our service area in 2023.

As part of the Project, identify any areas that the Applicant would be willing to provide public Wi-Fi in a central or community location to improve access for all South Carolinians and for what period of time.

HTC has already worked with leaders of Marion County and the Marion County School District to identify two community centers in need of Wi-Fi access and has provided free public Wi-Fi in the parking lot of these centers since January of 2022. If additional needs exist at the community centers in this project area, HTC will continue to work with county and school leaders to meet those needs.

List documents that demonstrate your organization currently has the necessary funds to complete this project/proposal. Attach documents to this proposal.

ARPA Funds Availability, file attached, dated 8/23/2022

List any lease, franchise agreement, interconnection agreement, authorization, permit, or other items needed to complete this project.	
This project will require pole attachment agreements with both Pee Dee Electric and Duke Progress Energy, both of which are already in hand. It will also require site specific encroachment permits from SCDOT and Marion County in order to place facilities in their rights-of-way once the project is awarded. In addition, HTC estimates 8 rail crossings and will need the appropriate approvals from railroad entities owning/controlling rail crossing in these areas.	
Will the Project deliver broadband in the approved Project Service Area that meets or exceeds symmetrical download and upload speeds of 100/100 Mbps?	Yes
If no to above, explain and provide support demonstrating why the Project will not deliver such speeds and provide an affidavit that 100/100 Mbps symmetrical download/upload speeds are not practicable.	
Explain how the Applicant will consult with the community in the Project Service Area on the general affordability needs of the target markets.	
<p>HTC has consulted with the community in our Project Service Area and in surrounding communities for approximately two years now, primarily through one-on-one discussions with residents, community stakeholders and elected officials. We have also participated in two town halls in Marion County to help us gauge the needs and concerns of the residents in these areas. In these conversations, we've heard the same thing – residents are paying far too much for more for internet that barely reaches 10 Mbps. When we tell them about our pricing tiers and internet speeds, their reaction is often one of positive disbelief. Residents in our project areas have little to no choice for internet service, and the choices that they do have are far too expensive and do not offer reliable high speeds. Our subscription rates in our rural grant areas to date (greater than 40% within just two years) prove that our offerings meet the affordability needs of this target market.</p>	
Will the Project (1) prioritize investments in fiber-optic infrastructure wherever feasible and focus on projects that deliver a physical broadband connection by prioritizing projects that achieve last mile connections or ensure funded middle mile projects have commitments in place to support new and/or improved last mile service; (2) include affordability options and shall participate in ACP for the life of ACP; and (3) prioritize support for local networks owned, operated, or affiliated with local governments, nonprofits, and cooperatives.	Yes
If no to above, explain.	



<p>If awarded, will the Grant funds be used to overbuild another existing broadband provider or to reimburse expenses related to overbuilding another broadband provider?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>If yes to above, explain.</p>	
<p></p>	
<p>Is there an identified need in the Project Service Area for additional broadband infrastructure that is not met by existing federal or state funding commitments?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>If so, explain whether service to households and businesses in the Project Service Area should require a holistic approach that provides service to a wider area in order to make ongoing service of certain households or businesses within the service area economical.</p>	
<p></p>	

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5.1 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Senator Kent Williams
Entity Type (.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Elected Official
Role within proposed project	Supporter, Community Stakeholder
Primary Contact Name	Senator Kent Williams
Title	State Senator, District 30
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	608 Gressette Building, Columbia, SC 29201
Phone Number	803-212-6000
Email	kentwilliams@scsenate.gov

5.2 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Marion County
Entity Type (.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Governmental Entity
Role within proposed project	Supporter, Community Stakeholder
Primary Contact Name	Tim Harper
Title	Administrator
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	PO Box 183, Marion, SC 29571
Phone Number	843-423-3904
Email	tharper@marionsc.org

5.3 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Marion County School District
Entity Type (.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Governmental Entity
Role within proposed project	Supporter, Community Stakeholder
Primary Contact Name	Dr. Kandace Bethea
Title	Superintendent
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	719 North Main St., Marion, SC 29571
Phone Number	843-423-1811
Email	kbethea@marion.k12.sc.us

5.4 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	MPD Electric Cooperative
Entity Type (.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Cooperative
Role within proposed project	Utility Partner, Pole Owner
Primary Contact Name	Ben Fleming, Jr.
Title	Chief Operating Officer
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	Po Box 491, Darlington, SC 29540
Phone Number	843-665-4070
Email	rbfleming@mpd.coop

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6.1 - Attachment Checklist

(Please attach the following items to application)

GIS Shapefiles

Proposed 2020 Census Blocks

Yes

Proposed Service Areas

Yes

Proposed Fiber/Cable Lines

Yes

Proposed Structures Served by Type

Yes

Proposed Network Junctions

No

6.2 Signed affidavit certifying grant application is complete and accurate

Yes

Partners for financial support related to proposed project or non-cash support provide associated documentation.

No

Letters of support evidencing community need and strategic partnerships

Yes

Copies of Applicant's Current Fee Structure for all Internet Speed Tiers

Yes

Certificates of Insurance

Yes

Certificates of Bonding, as described in CFR § 200.326 Bonding requirements.

Yes

Any additional information evidencing community need for project

Yes