



LANCASTER COUNTY BROADBAND AUTHORITY
FY2020 Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) Grant Opportunity
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION LCBA-2019-001
Issued: September 30, 2019

An electronic copy can be submitted to <https://www.lancova-broadband.org>. RFI submission tab before 5:00PM EST on November 15, 2019. A hard copy can also be submitted, in person or post marked stamped to Lancaster County Broadband Authority (LCBA) until 5:00PM EST on November 15, 2019, to the attention of LCBA-2019-001 Lancaster County Broadband Authority, 8311 Mary Ball Rd, Lancaster, Virginia 22503.

INQUIRIES: Any questions which may arise as a result of this Request for Information (RFI) may be sent to <https://www.lancova-broadband.org>. RFI question tab. The question and answer will be posted in this section of the web site. Contact initiated by an offeror concerning this RFI with any other County or LCBA representative, not expressly authorized elsewhere in this document, is prohibited. Any such unauthorized contact may result in disqualification of the offeror from this transaction.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Complete Legal Name of Firm: _____

Address: _____

Federal Tax ID Number: _____

Signature of Authorized Representative: _____

Typed Name & Title: _____

Please provide the primary contact person for questions relative to this project:

Contact Name & Title: _____

Phone: _____ **E-mail** _____

The respondent has the sole responsibility to identify and describe the services it proposes. Respondents should take into account that not only the content but also the form and clarity of their response. If the Authority cannot determine what is being proposed, then it is likely to reject the response. All information should be submitted in an organized, easy-to-understand manner. The right is reserved, as the interest of the Authority requires, to revise this document prior to the due date and postpone the due date. Such revisions will be announced by written addenda. The Authority will reject proposals received after the date and time of closing and return them to the offeror unopened. Timely submission of proposals is the sole responsibility of the respondent. The LCBA reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to waive informalities, and to negotiate with the successful respondent(s). If the Authority closes its offices due to inclement weather scheduled receipt of responses will be extended to the next business day, same time.

RETURN THIS PAGE WITH RESPONSE



I. PURPOSE

The Lancaster County Broadband Authority is seeking one or more Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to partner with Lancaster County Broadband Authority to develop a comprehensive plan for connecting Lancaster County at High Speed with network capability of 1GB service. Part of the financial piece will require a joint submission of one or more applications to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) Grant opportunity for FY2021 and/or United States Department of Agriculture Rural Utility Services USDA RUS) ReConnect for FY 2021. Responses to this Request For Information (RFI) are due by 5:00PM November 15, 2019. VATI Guidelines for 2021 are expected to be similar to the 2020 guidelines released in June, 2019 and the USDA RUS ReConnect is also expected to be similar to the 2020 guidelines that came out in March of 2019. Please see the two grant links <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/virginia-telecommunication-initiative-vati> and <https://www.usda.gov/reconnect/forms-and-resources> for complete information regarding VATI and /or ReConnect, including details on how to apply for the funding.

II. BACKGROUND

The Lancaster County Broadband Authority operates within Lancaster County which is located in Eastern Virginia with the Rappahannock River, Northumberland and Richmond counties defining the borders of Lancaster County. Lancaster comprises 133.25 square miles. Latest US censusⁱ data shows our total population is 10,768. Population has been slowly but steadily declining, since the 2010 Census, which counted 11,390. The age distribution of persons in our County is heavily weighted to senior citizens. 35.6% of county residents are over the age of 65. The population of young adults has been hollowed out by migration to larger towns and cities, but 15.4% of current residents are children under the age of 18. Geographic dispersion is also a challenge for the county. Waterfront homes are strung out along the banks of our rivers and creeks. These are mostly the second homes of affluent city dwellers and the retirement dream homes of our older residents. Inland residents concentrate in and around our three incorporated towns, or are widely dispersed in the less developed areas in the North and West of the County (maps included as attachments with detail). Kilmarnock is the largest of the three incorporated towns with a population of 1,440 living within the town limits. Irvington and White Stone have 403 and 457 residents respectively.

