

# South Carolina 2023 ARPA Grant Program Application CPF 1.0



## Section 1.1 - Applicant Information

Legal Entity/Organization Name	Farmers Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Parent Organization	
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Cooperative
Primary Contact Name	James L. Brown, III
Title	Chief Executive Officer
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	1101 E. Main Street, Kingstree, SC, 29556
Phone Number	843-382-2333
Email	<a href="mailto:brownj@ftc.org">brownj@ftc.org</a>

## Section 1.2 - Project Name/Number

Project Number (Format XXX-XX)	FTC -17
Project Name	Clarendon
Project Priority (1-5, 1 serving as highest priority for applicant)	4

## Section 1.3 - Broadband Service Provider Context

Date of Applicant's Initial FCC Submission	December 1, 1999
Date of Applicant's Most Recent FCC Submission	March 1, 2023
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.

What is your network up-time in South Carolina for the last 12 months? e.g. 99.999%

What is your network up-time in the county applied for the last 12 months e.g. 99.99%

Will all structures be served with the same technology type?

Estimated Miles of Fiber to be Installed

Estimated Percentage Underground

Estimated Percentage Aerial

Fiber to the Premises Minimum Sustainable Download/Upload Speeds 100/100 Mbps	
Yes	
	84
	100.00%
	0.00%

## Section 1.5 - Project Timeline

**(Maximum Timeline Allotted is 24 months)**

Project Start Date

Project Construction Activity Begins

Project Construction Activity Completion

July 17, 2023
November 20, 2023
November 21, 2025

### Customer Premises

*Initiation of Operations (premise installations begin)*

Overall Project Completion Date

Will the project be completed within

24 months of official Notice to Proceed (NTP)?

July 15, 2024
November 21, 2025
Yes

## Section 1.6 - ESA Project

Does this project include a Main Street Eligible Service Area?  
(YES/NO)

No
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## Section 1.7 - Low Cost Plan

**(Must be a minimum of 100/20 Mbps)**

What Download/Upload speed is offered in your low cost residential plan? (Example 100/20)

What is the monthly cost of the plan?

Does the above speed tier include unlimited data? (YES/NO)

Is a Consumer-based Contract Required? (YES/NO)

Is the pricing fixed? (YES/NO)

If no, what's the duration?

250 Mbps / 250 Mbps
\$69.95 internet only / \$49.95 with voice
Yes
No
Yes

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## Section 2.2 - In-kind Match (for Main Street Projects only)

Type	Description	Qty	Rate	Amount
In-Kind Match				
In-Kind Match				
In-Kind Match				
In-Kind Match				
In-Kind Match				
In-Kind Match				
In-Kind Match				
Total				\$ -

Total Project Cost and In-Kind Match	#REF!
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## Section 2.3 - Funding Details

Description	Comment	Amount
South Carolina ARPA Broadband Grant Program Funds requested		\$ 4,944,412.50
Applicant-Provided Funding		\$ 1,648,137.50
Third-Party Funding Source (if applicable) - List Source		\$ -
In-Kind Match (for Main Street Projects only)		
Total Project Cost		\$ 6,592,550.00
Percentage Funds Requested from SC Broadband Office		75.00%
Percentage Funds from Applicant Match		25.00%
Percentage Funds from Third Party Funding Source		0.00%
Percentage Funds from In-Kind Match		0.00%

**ADJUST APPLICANT  
PROVIDED FUNDING  
AMOUNT TO GET WHOLE  
PERCENTAGES ONLY**

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## Section 3.1 Confirmations

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

Agree

Applicant will provide at least one low-cost residential option without data usage caps at a minimum speed of 100/20 for a documented period of time.

Agree

The Project will comply with the requirements set forth in ARPA, South Carolina Act No. 244 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, including covered telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment provided or produced by entities owned or controlled by the People's Republic of China and telecommunications equipment produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).

Agree

The Applicant, to the extent practicable and consistent with applicable law under the award, will provide a preference for the procurement or use of goods, products, or materials produced in the United States as described in 2 C.F.R. 200.322 and Executive Order 14005 Ensuring the Future is Made in All by All of America's Workers (January 25, 2021).

