

LaSalle County Broadband Initiative

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LCBI TAKES MAJOR STEP TOWARDS WINNING GRANT

The National Telecommunications and Information Agency (NTIA) has informed Northern Illinois University (NIU) that the LaSalle County Broadband Initiative (LCBI) grant application has received its initial screening and has been determined “that it is sufficiently meritorious to proceed to the next stage of processing, referred to as the Due Diligence Phase.”

While this action by the NTIA does not guarantee funding or even the full eligibility of the LCBI application, according to Herb Kuryliw, NIU’s Network and Technology Architect, it likely places the LCBI in a fairly elite grouping of applications under consideration for final funding.

The Due Diligence Phase means the NTIA will ask the LCBI to submit additional documentation substantiating the claims made in the initial LCBI application. For example, Kuryliw says part of the additional information sought by the NTIA may well be resolutions of funding commitment from the public entities which have made pledges of financial support.

In late March, NIU filed a broadband grant application on behalf of the Illinois Broadband Opportunity Partnership – Northwest (IBOP-NW) which included the LCBI. At the request of the State of Illinois, the LCBI application was combined with two similar projects from Rockford and northwestern Illinois to form the IBOP-NW. This step was taken because the State of Illinois believed the NTIA was more interested in providing financial support for larger projects. The IBOP-NW application is seeking \$70 million in state and federal funding. Taking this step also meant the LCBI would be able to access the considerable experience and talent of NIU’s grant-writing division. Involvement of the LCBI with the IBOP-NW will not impact the implementation across LaSalle County of the LCBI plan.

The development of the LaSalle County Broadband Initiative was led by the City of Ottawa and the North Central Illinois Council of Governments.

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