

South Carolina 2023 ARPA Grant Program Application CPF 1.0



Section 1.1 - Applicant Information

Legal Entity/Organization Name	TruVista Communications, Inc.
Parent Organization	TruVista Communications, Inc.
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Corporation
Primary Contact Name	Eric Ramey
Title	VP- Regulatory and Admin
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	112 York Street, Chester, South Carolina 29706
Phone Number	803-581-9152
Email	Eric Ramey

Section 1.2 - Project Name/Number

Project Number (Format XXX-XX)	TVC-05
Project Name	Fort Lawn
Project Priority (1-5, 1 serving as highest priority for applicant)	5

Section 1.3 - Broadband Service Provider Context

Date of Applicant's Initial FCC Submission	June 30, 2014
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.

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	
	52.9
	40.00%
	60.00%

Section 1.5 - Project Timeline (Maximum Timeline Allotted is 24 months)

Project Start Date

Project Construction Activity Begins

Project Construction Activity Completion

June 1, 2024
January 1, 2025
November 28, 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)?

November 28, 2025
November 28, 2025
Yes

Section 1.6 - ESA Project

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

No

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?

100/100	
	\$85.00
	Yes
	No
	Yes
n/a	

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Section 2.1 - Project Construction Costs

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		\$ 3,042,750.00
Applicant-Provided Funding		\$ 1,014,250.00
Third-Party Funding Source (if applicable) - List Source		\$ -
In-Kind Match (for Main Street Projects only)		\$ -
Total Project Cost		\$ 4,057,000.00
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

Agree

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.

Agree

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.

TruVista ("Company") is proposing to use South Carolina ARPA funds to expand existing services into the under-served and unserved areas of Fort Lawn, SC with the project passing 525 premises. This fiber to the premise (FTTx) project will provide residents symmetrical internet speeds of up to 1Gbps. TruVista will leverage their existing talent and fiber core to extend fiber-to-the-home facilities to the proposed area. This will allow these farmers, business owners, schoolchildren, patients, and residents to take advantage of gigabit speeds. In addition to fiber optic internet services, these households will also gain access to TruVista's robust voice, video and security offerings.

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

The project areas cover very rural areas of Chester County in South Carolina. According to US Census Bureau data, the median household income for Chester County is \$43,985 compared to \$64,994 for the country. Further, the poverty level of Chester County is 18.3% compared to 13.8% in South Carolina and 12.8% for the country. Therefore, affordability of broadband is an important aspect of Company's SC ARPA project. The lack of broadband in the project areas creates additional burdens and complications when consumers attempt to access resources both inside and outside of the community. These burdens and complications were exacerbated during the Covid-19 Pandemic when remote access to school, work and healthcare are critical to everyday life. Access to remote learning via broadband connectivity is a significant need in the proposed project areas.

The US Census Bureau data shows 22.6% of Chester County population is under 18-years old, indicating that the population of this county needs access to broadband to access remote learning. These are students, for which reliable broadband access continues to be critical with the growing number of Covid variants and subsequent associated quarantine requirements. Lack of broadband presents additional challenges as current broadband connections are not sufficient to allow access to telemedicine in this rural area. In addition to the need for remote access to education and telemedicine, the pandemic has forced companies to have employees work remotely. The lack of available broadband connectivity completely inhibits companies and employees from being able to work from home and therefore impacts the livelihood of households located in the project areas.

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.

In order to try to provide affordable broadband to low-income customers in the community, Company currently participates in the FCC’s Federal Lifeline program and provides discounts to qualifying Lifeline subscribers of \$9.25 per month. Company also participated in the FCC’s Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (“EBBP”) as a means of offering further assistance to low-income broadband subscribers. Company now participates in the FCC Affordable Connectivity Program (“ACP”) which replaced the EBBP on December 31, 2021. Under the ACP, customer can receive up to \$30 per month in additional support. Company commits to continue to participate in both the Lifeline and ACP programs and will offer these same programs to all customers in the project areas.

