South Carolina 2022 ARPA Grant Program
Application SFRF 1.0

Section 1.1 - Applicant Information

Legal Entity/Organization Name	Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
Parent Organization	N/A
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Cooperative
Primary Contact Name	Kirby Wayne
Title	Chief Operating Officer
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	122 S. Main St. Jefferson, SC 29718
Phone Number	843-622-4626
Email	kirby.wayne@mysandhill.net
FCC Registration Number (FRN):	0001886464
Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number	009757532
Registered in the System for Award Management (SAM)	Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc.
SAM Number	OB665
SC State Vendor Number	7000025393

Section 1.2 - Project Name/Number

Project Number (Format XXX-XX)	SHC-05
Project Name	Carolina Church

Section 1.3 - Broadband Service Provider Context

Date of Applicant's Initial FCC Form 477 Submission	May 31, 2008
Date of Applicant's Most Recent FCC Form 477 Submission	8/15/2022
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)	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)	Yes
If yes to $25 -$34.99 month plan what are the upload/download speeds	100/100 or 250/250 with lifeline support

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)	Yes

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

Project Start Date	January 2, 2023
Project Construction Activity Begins	March 1, 2024
Project Construction Activity Complete	August 1, 2024

Customer Premises	
Installations Begin	August 1, 2024
Installations End	December 31, 2026

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	9.49
Estimated Percentage Underground	20%
Estimated Percentage Aerial	80%

Number of Counties to be Impacted	1
County Names	Marlboro

Total Number of Census Blocks with Concentrations of K-12	5
Total number of Census Blocks in DDA's	0

Total number of Census Blocks NOT in DDA or K-12 Concentration	10
Total Number of unserved 2020 Census Blocks part of Proposed Project	9

Total number of housing units served	111
Total number of businesses served	2
Total number of other Public Facilities e.g. community centers, fire stations served	0
Total Structures Served	113
Average Cost Per Structure Served	$3,312.39

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		$ 243,295.06
Applicant-Provided Funding		$ 131,005.03
Third-Party Funding Source (if applicable)		$ -
Total Project Cost		$ 374,300.09
Percentage Funds Requested from SC Broadband Office		65%
Percentage Funds from Applicant Match		35%
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

The majority of this project will run along Carolina Church Rd. and Heidt Rd. These 2 roads run somewhat parallel with Hwy 9 outside of the town of Clio. They will take us to the Dillon County line. We will have to run through a couple of Served blocks in order to get back to the feeder fiber on Hwy 381, where we will have to install and FDH for distribution. The feeder fiber already runs back to the Clio office. We will only have to add a few GPON cards there to accommodate these customers. This is a very rural farming community. 7 Priority blocks and 2 Unserved blocks will be taken care of with this build.

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

These projects selected for the applications are based on areas where we currently service most homes with at least 25Mb, but are unable to provide speeds in excess of 100Mb today. Working with both the local school districts as well as the local community college (Northeastern Tech), we have identified areas were people are trying to further their education at home.   We also have several people request more connectivity not just for educational purposes, but also work from home needs as more people are staying in county and working remotely now. Lastly, we are trying to help our elderly community by providing methods where they can be monitored through our security equipment by relatives that might live in other locations and need the peace of mind to know they are safe.

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.

While there have been several loan programs such as ReConnect, we are currently unaware of any provider trying to get funding through other programs for these areas we are applying for. Most previous programs other than CARES have not been pursued as we have desired to provide speeds exceeding the federal guidelines and could only adequately justify expediting these projects with grant money.   In many cases, the cost of providing service to some of these locations would far exceed any reasonable expectation for return on investment, if that was even achievable. As a cooperative, our goal is to ultimately provide fiber service to all customers within our area regardless of the financial gain for each household as it is the right thing to do to ensure that all people have equal access to broadband.

