

**Addendum #1 to NOFA #004 and Written Responses To Questions—Broadband Grant Program  
October 29, 2020**

Pursuant to Section 7.1 (*Amendments to NOFA*) of the NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY #004 (“NOFA”): “The Office reserves the right to amend this NOFA at any time. In the event the Office decides to amend, add to, or delete any part of this NOFA, a written amendment will be posted at Iowa Grants and <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband>.”

The following amends NOFA #004 and constitutes the Office’s written responses to all pertinent, timely, and properly submitted questions:

**1. Amendment:**

The Office observed that NOFA #004 Section 1.7.4 (*Application Acceptance Window Closes/Applications Due*) incorrectly set forth the closing date as within Central Daylight Time when in fact, the closing date is within Central Standard Time. This Amendment hereby amends NOFA #004 Section 1.7.4 as follows (Note: This Amendment does NOT change the date when the Application window closes, but merely amends the reference to Central Daylight Time):

1.7.4 Application Acceptance Window Closes/Applications Due (no Applications will be accepted after this date and time)	11/22/2020, 5:00 PM CST
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**2. Written Responses to Questions--Broadband Grants Program**

Pursuant to NOFA #004 Section 1.7.2 (*Written Questions and Responses*): “Questions regarding the scope, interpretation, application, or contents of this NOFA must be raised as part of the formal Written Question and Response process set forth herein. While the Office will make available administrative support throughout the application process to Applicants ... only written communications made in response to questions submitted through this process shall be binding on the Office.”

For purposes of the Written Question and Response period identified in the NOFA #004 timeline, written questions were due from the public **NO LATER THAN 11:59PM CDT on October 28th, 2020.**

Accordingly, the following provisions govern the Written Question and Response process as instituted by the Office under NOFA #004:

- 1.7.2.1 Written questions related to this NOFA must be submitted to the Office by email, to [ociogrants@iowa.gov](mailto:ociogrants@iowa.gov), no later than and in accordance with the date and time specified in the table above.
- 1.7.2.2 Written questions submitted after the date and time specified for final questions will not be considered and a response will not be provided by the Office. If a question or comment pertains to a specific section of this NOFA, the section and page must be referenced.
- 1.7.2.3 The Office will prepare written responses to all pertinent, timely, and properly submitted questions and post such responses as an addendum to the NOFA online at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband>. The Office's written responses will be considered part of the NOFA. Verbal responses to any questions will not be binding on the Office. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to check <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband> for written questions and responses to this NOFA.
- 1.7.2.4 Failure to raise a question or issue regarding the scope, interpretation, application, or contents of this NOFA as part of this question and response process shall be deemed a waiver or failure to exhaust administrative remedies for purposes of a subsequent appeal of an Award; such waiver is intended to ensure the Office is able to correct any material issues or errors in an orderly, efficient fashion and in a manner that is fair to all prospective Applicants.

#### **Comments, Questions, and Written Responses to NOFA #004.**

Pursuant to NOFA #004 Section 1.7.2.1, this Section sets forth the timely and properly submitted written questions and suggestions received by the Office concerning NOFA #004 and provides the following written responses.

**Q1.** My knowledge of Web Service is limited and perhaps not fully augmented, I believe a disproportionate value of this public service is not being equitably dispensed. Eastern Polk County has experienced ICN, Southeast Polk Schools, and MidAmerica Energy Installation of Broadband service, while residents of the area have not been informed of what has developed. There appears to be no coordinated effort to inform the residents of this development in the area of Iowa. The adjoining counties have not distributed any information on this subject.

**A1.** The State of Iowa Office of the Chief Information Officer recently coordinated a statewide mapping process to identify areas where Communication Service Providers report that broadband service has been installed. The mapping process involved four stages: (1) a

third-party contractor gathered information concerning service areas from Communication Service Providers and posted the data to an online map, (2) the map was then published in September 2020 for public comment and input, (3) field validation was conducted to verify availability of broadband service, and (4) a revised map was published online with updated information. That map, including the most recently available information as of July 31, 2020 can be found at <https://connectednation.org/iowa/interactivemap> and shows locations where broadband service is believed to be available. Members of the public are encouraged to review this map to find more information about Communication Service Providers in their area.

