

South Carolina 2024 ARPA Grant Program Application SLFRF 3.0



Section 1.1 - Applicant Information

Legal Entity/Organization Name	Comporium, Inc.
Parent Organization	
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Corporation
Primary Contact Name	Tim Smoak
Title	Vice President - Business Development
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	330 E. Black St. Rock Hill, SC 29730
Phone Number	803-326-7275
Email	tim.smoak@comporium.com
Secondary Contact Name	Chris Moody
Title	Senior Regulatory Cost Analyst
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	330 E. Black St. Rock Hill, SC 29730
Phone Number	803-326-7255
Email	chris.moody@comporium.com
FCC Registration Number (FRN):	0001-8887-18
Registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) - (Yes/No)	Yes
Unique Entity ID (UEI) Number	DMALANWXKK55
Federal Tax ID Number	57-0236160
SC State Vendor Number	7000011126

Section 1.2 - Project Name/Number

Project Number (Format XXX-XX)	CMP-32
Project Name	Midlands 1
Project Priority (1-5, 1 serving as highest priority for applicant)	2

Section 1.3 - Broadband Service Provider Context

Date of Applicant's Initial FCC Submission	September 1, 2000
Date of Applicant's Most Recent FCC Submission	2/29/2024
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
Will all structures be served with the same technology type?	Yes
Estimated Miles of Fiber to be Installed	7.7
Estimated Percentage Underground	100.00%
Estimated Percentage Aerial	0.00%

Section 1.5 - Project Timeline

Project Start Date	July 1, 2024
Project Construction Activity Begins	January 6, 2025
Project Construction Activity Completion	May 29, 2026
Customer Premises <i>Initiation of Operations (premise installations begin)</i>	April 14, 2025
Overall Project Completion Date	June 30, 2026
Will the project be completed within 24 months of official Notice to Proceed (NTP)?	Yes

Section 1.6 - 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)

Duration of Low-Cost Plan (Post Construction)

100 Mbps/100 Mbps	
	\$49.94
Yes	
No	
Comporium will maintain a fixed price of \$49.94 for its low cost broadband option for two years from the date the project is completed.	

Section 1.7 - Free Public Wi-Fi

Will a new Free Public Wi-Fi location(s) be added? Free Public Wi-Fi is a location where anyone can access the Wi-Fi network at no cost 24/7, 365 days. Wi-Fi location needs to be in county or counties applied for.

If yes, how many locations will be added?

If yes, specify the duration the applicant will offer this service.

Yes	
	1
2 years	

Section 1.8 - Network Resiliency

Indicate if any of the Network Resilient Items will be implemented in the project area.

Ensure power redundancy with DC Battery/Diesel/Gas Generator Backup from temporary power loss at premise, Network Operations Center (NOC), and OLTs.

Ensure OLTs have divergent paths to redundant upstream equipment. Configure OLTs on a fiber ring so the network may continue operation if fiber is cut and/or damaged.

Establish an Emergency Action Plan (EAP).

Conduct readiness drills and tabletop exercises leveraging the EAP, document lessons learned and update the EAP based upon findings. Deploy facilities underground as opposed to aerial to minimize impacts of downed utility poles from hurricanes, tornadoes, and vehicle accidents occurring in rights of way.

Diversify connectivity by including more than a single tier-one provider as an access point to the Internet through the ISP's network. Maintain field service teams and spare equipment on standby before, during, and after major weather events and enact mutual assistance agreements, if appropriate.

Conduct regular site inspections for encroachments, damaged facilities, susceptible facilities or other threats through field reconnaissance and windshield surveys on facilities.

Elevate OLTs above base flood elevations in mapped floodplains and associated flood-prone areas.

Will Implement	
Will Implement	
Will Implement	
Will Implement	
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Will Implement	

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Section 2.2 - Funding Details

Description	Comment	Amount
South Carolina ARPA Broadband Grant Program Funds requested		\$ 104,394.69
Applicant-Provided Funding		\$ 475,575.83
Third-Party Funding Source (if applicable)		\$ -
Total Project Cost		\$ 579,970.52
Percentage Funds Requested from SC Broadband Office		18%
Percentage Funds from Applicant Match		82%
Percentage Funds from Third Party Funding Source		0%

**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 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 for a disclosed 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.

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

Disagree

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 Feb. 1, 2024, and December 31, 2026 and expended to cover such obligations by December 31, 2026.

Select one

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.

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.

This project will create fiber-based access in portions of Aiken and Lexington Counties. 10 Gbps service using XGS-PON technology will facilitate the connectivity. This scalable, future-proof network will accommodate economic growth in the affected areas. Comporium integrates redundancy in its network designs, buries facilities where possible to reduce weather related outages, and leverages existing fiber infrastructure to minimize incremental investment required to serve the BSLs in this application.

