



Project Title: Broadband Needs Assessment, Diagnostics, and Benchmarking for the North Florida Broadband Authority (NFBA) Ubiquitous Middle Mile Project

Investigator(s): Dr. Charles R. McClure cmcclore@lis.fsu.edu

Funding Agency: North Florida Broadband Authority (NFBA)

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Award Amount: \$199,342.00

The Information Use Management & Policy Institute (Information Institute, <http://ii.fsu.edu/>) of Florida State University (<http://www.fsu.edu/>), College of Communication & Information (<http://cci.fsu.edu/>), School of Library & Information Studies (<http://slis.fsu.edu/>) has received an award from the North Florida Broadband Authority (NFBA, <http://www.nfba-fl.org/>) to perform several activities in support of its \$30 million Ubiquitous Middle Mile Project for which the NFBA has obtained funding from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA, <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/>) as part of the Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP, <http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/>).

The Information Institute will be conducting several activities to achieve a more thorough understanding of how anchor institutions (e.g., libraries, schools, community colleges, local government agencies, and hospitals) within the North Florida 14 county Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC) (<http://www.eflorida.com/FloridasFuture.aspx?id=2108>) currently use broadband technology, as well as to achieve an understanding of the factors that might impact the anchor institutions' decisions to adopt the high-speed broadband services offered by the project.

These activities include: (1) conducting a needs assessment of the existing and future broadband uses and applications of the region's anchor institutions to assist the middle mile network designers to deploy and configure the network and to obtain baseline data; (2) conducting diagnostics that describe the anchor institutions' existing broadband networks and determine potential network improvements; and (3) providing benchmarks for data points such as workstation-level bandwidth, bandwidth costs, and the situational factors that impact anchor institutions' decisions to obtain or increase bandwidth capacity.

Anticipated outcomes from this project are to (1) inform the deployment and configuration of the middle mile network; (2) increase the awareness, successful deployment, and use of broadband at the various anchor institutions in the RACEC; (3) insure that users of the various anchor institutions obtain high quality and up-to-date broadband services; (4) position the NFBA to better document the success of the project based on intended outcomes described in the original proposal to the NTIA; and (5) assist in obtaining additional funds for broadband expansion and economic development in the region.

Charles R. McClure, Information Institute Director and Principle Investigator for the project noted that "it is essential that residents in the RACEC know how to best access and use the increased broadband that will become available in the area." Ultimately, the successful completion of project activities will directly assist the NFBA in understanding the broadband needs, uses, and adoption factors that will provide basic information to assist in the design, placement, and deployment of the network. The project also will assist anchor institutions contribute to the region's overall economic development.

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