The data collected through the process described above became the basis for the State of Iowa Broadband Availability Map Version 3 (V3) (*see* <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband-availability-map-version-3>) which was adopted as the official broadband map of the State of Iowa on October 28, 2020. Broadband Availability Map V3, identifies all United States Census Blocks within which no provider is known to provide broadband service to 10% or more of the area. Such United States Census Blocks become Targeted Service Areas in accordance with Iowa Code Chapter 8B.10. Targeted Service Areas are the locations that Applicants may include in Applications to this NOFA as eligible to receive state incentives.

More information about broadband programs administered by the Office of the Chief Information Officer can be found at <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband>. We also encourage members of the public to contact Communication Service Providers to ensure they are aware of this opportunity. Communication Service Providers must affirmatively apply to this NOFA and, as a part of that process, identify the Targeted Service Areas within which they intend to expand broadband service.

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- Q2.** If there is an area currently served by 25/3 wireless broadband service and we would like to bring Fiber to this area to offer speeds 100/20 +, would we qualify for this grant opportunity?
- A2.** Areas eligible for grant funds are indicated in the State of Iowa Broadband Availability Map Version 3 (V3) (*see* <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband-availability-map-version-3>). Applicants are encouraged to review this map to determine if areas of interest are eligible under this NOFA. If the Broadband Availability Map reflects that an area is not a Targeted Service Area, it will not be eligible for NOFA #004 grant funds.

Additional information concerning the underlying data forming the basis of the map is also available, including providers reporting service in a specific area. To find such information, please refer to the State of Iowa Broadband Availability Map V3 Challenge Process and

[https://ocio.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/broadband\\_map\\_v3\\_challenge\\_process\\_faq.pdf](https://ocio.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/broadband_map_v3_challenge_process_faq.pdf)).

Question 4 addresses how to determine why a Census Block is designated as a Targeted Service Area (TSA) or Non-Targeted Service Area.

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**Q3.** Where will we apply at?

**A3.** Applications to this NOFA are required to be submitted electronically through the [Iowa Grants System](#) (Funding Opportunity #380273 - Broadband Grant Program - Empower Rural Iowa - NOFA #004) which will be open for submissions on October 29, 2020 and closes November 22, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. CST. (See NOFA 004 sections 1.7.3, 1.7.4.)

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**Q4.** Is there any way I can advocate for a grant to be awarded to SE Iowa?

**A4.** Applicants to this NOFA are encouraged to provide evidence of community support for their Project (see NOFA #004 Section 3.2.2). Such evidence, by way of example only, may include letters from members of the community that support the proposed Project. If an Applicant in your area is considering submitting an Application under this NOFA, that Applicant can include one or more letters of support from the public as a part of the Application.

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**Q5.** I do not have internet and companies are not willing to entertain the idea without a grant. I will reach out to whomever I need to for this opportunity. It is a real struggle with school aged children and a job working at home on a hotspot. Please let me know what I can do to bring internet to my home.

**A5.** We understand your concern. We encourage members of the public to contact Communication Service Providers to ensure they are aware of this opportunity.

The underlying purpose of the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant program is to support Communication Service Providers who seek to expand broadband service in areas such as yours. The State of Iowa Office of the Chief Information Officer strongly encourages Communication Service Providers to submit Applications for service build out in any area identified as a Targeted Service Area on the State of Iowa Broadband Availability Map V3 (see <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband-availability-map-version-3>).

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**Q6.** If a provider has received funding thru ReConnect (thru the USDA) are they eligible to apply for NOFA#004 and if approved, use that funding as well?