Describe how your proposal meets the needs of the community to be served as described in the "Guidelines." **Refrain from discussing rates, structure counts, estimated dates, work that occurred in the past, or the Company's history of providing Broadband service. Limit 500 Characters (including spaces).**

Proposed connectivity will enable remote work, telehealth, and remote learning. High-speed internet will make rural Aiken and Lexington Counties more acceptable to businesses seeking an educated workforce and connected workspaces, thereby promoting economic development in impoverished areas. PIP rate for Aiken Schools is over 62%; for Lexington Schools almost 54%. Combined poverty rate is nearly 14% in these counties. Over 11% of homes lack broadband access per the US Census Bureau.

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.

Project has very minimal partial census block overlap with an RDOF awardee, but no BSLs are in the overlapping area.

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

Comporium understands that building a broadband network is critical to the project area and further recognizes the need to engage the community increases awareness and adoption of the newly available broadband services. Comporium plans on using various marketing tactics to promote the broadband expansion. These include but are not limited to:

- **Press Release:** As soon as an award announcement has been finalized and signed by ORS and the legal team of Comporium a press release will be issued to local media outlets. These types of media releases will be used first, to make residents and businesses aware of planned upgrades in unserved areas of the service territory.
- **Direct Phone Calls:** Comporium will generate a list of residential and business locations within the polygons that have been identified as unserved. Outbound phone calls will be made by the automated IVR (interactive voice response) system to notify customers upgrades are coming to their area.
- **Email Marketing and Advertising Campaign:** Current DSL customers of Comporium have an email address on file with the company. Comporium Marketing personnel will be able to compose an announcement email and send it directly to email addresses of residences and businesses who will benefit from broadband expansion.
- **Direct Mail Postcards:** Comporium will implement a direct mail campaign to target locations within the unserved polygons to make them aware of the upgrades. These postcards will notify current DSL customers that their area has been identified and will be upgraded with newer fiber technologies.
- **Community Engagement Events:** Comporium will hold events at various locations within the project areas. These events will be open to the public, so that customers can come ask questions to staff.

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

The Comporium Marketing department will work diligently to increase digital literacy and broadband adoption in the ARPA project areas. When exploring and discussing strategies to assist in digital literacy, Comporium has created a training video called; "Comporium Internet 101 - Basic Internet Concepts." Please view the link to Comporium Internet 101 – Basic Internet Concepts here: <https://youtu.be/iWE97b8xhJY>. Topics covered in this video range from bandwidth, home wi-fi, email, protecting oneself against online scams, and antivirus software. These topics were selected because Comporium understands education is the key to utilization. Comporium has partnered with non-profit entities in the application. These entities have agreed to allow Comporium to hold in person educational meetings on site at the following: ABBE Regional Library System (Aiken County) and Lexington County Public Library. Comporium will hold one educational meeting with each community partner. Training sessions will be completed no later than second quarter 2026, actual dates pending venue scheduling availability. Comporium Marketing department will promote these meetings on our website, facebook, Instagram, and twitter pages notifying not only customers, but also inviting the general public as well. Individuals who attend, will watch the forementioned video; "Comporium Internet 101" and have the opportunity to ask questions to marketing staff members and multi system technicians. Comporium will also hold one educational session at a local business office location for customers and the general public. This educational session will be completed no later than second quarter 2026. Comporium believes education and outreach are the key to embracing digital literacy and subsequently, these educational sessions will increase overall broadband adoption within the ARPA 3.0 project areas.

Will the Project deliver broadband in the approved Project 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 Area on the general affordability needs of the target markets.	
Applicant consulted with the President of Lexington County Development Corporation Eddie Richardson to discuss broadband and affordability needs within the target market areas. Mr. Richardson agreed rates were affordable.	
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.	
If awarded, will the Grant funds be used to overbuild another existing broadband provider or to reimburse expenses related to overbuilding another broadband provider?	No
If yes to above, explain.	

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5.1 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Aiken County Library
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Governmental Entity
Role within proposed project	Project Partner
Primary Contact Name	Mary Jo Dawson
Title	Library Director
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	204 Park Street NE Wagener, SC 29164
Phone Number	(803) 642-7595
Email	maryjod@abbe-lib.org

5.2 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Tyler Brothers
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Small Business
Role within proposed project	Small Business Support
Primary Contact Name	John Tyler
Title	Co-Owner Tyler Brothers
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	116 Railroad Avenue East Wagener, SC 29164
Phone Number	(803) 564-3174
Email	jtyler111@yahoo.com

5.3 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Lexington County Library
Entity Type (.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Governmental Entity
Role within proposed project	Project Partner
Primary Contact Name	Kelly Poole
Title	Library Director
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	199 N. Lawrence Ave. Swansea, SC 29160
Phone Number	(803) 785-2640
Email	kpoole@lex.lib.sc.us

5.4 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Lexington County Development Corporation
Entity Type (.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Non-profit
Role within proposed project	Economic Development Support
Primary Contact Name	Eddie Richardson
Title	President
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	1006 12th Street Cayce, SC 29033
Phone Number	803-794-7835
Email	err6771@outlook.com

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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

Proposed 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

Any additional information evidencing community need for project

Yes