As discussed in the previous paragraph there is a large variance in household income in the county. Using different census blocks with less than 10:1 mb/s service area, household incomes can vary significantly, Figures 1 and 2. This socioeconomic issue highlights the need to bring Broadband internet throughout the county.

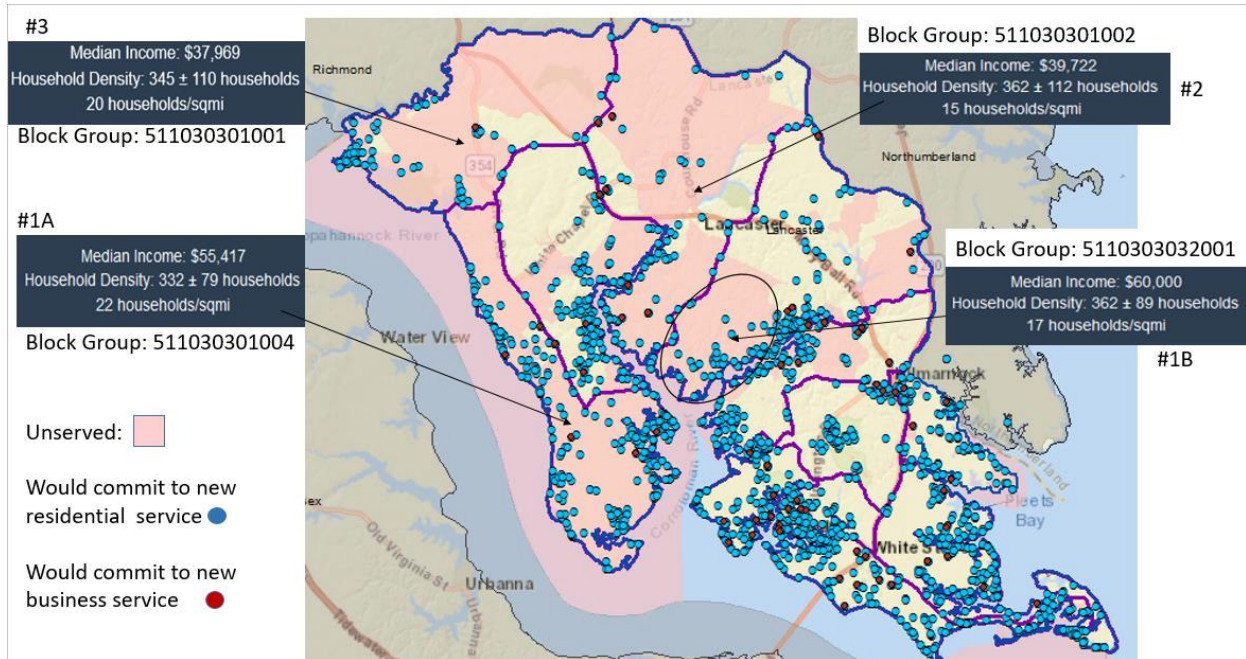


Figure 1. Variance in Census Block median household salaries overlaid with unserved areas

