

Connect Arkansas Remains Lead Agency for More Broadband Stimulus Money

By Arkansas Business Staff - 2/11/2010 11:20:32 AM

<http://www.arkansasbusiness.com/printable.aspx?aid=120010>

Gov. Mike Beebe's office on Thursday confirmed that Connect Arkansas will remain the lead coordinating agency for the second notice of funds availability released by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration for broadband stimulus funds, according to a news release.

In June 2009, Beebe designated Connect Arkansas as the state clearinghouse for the first round of NTIA broadband stimulus funding.

The NTIA on Jan. 15 released its second and, most likely, last notice of funds availability outlining three application opportunities for broadband stimulus funding.

Opportunities for funding break down into the following categories:

- Comprehensive community infrastructure - the funds for this program will focus on providing broadband infrastructure that addresses the major needs of the community it will serve. Priority will be given to applications that propose projects that connect to community anchor institutions such as schools, health care facilities and libraries. \$2.35 billion has been set aside for projects submitted to this category with awards ranging between \$5 million and \$150 million.
- Public computer centers - this program is similar to that outlined in the first notice of funds availability in that projects must expand public computer center capacity with emphasis on public libraries and community colleges. The NTIA is looking for projects that will provide or improve broadband access to the general public. \$150 million has been set aside for this program with awards ranging from \$500,000 to \$15 million.
- Sustainable broadband adoption - The NTIA's parameters for this program are similar to the first NOFA, except the NTIA is emphasizing the need for programs to be innovative and sustainable once stimulus funds run out. Proposals within this category must target one or more focus areas that include education, employment and economic development, enhanced services for healthcare delivery or vulnerable populations and children.

During the first round of broadband stimulus funding, Connect Arkansas played the lead role in coordinating interested organizations in the development and submission of collaborative grants for public computer centers and sustainable broadband adoption.

Connect Arkansas submitted an application for the broadband data and delivery program and assisted service provider organizations with maps and general guidance on their applications. Connect Arkansas also collected and summarized the infrastructure grant applications for the governor's office.

For the NTIA's second round of funding, Connect Arkansas will act as the state's lead agency in the following ways:

- Comprehensive Community Infrastructure - Connect Arkansas will provide maps and general inquiries into this program category for organizations interested in submitting their own applications. Likewise, Connect Arkansas requests that all agencies submitting an application also submit a secure copy to the Connect Arkansas office for a briefing regarding the applications with the governor's office.
- Public Computer Centers - Given the direction the NTIA has gone with the first round of proposals, Connect Arkansas requests that organizations develop and submit their own PCC applications during this round. In doing so, the governor's office has requested agencies also submit a copy of their proposals to the Connect Arkansas office for inclusion on the briefing for the governor's proposal endorsements to the NTIA

- Sustainable Broadband Adoption - Connect Arkansas will engage collaborative organizations to develop and submit a comprehensive statewide application. Connect Arkansas has posted an "Intent to Participate" form on its Web site, www.connect-arkansas.org, for interested parties.

The applications for the second round of broadband stimulus funding will be available Feb. 16 at www.broadbandusa.gov. All program applications are due March 15.

Previously

[Connect Arkansas Gets \\$2 Million to Map Broadband Access in Arkansas](#)

[Connect Arkansas Aims to Expand Broadband](#)

Copyright © 2010, [Arkansas Business Limited Partnership](#). All Rights Reserved.