



November 18, 2020

Matt Behrens  
Deputy Chief Information Officer  
State of Iowa  
200 East Grand Ave  
Des Moines, IA 50309

RE: Vinton Municipal Communications Utility Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant

Dear Deputy Chief Behrens,

As a medical facility operating in the Vinton, Iowa area it is important that hospitals, clinics and other medical providers have access to high quality broadband service that is reliable, provided at an affordable rate and supported by a local broadband services entity. During the current COVID pandemic, it's critical to the Vinton, Iowa community that quality 1 Gigabit downstream / 1 Gigabit upstream broadband service is readily available. Access to high speed broadband service will allow Virginia Gay Hospital employees to work from home, limit COVID virus spread among medical staff and patients and offer Vinton area citizens access to telemedicine screenings and appointment services. Elderly Vinton residents would also have the option of at-home health care services instead of group-housing based healthcare with the deployment of high-speed broadband service.

Rural Iowa Broadband Grant applications from communications service providers should reduce or eliminate unserved and underserved areas through the installation of 25/3 broadband or 100/20 broadband facilities. The Vinton Municipal Communications Utility (VMCU) will use its Iowa broadband grant funds to provide much needed 1 Gigabit downstream and 1 Gigabit upstream broadband service to the Vinton, Iowa business community and the area covered under this application.

Vinton, Iowa is a growing community with an increasing number of residents and businesses. Today broadband coverage may be non-existent or limited in some areas making it difficult for emergency services to respond effectively. The health and safety of Vinton, Iowa citizens is enhanced with the deployment of Gigabit broadband service to the Vinton, Iowa community.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for the VMCU Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant application.

Sincerely,



Michele Schoonover, CEO  
Virginia Gay Hospital