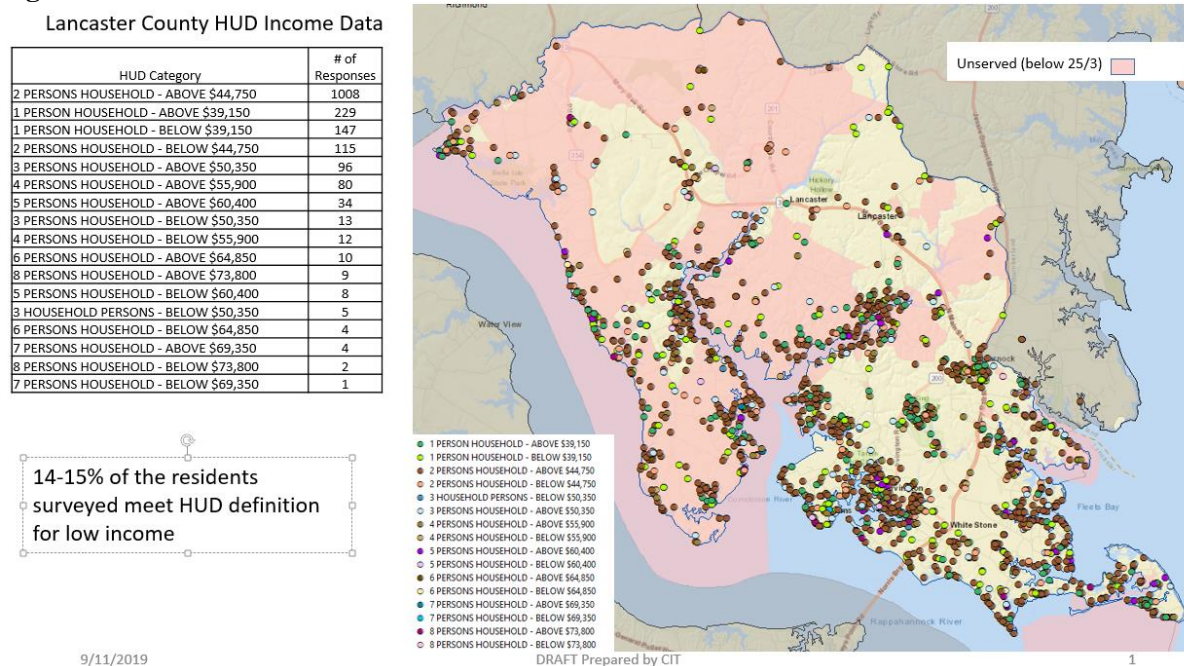


Figure 2. HUD economic question overlaid onto unserved areas based off of greater than 35% survey responses.

Lancaster County is served in varying degrees by broadband service. Areas principally around the incorporated Towns of Kilmarnock, Irvington and White Stone are served by incumbent broadband providers either with cable, wireless, or fiber; however, approximately 35% of the potential passes are not covered by reliable, affordable broadband (less than 10:1 mb/s service). In August of 2018, the Lancaster County Board of Supervisors created the Lancaster County Broadband Authority (LCBA), an independent political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia under the Virginia Wireless Service Authorities Act, in order to address the issue of providing high speed and affordable broadband to citizens through the *Rural Broadband Initiative*.

The LCBA intends to partner with one or more private, utility, or other public sector entities and service providers to begin implementation of the *Rural Broadband Initiative* that would be accelerated by obtaining VATI and/or ReConnect grant funds.

The Authority reserves the right to make available all or portions of its GIS data and support tower infrastructure to potential partners for the implementation of the *Rural Broadband Initiative* through either or both 2021 VATI and 2021 ReConnect grant(s). Below in Figures 3-6 are some of the GIS data that LCBA has. Depicted in Figure 3, the turquoise colored roads represents the areas that are considered non- or under- served areas ($< 10:1$ mb/s) in Lancaster County, this represents 2207 passes over 207 street miles. Depicted in Figure 4 is the location of all towers in Lancaster County that are approaching or are just over 200 feet tall. Depicted in Figure 5 are the towers with telecommunication equipment already in place. Depicted in Figure 6 are the Electrical Substations within Lancaster County.