**A6.** Yes, the budget composition allows for federal funding in addition to state awarded funds. Pursuant to Iowa Code § 8B.11(4)(a)(2), “The office shall award grants on a competitive basis for the installation of broadband infrastructure that facilitates broadband service in targeted service areas at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in section 8B.1, after considering . . . The applicant’s total proposed budget for the project, including the amount or percentage of local or federal matching funds, if any, any funding obligations shared between public and private entities, and the percentage of funding provided directly from the applicant.” Further, in evaluating the application, the budget composition will affect the scoring received for that factor. (*See* NOFA 004 section 3.2.1. Budget Composition: “This factor takes into consideration the degree to which State funds are requested for the funding of this project. Generally speaking, Projects that are supported by funding other than State funds will receive higher scores for this factor. This NOFA permits requests of up to 35% from State funds; therefore, those Projects requesting less than 35% will receive higher scores than those requesting the entire 35%.”).

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**Q7.** Can a provider apply for more than 1 project?

**A7.** Yes, reference NOFA Section 7.6. Multiple Applications: An Applicant may submit one or more Applications for different Projects.

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**Q8.** Can a provider have multiple TSAs in one application?

**A8.** Yes, applicants can select multiple TSAs in one application. Instructions for selecting TSAs are included in the NOFA’s Exhibit J.

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**Q9.** Can a provider submit more than 1 application?

**A9.** Yes, reference NOFA Section 7.6. Multiple Applications: An Applicant may submit one or more Applications for different Projects.

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**Q10.** In the NOFA #4, we were awarded a Grant Project from NOFA #2 that is actively being built with plans to finish the project in 2021. ... This grant was for 15% of the total project costs. My question is with the onset of COVID-19, our material costs and contractor costs are substantially higher than they have been or what was proposed in the NOFA #2 grant. With this being said, are their additional monies (up to 35% in current NOFA) available that can be used for this NOFA#2 build? This same area is eligible in NOFA#4 today which is why the question. Obviously we would need to contest the area due to a previous award from the state if we are unable to secure additional funding.

**A10.** No. Under NOFA #004 (*see* Section 1.6.5), the Office will not entertain offers from Applicants that seek to substitute an award of funds granted under this NOFA for any funds awarded to the same Applicant to build in the same Project area under any prior grant rounds administered by the Office. For the sake of clarity, an award under this NOFA will not be offered for Census Blocks or Broadband Blocks for which a prior Award has been accepted by the Applicant.

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**Q11.** Will the Broadband Availability Map Round 3 be made available in kmz or shapefile format?

**A11.** The data underlying State of Iowa Broadband Availability Map V3 is published with the map (*see* <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband-availability-map-version-3>). Refer to “Download data used in this application” section at the bottom of that page. The data can also be accessed directly from <https://bit.ly/3jy5COI>. Additional data sets may be available if needed. Please contact [ociogrants@iowa.gov](mailto:ociogrants@iowa.gov) should you have further questions.

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**Q12.** I live in rural Warren County and do not currently have high-speed internet. Will grants ever be offered to Iowa families to get broadband? Our neighbor (.5 miles north of us) has CenturyLink internet. CenturyLink quoted us \$2,500.00 just to run a line to our house. It is very frustrating that internet access is so close to us but we cannot get it.

**A12.** This grant program is available to Communication Service Providers who seek to install broadband service in Targeted Service Areas of the State of Iowa as identified on Broadband Availability Map V3 (*see* <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband-availability-map-version-3>). If you are located within a Targeted Service Area, a Communication Service Provider could include the costs to extend service to your home as a part of its Application.

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**Q13.** Are there any new rural broadband grant opportunities available?

**A13.** Yes. NOFA #004 is a broadband grant opportunity available to Communications Service Providers for the purpose of reducing or eliminating Unserved or Underserved Areas in the State through the installation of Broadband Infrastructure, including in rural areas, many of which are designated as Targeted Service Areas on the State of Iowa Broadband Availability Map V3 (see <https://ocio.iowa.gov/broadband-availability-map-version-3>).

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