Agree

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

Agree

The Project includes pre-project Engineering uses or costs

Disagree

If Yes to above, the pre-development Engineering uses or costs will be (1) tied to an eligible broadband project or reasonably expected to lead to such a project; (2) necessary for the efficient and timely performance of eligible Projects; and (3) incurred after March 15, 2021, but prior to execution of the Grant Agreement.

Select one

Applicant will encourage its employees, contractors, and subcontractors to adopt and enforce on-the-job seat belt policies and programs for their employees when operating company-owned, rented or personally owned vehicles pursuant to Executive Order 13043, 62 FR 19217 (April 8, 1997).

Agree

Applicant will encourage its employees, contractors, and subcontractors to adopt and enforce policies that ban text messaging while driving.

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 except item 1)

Provide a Summary Narrative that describes your project.

**This narrative must be unique for each project and discuss this project only. Refrain from discussing rates, structure counts, estimated dates, work that occurred in the past, or the Company's history of providing Broadband service. Limit 750 Characters.**

The areas in these projects are mostly occupied by homes often separated by woods and fields. While both areas do have internet available via FTC's copper network, they do not have access to broadband over a fiber connection. The area referred to as Bloomville begins just south of Manning along S.C. 260 until it stretches to the southeast to Williamsburg County. The peak of this project toward the north is U.S. 521. For the other part of the project, the areas to the west and north of the town of Summerton are included. This portion is located west of U.S. 301 and runs parallel to Lake Marion, ending just east of Rimini. It extends north and ends just short of Panola.

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

The goal of Farmers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. has always been to provide services to all of its members. This application is no exception as FTC shares the South Carolina Broadband Office's goal of reaching the people in this area with all-important broadband through a fiber connection.

The 85 census blocks in this grant application have been defined as "Unserved and/or Priority Areas" in Clarendon County by the South Carolina Broadband Office. Through this project, FTC will be passing 853 structures, including 664 residential addresses that serve as the home for approximately 250 students. By deploying a fiber connection, FTC will future proof the network, and these households and students will have access to affordable broadband internet plans with multiple qualifying speeds to include a 1 Gigabit symmetrical offering.

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Clarendon County has a population of 31,024 and a median income of \$43,881. Also, of that total only 15.8% have a 4-year degree or greater. The internet broadband subscription rate for Clarendon is 75.9%. For the priority areas, however, the percentage is considerably lower.

Bringing qualifying broadband to these areas will enhance the lives of those who live there through distance learning, telemedicine, working from home, ecommerce opportunities, job searches and online applications, just to name a few. Funding through this grant will help FTC build fiber to this priority area, which, otherwise, would be cost prohibitive to construct.

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.

N/A

Describe your plans or programs you will implement to improve adoption in the community described in this proposal.

The pandemic brought to light the need for broadband in some areas. The need was always there, but when so many had to work from home and students had to take classes online, the urgency for it increased. Understanding that need should help bolster the adoption rate of broadband.

With that in mind, FTC, long before COVID, was working on educating the people in its territory.

Part of the process was developing a video for FTC's all-local TV station. The video was split into shorter videos to be posted on the company's website. The company also developed a speed calculator, which, after receiving user information, calculates the needed bandwidth. FTC has also attempted to educate through newsletters, blogs, social media and advertising.

FTC devoted a section on its website to fiber and broadband. It details the progress of FTC's ongoing fiber project, including an online tool that shows the maximum speed available at an address.

Conversations with the K&H Resource Center for senior citizens in Summerton were recently held about donating computers to its computer area. The focus is to demonstrate how broadband can change their lives. Further, FTC reached out to the University of South Carolina Sumter to help cultivate a relationship with K&H to take free Apple product classes at the school.

The next step in the adoption process was offering a robust internet product, starting with free installation, a free smart router for new service and a free FTC WiFi app to manage the home network.