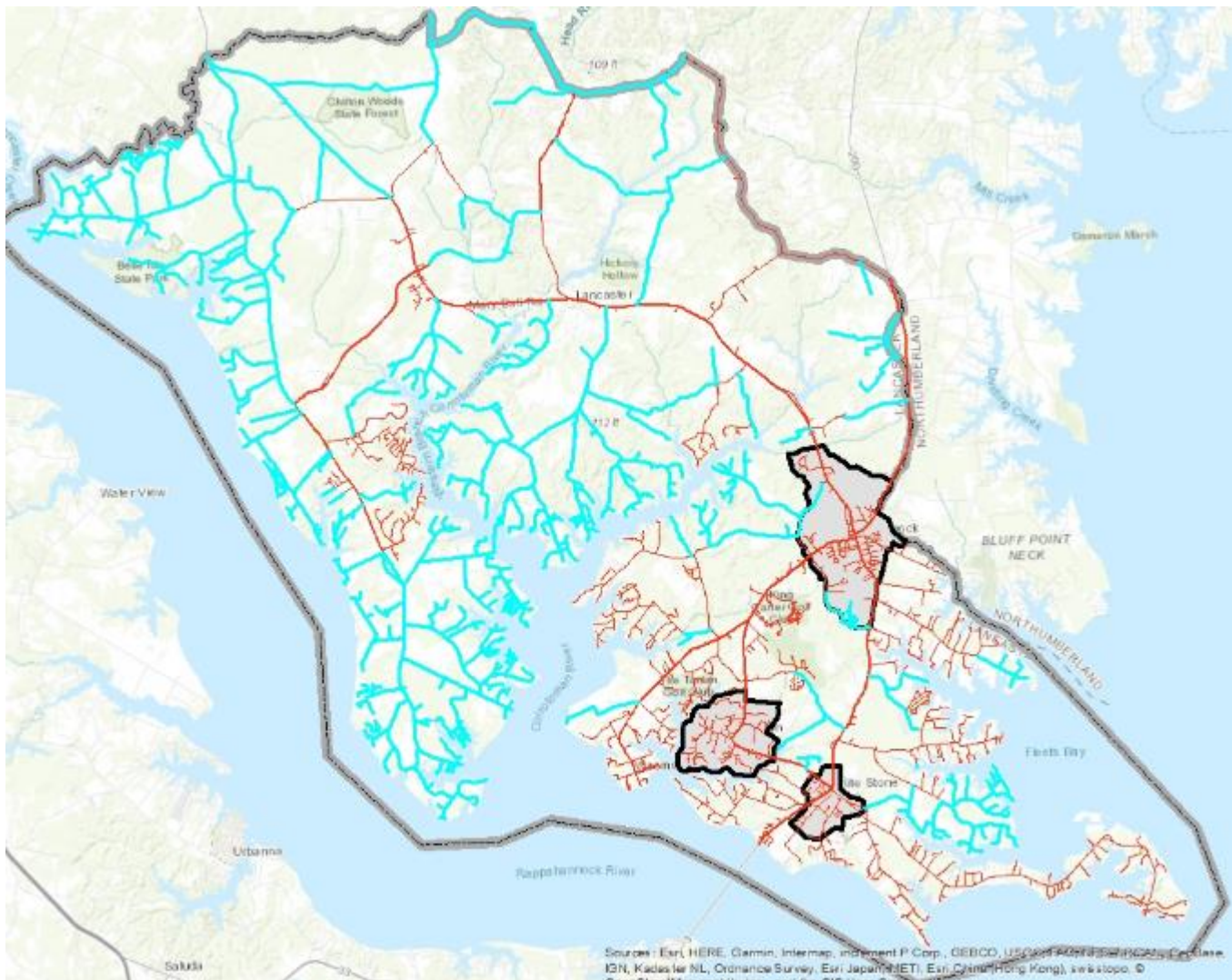


Figure 3. Non Served Roads (Turquoise) within Lancaster County

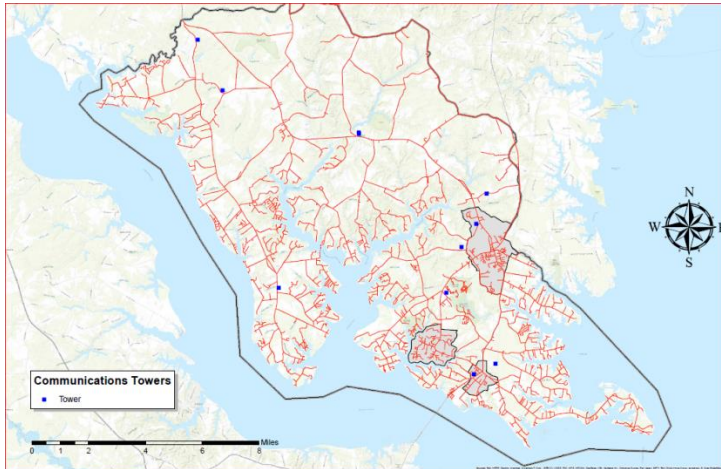


Figure 4. Towers within Lancaster County that are near 200' or higher

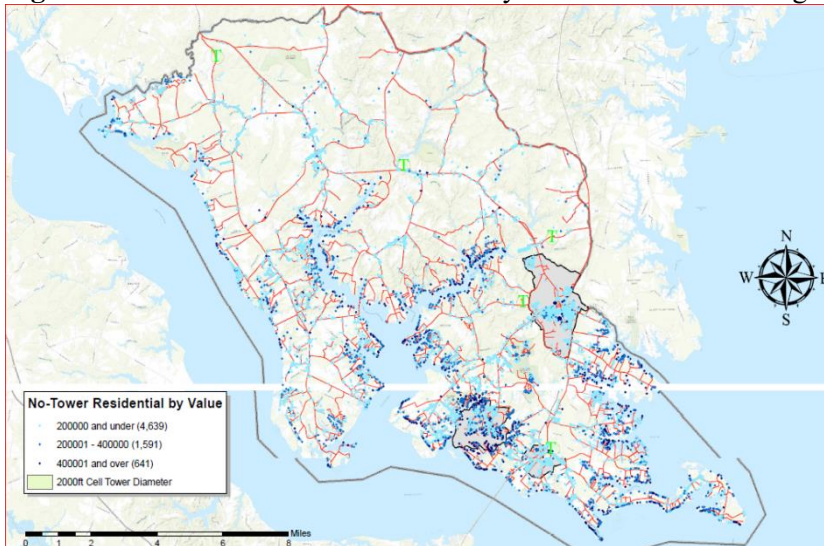


Figure 5. Five Towers that already have telecom equipment marked as green T

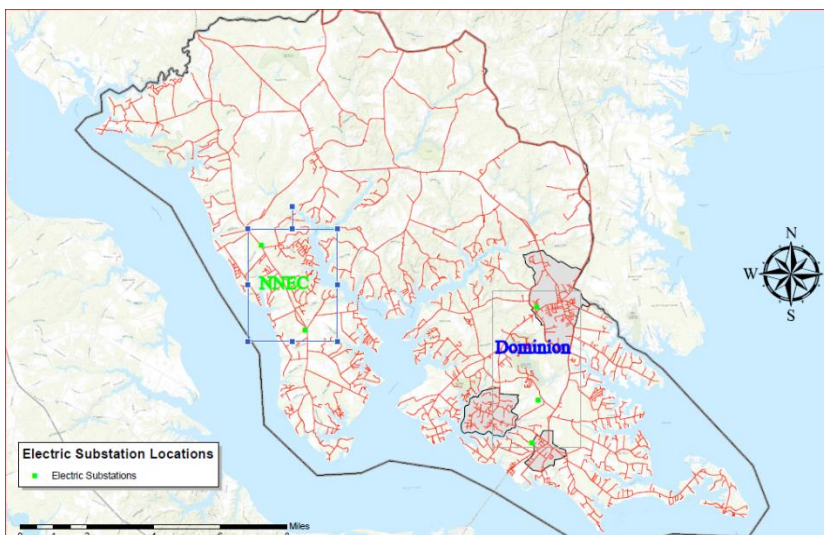


Figure 6. Electric Substations in Lancaster County, Dominion Energy in blue located in townships (Kilmarnock, Irvington, and White Stone) along Route 3 and Northern Neck Electric Cooperative (NNEC) electric substation in green off 354 on the peninsula



III. Desired Outcome

The desired outcome is a Lancaster County Broadband Authority (LCBA) public/private partnership(s) with one or more private, utility, or other public sector entities and service providers. This partnership will result in broadband services being delivered to all or a defined portion of the unserved/underserved residences and businesses in Lancaster County. It is expected the partners will be willing to be co-applicants for multiple Grants such as VATI and USDA RUS Reconnect funding. LCBA reserves the right to partner with more than one partner in this effort.

