

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



Section 1.1 - Applicant Information

Legal Entity/Organization Name	TriCoLink, Inc.
Parent Organization	Tri-County Eleelectric Cooperative, Inc.
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Corporation
Primary Contact Name	Chad T. Lowder
Title	CEO
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	PO Box 217 St. Matthews, SC, 29135
Phone Number	803-874-1300
Email	clowder@tce.coop
FCC Registration Number (FRN):	29670247
Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number	118074110
Registered in the System for Award Management (SAM)	TriCoLink, Inc.
SAM Number	RBQFT6CNZBTY9
SC State Vendor Number	7000324135

Section 1.2 - Project Name/Number

Project Number (Format XXX-XX)	STM-07
Project Name	St. Matthews Project

Section 1.3 - Broadband Service Provider Context

Date of Applicant's Initial FCC Form 477 Submission	June 30, 2021
Date of Applicant's Most Recent FCC Form 477 Submission	8/17/2022
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

Section 1.5 - Proposed Broadband Pricing Tiers

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

No
No
No
No
No
Yes
No
Yes
Yes

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

Project Start Date	January 1, 2023
Project Construction Activity Begins	July 1, 2023
Project Construction Activity Complete	July 1, 2024
Customer Premises <i>Installations Begin</i>	109 September 1, 2024
<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	11.6
Estimated Percentage Underground	10
Estimated Percentage Aerial	90
Number of Counties to be Impacted	2
County Names	Calhoun, Orangeburg
Total Number of Census Blocks with Concentrations of K-12	5
Total number of Census Blocks in DDA's	1
Total number of Census Blocks NOT in DDA or K-12 Concentration	5
Total Number of unserved 2020 Census Blocks part of Proposed Project	11
Total number of housing units served	55
Total number of businesses served	30
Total number of other Public Facilities e.g. community centers, fire stations served	24
Total Structures Served	109
Average Cost Per Structure Served	\$ 4,542.48
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		\$ 346,591.49
Applicant-Provided Funding		\$ 148,539.21
Third-Party Funding Source (if applicable)	N/A	\$ -
Total Project Cost		\$ 495,130.70
Percentage Funds Requested from SC Broadband Office		70%
Percentage Funds from Applicant Match		30%
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.

Disagree

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

Tri-County Electric Cooperative is a member-owned cooperative providing electric service to more than 18,000 residential , agricultural, commercial, and industrial electric members in South Carolina. In 2020, Tri-County initiated a 3-year fiber deployment project to build an advanced communications network capable of deploying smart-grid technologies and fiber-to-the-home(FTTH) broadband services to its members. As of today, Tri-County has completed construction of its initial project to build over 1,500 miles of mainline fiber and provide fiber to home service availability to 100% of its membership. The project was completed 1 year ahead of schedule and has already connected over 5,000 FTTH broadband customers to its network. This fiber network is currently available to all Cooperative members located in Calhoun, Richland, Lexington, Orangeburg, Kershaw and Sumter Counties. Broadband service is provided through Tri-County's subsidiary TriCoLink. TriCoLink provides local customer service with employees based within the service area. All customers of TriCoLink are able to receiver 1Gbs symmetrical service no matter their location. In reviewing the unserved and underserved census blocks in the ARPA application TriCoLink is positioned to utilize the current fiber back bone and expand services to these areas. Due to the recent investment of the fiber back bone TriCoLink will be able to construct this expansion of its existing infrastructure faster and more economical than other providers.

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

TriCoLink, Inc. provides fiber to the home with our lowest package being 100Mbps symmetrical and our largest package 1Gbps symmetrical, with no data caps or speed throttling. TriCoLink, Inc. has enterprise grade solutions and is working towards being an open carrier.

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.

TriCoLink, Inc. may build through an existing federal or state funded area to provide service to a Priority Unserved area. However, we do not plan to serve these areas already funded just pass through.

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

For more than 80 years Tri-County Electric Cooperative Inc, owner of TriCoLink, has served the rural areas of South Carolina. Through this dedication of service and commitment to our communities the Cooperative has become a trusted partner for the citizens of these communities. As the ISP subsidiary of Tri-county, TriCoLink will partner with civic organizations, faith communities, and governmental bodies to promote the value of fiber to the home service. We will also be conducting public sign-up days in the local communities. Our employees will become fiber ambassadors that provide information and assistance through the sign-up process. It is the mission of TriCoLink and Tri-County to have everyone linked to fiber by TriCoLink.

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

Tri-County Electric Cooperative has been a part of these communities for over 80 years. We were the first to provide power to many of these rural areas when other utilities refused. This commitment to the community has allowed the Cooperative to build strong grass roots connections within the community. Tri-County Electric Cooperative, through its subsidiary, TriCoLink, plans to provide necessary education about the benefits of fiber, we plan to publish articles in 'SC Living Magazine' which is provided free of charge to 15,000 residences within our service area. We will also be conducting training seminars utilizing community meeting facilities and our auditorium located in St. Matthews.

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.

TriCoLink, Inc. would entertain the idea of providing a public Wi-Fi in a central or community location but as of right now we are not actively pursuing it since we have not been approached to do so.

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

Letter from CFC stating Loan funds availability to complete the project.

List any lease, franchise agreement, interconnection agreement, authorization, permit, or other items needed to complete this project.

TriCoLink, Inc. may need to acquire permits for railroad crossings, interstate crossings, and DOT permits. We also anticipate having to file for Joint use agreements with other utilities to serve these areas. We currently have Franchise Agreements and have attached them in the folders for each project.

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.

TriCoLink, Inc. communicates very well with the community leaders and receive feed back from our consumers. Our Fiber teams meets regularly to discuss the needs of the communities that we plan to serve or currently serve.

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>Yes</p>
<p>If yes to above, explain.</p>	
<p>Yes, we may need to make passage through predetermined served areas in order to provide service to the Unserved and Underserved areas awarded to us in this Grant. Many of the served areas we will pass through have reached out to us wanting a more reliable, faster, better value broadband provider. We will offer service to them as we pass thus creating a more competitive market place.</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>No</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>	

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5.1 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Calhoun County Council
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Governmental
Role within proposed project	Supporter
Primary Contact Name	John E. McLauchlin
Title	Administrator
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	102 Courthouse Dr, Suite 108, St. Matthews, SC 29135
Phone Number	803-874-2435
Email	JMcLauchlin@calhouncounty.sc.gov

5.2 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Orangeburg County Development Commission
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Governmental
Role within proposed project	Supporter
Primary Contact Name	C. Gregory Robinson
Title	Executive Director
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	125 Reginal Parkway, Suite 100, Orangeburg SC 29118
Phone Number	803-536-3333
Email	grobinson@ocdc.com

5.3 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name
Entity Type
(.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)
Role within proposed project
Primary Contact Name
Title
Mailing Address City, State, Zip
Phone Number
Email

5.4 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name
Entity Type
(.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)
Role within proposed project
Primary Contact Name
Title
Mailing Address City, State, Zip
Phone Number
Email

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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

Yes

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.

Yes

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.

No

Any additional information evidencing community need for project

No