The Calix GigaSpire U6 router includes the following features:

- Carrier-class Wi-Fi 6 technology
- List of all devices on the network
- Ability to set up a separate guest Wi-Fi

The no cap Internet offering provides free premium Wi-Fi, which includes Basic Parental Controls. Contained in Basic Parental Controls are the following:

- Set up user profiles
- Enable and disable devices within profiles
- Allows for multiple bedtime schedules

Describe your plans or programs you have developed and will implement to increase digital literacy, for example, support through online training, for this project?

FTC has made educating the public on broadband and the need for it a priority over the past several years. One discovery made was that people of all socio-economic levels did not understand the increased need for bandwidth, its power and what speed they required for a positive experience. In fact, even professionals, when asked during presentations what speed they had, seldom knew the answer.

With the need to help the public better understand, FTC embarked on a bit of a mission, culminating in a video to be used on its all-local TV station. The same video was broken up into segments for use on its website.

Further, computers were donated to community centers to teach residents, particularly senior citizens, about the internet and how they could use it to improve their quality of life. From ordering their groceries online to meeting with their doctors on video chats to even keeping up with family on social media, broadband could change their lives.

Conversations with the K&H Resource Center for senior citizens in Summerton were recently held about donating computers to bolster its computer area. They have some, but they are not functioning correctly. Further, FTC reached out to the University of

South Carolina Sumter to help cultivate a relationship with K&H. USC Sumter has an iLab, which focuses on the instruction of Apple products. The director of K&H was thrilled with the opportunity to educate the membership. She mentioned that they all have iPads and iPhones but only utilize them on a limited basis.

FTC could also entertain a partnership with Central Carolina Technical College facility (F.E. Dubose) to hold community classes.

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

FTC offers and maintains public Wi-Fi to multiple areas in four of the five counties it serves with a plan under way to add the fifth, Williamsburg County. The Kingstree Recreation Department, located at 375 Nelson Boulevard, will have coverage at the recreation facility, both inside and outside. The town's baseball and softball fields along with an outside basketball court are located at the facility.

The following is a complete list of existing FTC public Wi-Fi locations:

Florence County  
 Business District of Lake City  
 Main Street

Sumter - Bobby Richardson Baseball Complex - 416 South Wise Drive  
 Central Carolina Technical College  
 506 North Guignard Drive  
 Business District of Sumter  
 Main Street  
 Palmetto Tennis Center  
 400 Theatre Drive  
 University of South Carolina Sumter  
 200 Miller Road

Lee County - Chappell Park 397 Chappell Drive  
 Bishopville  
 Clarendon County  
 John C. Land Landing  
 Greenall Road  
 Summerton

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.

N/A

Explain how the Applicant will consult with the community in the Project Area on the general affordability needs of the target markets.

FTC will consider conducting market studies of the project service area to determine the general affordability of its broadband plans. Focus groups involving residents from those specific areas could also be conducted to receive community feedback. Finally, discussions with city and county officials as well as councils of government would provide information vital to the process.

In addition, as a participant of the Affordable Connectivity Program, FTC will continue to utilize various avenues to educate consumers on the advantages of this valuable initiative.



What network resiliency strategies will be leveraged to ensure facilities remain operational?	
<p>FTC, as a standard practice, takes a 3 step approach to network reliability. First and foremost, all facilities are buried to protect from inclement weather. Secondly, the electronic GPON OLT equipment which feeds each serving area, is placed on a fiber optic network ring to ensure a single cut will not bring down the network. Finally, the GPON equipment is equipped with a backup generator and batteries to ensure service even during prolonged power outages.</p>	
<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.</p>	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>	No
If yes to above, explain.	

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## 5.1 - 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


## 5.2 - 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


**5.3 - 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 Fiber/Cable Lines*

Yes

*Proposed Structures Served by Type*

Yes

*Existing ~~Fiber/Cable Lines~~ Network Junctions*

Yes

Signed affidavit certifying grant application is complete and accurate

Yes

Proof of funding related to proposed project or non-cash support, provide associated documentation e.g. yearly financial reports, bank statement, etc.

Yes

Letters of support and strategic partnerships

Yes

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

Yes

Certificates of Insurance

Yes

Main Street Work Plan

No

Any additional information evidencing community need for project

Yes