IV. Requested Information:

Through this RFI, eligible private, utility, or other public sector entities and service providers are encouraged to submit one or more VATI and/or ReConnect Broadband Project Proposals (BPP) which may potentially be included in the LCBA's application(s) for State and/or Federal funding. Each project and response should contain:

1. FCC Form 477 or equivalent
2. Summary of current services provided and locations your organization currently serves including number of years in the telecom industry.
3. Take Rate, Adoption, and Affordability Metrics (tiers of service including range of cost).
4. Statement of eligibility for both VATI and ReConnect Grants
5. Define area for targeted Grant funding per VATI and/or ReConnect guidelines.
 - a. Include map of proposed service area with notation of potential passes (residential and commercial)
 - b. Maps must show physical address and street names
 - c. Printed map, and an ESRI file map on a jump drive (ESRI preferred, KMZ or KML also accepted)
6. Documentation that proposed project area is unserved based on grant definitions.
7. Technology Proposed for the project(s)
 - a. Wireless, Fiber, etc.
 - b. Proposed speed of the network
 - c. Type of equipment to be installed for the project(s)
 - d. Proposed service speeds to customers
 - e. Speed of the "backbone" network
8. Proposed Cost Model (s)
 - a. Estimated total cost of the project
 - b. Estimated cost (including %) for partner, county, passes, and grant
 - c. Model demonstrating sustainability after 5 years
9. Partnership Model
 - a. Proposed partnership agreement
 - i. What is your recommendation for a partnership agreement.
 - b. Proposed LCBA Support
 - i. What types and level(s) of support will you require from the LCBA
 1. Demand Aggregation Support (surveying LCBA residents to create demand for the improved broadband service).
 2. Permitting Support (VDOT and others contact and permit processing)
 3. Other
10. State and Federal Grant Proposal.
 - a. State preparedness to complete the work
 - i. Who will be working on the project
 - ii. Availability of equipment and materials required to complete the work



- b. Project Schedule - discuss software to be used
 - c. Major Milestones and Project Plan - discuss software to be used to manage the project.
11. Ability to complete a project within twelve months for VATI Grant award contract execution and five year timeline for USDA RUS ReConnect that meets the required financial directives.

V. Submissions

LCBA requests that interested companies, consultants and persons with expertise in the areas outlined above submit information regarding creative ideas, recommended approaches, strategies, advice and the like. LCBA seeks input in any form deemed appropriate by the respondent, including but not limited to white papers, lessons learned, etc. All submission should be made by submission to the website or the County office as mentioned upfront with the exception of the ESRI file submitted on a jump drive that can be mailed or hand delivered to the County Office (ESRI preferred, KMZ or KML also accepted).

VI. Timeline

Responses to this RFI are due by 5:00 p.m. E.S.T. on November 15, 2019. Late response shall not be accepted. Responses should be submitted in writing and clearly labeled “RFI #2019-01-LCBA” to:

Attention LCBA-2019-001
8311 Mary Ball Rd
County of Lancaster, Virginia
Lancaster, VA 22503

Or electronically to the website as described in the first section.

Disclaimer:

Be advised. This is a request for information ONLY. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes-it does not constitute a request for proposal or a promise to issue an RFP or IFB in the future.

This RFI does not commit the Lancaster County Broadband Authority (LCBA) to contract for any supply or service whatsoever. Furthermore, LCBA is not at this time seeking proposals, but will accept unsolicited proposals. Parties responding are advised that LCBA will not pay for any information or administrative costs incurred in response to this RFI; all costs associated with responding to this RFI will be solely at the interested party's expense. Not responding to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future RFP, if any are issued. Any materials submitted in response to this RFI shall be the sole property of the LCBA.

ⁱ Unless otherwise noted, county side data is from the US Census Bureau, Quick Facts, Lancaster County Virginia, and represent the data set compiled on August, 8, 2019.