Describe any plans or programs you have developed to improve adoption in the community described in this proposal.
Over the years we have continued to improve our service not just by speed by also by affordabiltiy as well as additional service offerings.   To date, I believe we are the only provider in the state that I am aware of that also takes into considering homes are mostly using wireless devices by providing up to 2 free wifi extenders in the home. This helps students that are trying to do homework at their bedroom desk area. We also offer lifeline and ACP support which makes the 100Mb offering free except for some minor taxes and equipment lease fee. We have been doing door tags in communities as we build and roadside signs to let people know when fiber is in their area as well.
As part of the Project, explain how the Applicant will make efforts to increase digital literacy, for example, support through online training?
In the past we have invested in computer training for the community.   We recently made a sizeable donation to the local community college to help fund their computer classroom for the local communities.   Our technicians also spend time working with customers upon install to make sure all of their devices are connected to broadband.   Finally, we offer a technical support line that customers can use when they have no service impacting issues but need some assistance with broadband technical help.
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.
Sandhill has been a proud sponsor of the community and from March 2020 until today we offer free public wi-fi locations in each town that we service (12 currently).   We also have worked in conjuction with the local schools and community ballparks to make sure that each high school stadium has free wi-fi access and each community ballpark as well (7 more total locations).   We have been working with town officials to expand this service to even more locations as they see fit over time.   There are no plans for removing these connections even after the emergency declaration has ended, so the community can still enjoy this service away from home.
List documents that demonstrate your organization currently has the necessary funds to complete this project/proposal. Attach documents to this proposal.
Sandhill had funding through both Wells Fargo Advisors and First Citizen's Advisors invested that can be used to complete these projects.   Letters are attached and financials can be provided showing that sufficient funds would be readily available to handle all applied for areas under ARPA.   We have also had a proven track record with CARES and RBGP in the past for funding and completing projects of this magnitude.

List any lease, franchise agreement, interconnection agreement, authorization, permit, or other items needed to complete this project.
In areas where projects are listed as aerial, necessary permits with the power utilities will be obtained. Otherwise, any underground would would be handled in conjunction with local DOT crews on highway right of way to avoid any other needed permits.   Depending on the project, some might require railroad permits and these would be filed for immediately upon award of the grants.

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.
We have already developed great relationships with all county councils, economic development boards, and school districts as we have been building out over the past few years. In several cases already, we have changed our schedule to accommodate needs by school districts or other organizations. We also are working with ORS on the connectivity website to ensure with can target any customer request that come up.   All parties are aware of our participation in ACP and other programs and we have been a part of back to school events this year to get material to all K-12 students about ways we can offer affordable broadband to suit their needs.

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.	
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?	No
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.	

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5.1 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Northeastern Technical College
Entity Type (.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Educational Non-profit
Role within proposed project	Coordination with students to provide free broadband included with tuition grants
Primary Contact Name	Kyle Wagner
Title	President
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	1201 Chesterfield Hwy, Cheraw, SC 29520
Phone Number	843-921-6916
Email	kwagner@netc.edu

5.2 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Marlboro County Government
Entity Type (.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Government Entity
Role within proposed project	Providing support for new business growth, community support, and households in need
Primary Contact Name	Ron Munnerlyn
Title	County Administrator and Economic Development
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	PO Box 419, Bennettsville, SC 29512
Phone Number	843-479-5600
Email	jrmunnerlyn@marlborocounty.sc.gov

5.3 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Marlboro County School District
Entity Type (.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Governmental Education Entity
Role within proposed project	Providing addresses of students that need ACP assistance for broadband
Primary Contact Name	Donald Andrews
Title	Interim Superintendent
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	122 Broad St., Bennettsville, SC 29512
Phone Number	843-479-4016
Email	dandrews@marlboro.k12.sc.us

5.4 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Town of Cheraw
Entity Type (.e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Governmental Entity
Role within proposed project	Providing Community Support
Primary Contact Name	Andy Ingram
Title	Mayor
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	PO Box 219, Cheraw, SC 29520
Phone Number	843-537-7283
Email	aingram@netc.edu

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