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

As additional consideration, Company launched an initiative called EDUCATE 2020 which offered free internet services until the end of the school year to households with school-aged children at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Company also implemented a “Distance Learning Program” during the 2020 -2021 school year in partnership with the local school district in Chester County Schools and state governments to provide broadband services at substantial discounts to qualifying households in the following year. Company will consistently seek ways to work with educational, government and civic partners to provide additional discounts to ensure wider broadband acceptance levels.

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.

TruVista is committed to providing consistent, reliable internet connectivity to its customers and as such will work with local government and community leaders to identify central and/or community locations to improve public Wi-Fi access. Company will then commit to providing Wi-Fi in those identified areas to improve access for South Carolinians.

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.

Company proactively meets with community leaders to keep them informed of our Fiber deployment efforts as well as to discuss future needs for unserved and underserved residents within their constituency. TruVista meets regularly with City, County, and Education leaders across all footprints to keep them informed of affordability initiatives like Lifeline, ACP, and the prior EBBP as well as to get their feedback and hear their communities' needs. TruVista will always be active partners with communities and community leaders to work together to identify both needs and potential solutions.

What network resiliency strategies will be leveraged to ensure facilities remain operational?

TruVista's current fiber customers experience few outages and high performance.

The design itself is also resilient due to the following features:

- Redundancy – We are redundant in all aspects of the TruVista network.
- Peering – (2) 100GE SEGRA Telecom connections (Geo-redundant - Toccoa, GA and Chester, SC) and multiple Atlanta Exchange 10GE
- Power - Equipment in Central Offices have redundant power systems and generator backup

The backhaul is composed of fiber/fiber paths and electronics. The core network is in a ring topology. The fiber core is fully redundant, and no part of the ring overlaps. Redundancy ensures a single fiber cut does not take down the entire ring. TruVista employs routers to light the fiber and provides backhaul bandwidth/connectivity. The backhaul ring has 100GE bandwidth between routers at each site. The routers have card redundancy as well. One side of the 100GE core ring terminates on one card, and the other side of the 100GE ring terminates on a completely different card. Access to the internet for long-form networks is through the backhaul network to the Central Office and then to our internet provider, SEGRA, via a 100GE connection.

The middle mile from the core to the Central Office will be via fiber transport. The transport architecture will be a ring. Due to the rural nature of the areas, most rings will be folded rings, but some will be fully physically diverse rings for at least part of the transport. TruVista currently uses Cisco for 100 G Ethernet fiber transport. When possible, portions of the embedded fiber transport will be used.

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.

N/A

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.

N/A

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5.1 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Mike Fanning
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	State Government - Senator
Role within proposed project	Non-Financial Contributor
Primary Contact Name	Mike Fanning
Title	Senator
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	Post Office Box 142, Columbia, SC 29202
Phone Number	803-212-6108
Email	mikefanning@scsenate.gov

5.2 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Randy Ligon
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	State Government - House of Representative
Role within proposed project	Non-Financial Contributor
Primary Contact Name	T. Randolph "Randy" Ligon
Title	SC District 43 State House Representative
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	Post Office Box 4815, Rock Hill, SC 29732
Phone Number	803-366-3535
Email	RandyLigon@schouse.gov

5.3 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Chester County Economic Development
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Non-profit Entity
Role within proposed project	Non-Financial Contributor
Primary Contact Name	Robert Long
Title	Director
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	3200 Commerce Drive, Ste. B, Richburg, SC 29729
Phone Number	803.377.1216
Email	rlong@choosechester.com

5.4 - Project Sponsors

Entity Name	Chester County Chamber of Commerce
Entity Type (e.g. Corporation, non-profit, cooperative, governmental entity)	Non-profit Entity
Role within proposed project	Non-Financial Contributor
Primary Contact Name	Brooke Clinton
Title	President
Mailing Address City, State, Zip	109 Gadsden Street, Chester, SC 29706
Phone Number	803.581.4142
Email	chestercountychamber@gmail.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

Existing Fiber/Cable Lines

No

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

No