

South Carolina 2024 ARPA Grant Program Application SLFRF 3.0



Section 1.1 - Applicant Information

Legal Entity/Organization Name	WC Fiber, LLC
Parent Organization	West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Corporation
Primary Contact Name	Jeff Wilson
Title	President / CEO
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	PO Box 610, Abbeville, SC 29620
Phone Number	864-446-9251
Email	jeff.wilson@wctel.com
Secondary Contact Name	Jeff Robinson
Title	Director of Engineering and Construction
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	PO Box 610, Abbeville, SC 29620
Phone Number	864-446-9234
Email	jeff.robinson@wctel.com
FCC Registration Number (FRN):	0024824443
Registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) - (Yes/No)	Yes
Unique Entity ID (UEI) Number	X6GHCVSZ3RK3
Federal Tax ID Number	47-4190695
SC State Vendor Number	7000289683

Section 1.2 - Project Name/Number

Project Number (Format XXX-XX)	WCF-31
Project Name	Abbeville/McCormick
Project Priority (1-5, 1 serving as highest priority for applicant)	1

Section 1.3 - Broadband Service Provider Context

Date of Applicant's Initial FCC Submission	December 31, 2010
Date of Applicant's Most Recent FCC Submission	28-Feb-24
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	16
Estimated Percentage Underground	100.00%
Estimated Percentage Aerial	0.00%

Section 1.5 - Project Timeline

Project Start Date	August 1, 2024
Project Construction Activity Begins	January 1, 2025
Project Construction Activity Completion	September 30, 2025
Customer Premises <i>Initiation of Operations (premise installations begin)</i>	February 1, 2025
Overall Project Completion Date	December 31, 2025
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)	250 Mbps / 250 Mbps
What is the monthly cost of the plan?	\$50
Does the above speed tier include unlimited data? (YES/NO)	Yes
Is a Consumer-based Contract Required? (YES/NO)	No
Duration of Low-Cost Plan (Post Construction)	2 years

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.	No
If yes, how many locations will be added?	Select One
If yes, specify the duration the applicant will offer this service.	Select One

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.	Will Implement
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.	Will Implement
Establish an Emergency Action Plan (EAP).	Will Implement
Conduct readiness drills and tabletop exercises leveraging the EAP, document lessons learned and update the EAP based upon findings.	Will Implement
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.	Will Implement
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.	Will Implement
Conduct regular site inspections for encroachments, damaged facilities, susceptible facilities or other threats through field reconnaissance and windshield surveys on facilities.	Will Implement
Elevate OLTs above base flood elevations in mapped floodplains and associated flood-prone areas.	Will Implement

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Section 2.2 - Funding Details

Description	Comment	Amount
South Carolina ARPA Broadband Grant Program Funds requested		\$ 649,628.00
Applicant-Provided Funding		\$ 649,628.00
Third-Party Funding Source (if applicable)		\$ -
Total Project Cost		\$ 1,299,256.00
Percentage Funds Requested from SC Broadband Office		50%
Percentage Funds from Applicant Match		50%
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

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 Feb. 1, 2024, and December 31, 2026 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.

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.

WCFIBER, LLC submits this grant application to construct a 100% fiber network in the proposed project area. This project area includes unserved locations in Abbeville and McCormick Counties. The proposed network will utilize XGS PON technology capable of delivering 10 Gbps symmetrical service to each location passed. Upon completion of this project, these 2 counties will be 100% served.

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).**

WCFIBER works closely with local school districts and public officials on our efforts to apply for this grant. If awarded WCFIBER will utilize a marketing campaign to inform people in the proposed service areas that service is available, opportunities to learn about broadband and affordability through programs like the Affordable Connectivity Program. This campaign would include mailers, radio ads and in some cases door to door consultation.

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.

To the best of our knowledge, this project area is not subject to an existing federal or state funding commitment.

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

WCFIBER plans to conduct a marketing campaign targeting the proposed area with direct mail, postcards, radio ads and in some cases door to door consultation. We actively host meetings at chamber and non-profit events to inform the public on our expansion plans. WCFIBER has already established a way for the community to register their interest through our website. Once service is available, residents are immediately contacted.

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?

WCFIBER has developed computer literacy classes working with Piedmont Technical College. We have conducted these classes in the past and have plans to conduct classes in the 1st and 3rd quarters of 2025 at a location near the project area. These classes are open to the public, and you do not have to be a customer to attend. The courses cover basic computer skills, streaming, and cyber security. We also use online tools to help businesses navigate social media for marketing purposes. NOTE: No new wifi hot spots are included in this application because we already have them throughout these 2 counties. We will leave these in place for 4+ years.

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.

WCFIBER has had discussions with County Government Officials, School District Superintendents, Council of Governments, and government social services to better understand the broadband affordability needs of existing and prospective service areas. WCFIBER has presented to County Councils, City Councils, and non-profits. We plan to offer the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) until the funding runs out. Some other organizations we have worked with in providing information on our service packages and the Affordable Connectivity Program includes GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission, Local housing authorities, The Department of Social Services, Local food banks, First Steps, and Veteran Offices.

We have utilized radio, printed materials, door hangers, and community events to inform the public of the ACP. WCFIBER also has had discussions with various entities regarding pricing. Our prices are evaluated annually utilizing adoption rates, cost of service, and competitive pricing.

- Adoption Rates: Our adoption rates exceed industry standards not only in new markets but also in established markets.
- Cost to Provide Service: We are constantly evaluating our cost to provide service. We invest in the latest technology to provide the best service. We are one of the few companies offering a total fiber to the home network.
- Competitive Pricing: Based on throughput - speed measured in Mbps - we offer the lowest prices in the area. Our service offerings are symmetrical speeds, which most competitors do not provide.
WCFIBER utilizes the following measures to eliminate barriers to service adoption:
- Affordable services offering designed to meet the needs of all users, from basic browsing and email to those that have fully engaged in a digital lifestyle.
 - No data caps or speed throttling
 - No installation charges
 - No contracts
 - No deposits
 - No credit checks
 - 1st month free

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	Abbeville Area Medical Center
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Non-Profit Hospital
Role within proposed project	Letter of Support
Primary Contact Name	Will Gordon
Title	Vice President & Chief Administrative Officer
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	420 Thomson Circle, Abbeville, SC 29620
Phone Number	864-366-5011
Email	mdavis@abbevilleareamc.com

5.2 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	McCormick County Economic Development
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	County Government
Role within proposed project	Letter of Support
Primary Contact Name	Mark Warner
Title	Director
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	610 S. Mine St., McCormick, SC 29835
Phone Number	864-852-2231
Email	mwarner@mccormickcountysc.org

5.3 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	McCormick County School District
Entity Type (.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Public School
Role within proposed project	Letter of Support
Primary Contact Name	Dr. Jaime Hembree
Title	Superintendent
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	821 N. Mine Street, McCormick, SC 29835
Phone Number	864-852-2435
Email	hembreej@mccormick.k12.sc.us

5.4 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Piedmont Technical College
Entity Type (.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Technical College
Role within proposed project	Letter of Support
Primary Contact Name	Dr. Hope Rivers
Title	President
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	620 N. Emerald Rd., Greenwood, SC 29648
Phone Number	864-941-8400
Email	rivers.he@ptc.edu

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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

No