

# 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 -16
Project Name	Sumter
Project Priority (1-5, 1 serving as highest priority for applicant)	3

## 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	
	81
	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		\$ 4,862,400.00
Applicant-Provided Funding		\$ 1,620,800.00
Third-Party Funding Source (if applicable) - List Source		\$ -
In-Kind Match (for Main Street Projects only)		
Total Project Cost		\$ 6,483,200.00
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 major part of this project includes Sumter County divided into two areas. The two largest portions are along the county lines; one borders Clarendon and the other Florence. The one along Clarendon is directly east of the City of Sumter along U.S. 378 where it intersects with Interstate 95 near Turbeville. The other is to the northeast of this area where Interstate 95 intersects with U.S. 301 near Sardis.

Another considerable section of this project is in Lee County along the Sumter County border close to the town of Mayesville in Sumter. It is just to the west of U.S. 76. Finally, there is a large area in Clarendon County where it meets Sumter County near Lake Marion and Rimini. It is south of State Road S14-26.

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

A major goal of Farmers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. is to provide a fiber connection to every member. And this application is another step toward achieving that goal. The 71 census blocks in this grant application have been defined as "Unserved and/or Priority Areas" in Lee, Clarendon and Sumter counties by the South Carolina Broadband Office.

Through this project, FTC will be passing 609 structures, including 502 residential addresses that serve as the home for approximately 122 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, Lee County has a population of 16,531 and a median income of \$32,851 that falls well below the state level of \$54,864. Also of that total, only 14.9% have a 4-year degree or greater. Taking into consideration these figures, along with an internet broadband subscription rate of 60.3%, Lee is generally considered a county of need compared to the rest of South Carolina.

Clarendon County, according to census data, has a population of 31,024 and a median income of \$43,881. Also, of that total only 15.8% have a bachelor's degree or greater.

The internet broadband subscription rate for Clarendon is 75.9%. For the priority areas, however, the percentage is considerably lower.

Sumter County, population 104,758, has a median income of \$46,570. Also, of that total, 20.8% have a 4-year degree or greater. The broadband subscription rate for Sumter is 77.9%, but, like Clarendon, access in this part of the project is much lower.

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. 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 with a better adoption rate of broadband.

With that in mind, FTC was focusing on educating its members long before COVID, including developing a video for FTC's local TV station. The video was split into shorter videos to be posted on the company's website. FTC also developed a speed calculator, which, after receiving user information, calculates the needed bandwidth in a home or business. The company 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 down to the address point level.

The company donated 15 computers as well as the mice and keyboards to the Shiloh Community Center, a facility under development, that will be utilized by residents in both Sumter and Lee counties. The center will teach residents how broadband can change their lives.

In Clarendon, FTC recently met with the K&H Resource Center, which offers help to senior citizens in the Summerton area. Part of the meeting centered around the donation of computers for its computer room as well as cultivating a relationship with the University of South Carolina Sumter to take Apple courses in the school's iLab.

The next step in the adoption process was offering a robust, no data cap internet product, starting with free installation, a free smart router for new service and a free FTC WiFi app to manage the home network. Among the features available through this offering is free premium Wi-Fi, which includes Basic Parental Controls.

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 for the past several years. One discovery made was that people of all socio-economic levels did not understand the increased need for bandwidth 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 an extensive video to be used on its 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 can use it to improve their quality of life.

The Shiloh Community Center, still under development, is a facility with numerous uses for those in Sumter and Lee counties. It will be a meeting space and since FTC donated 15 desktop computers, it will be a location for the training and utilization of broadband. The company also donated the keyboards and mice to equip the desktops. Also, FTC recently donated 11 desktop computers, complete with keyboards and mice, for use in an established training session at the South Sumter Resource Center, a county-operated facility complete with a branch of the local library.

In Clarendon County, conversations with the K&H Resource Center for senior citizens in Summerton led to discussion about a donation of computers to bolster its computer area. 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.

FTC could also entertain partnerships with Central Carolina Technical College campuses in all three counties to hold community classes to train residents on the power and utilization of broadband.

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

<p>Explain how the Applicant will consult with the community in the Project Area on the general affordability needs of the target markets.</p>	
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
<p>What network resiliency strategies will be leveraged to ensure facilities remain operational?</p>	
<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>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>If no to above, explain.</p>	
<p style="background-color: #ffffcc;"> </p>	
<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>No</p>
<p>If yes to above, explain.</p>	
<p style="background-color: #ffffcc;"> </p>	



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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