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<b>Organization:</b>	<b>First Step Internet</b>
<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Central North Idaho Regional Broadband Network Expansion</b>
<b>Project Type:</b>	<b>Infrastructure</b>
<b>State(s):</b>	<b>Idaho</b>
<b>Federal Award:</b>	<b>\$2,393,623</b>

**ABOUT THE PROJECT**

First Step Internet proposes to build a regional network of 10 microwave towers to extend high-capacity Internet service in the rural counties of Latah, Idaho, Clearwater, Lewis, and Nez Perce in north-central Idaho. The project intends to directly connect 42 anchor institutions, including healthcare facilities, emergency response agencies, libraries, and government offices, as well as institutions serving the Nez Perce Tribe. The 550-mile network plans to offer speeds of 50 Mbps to 100 Mbps for anchor institutions and facilitate more affordable broadband Internet service for local consumers, including as many as 21,000 households and 700 businesses, by enabling local Internet service providers to connect to the project's open network. In addition, the Nez Perce Tribe has already made plans to use the new network to provide enhanced last-mile services.

The Central North Idaho Regional Broadband project also proposes to:

- Work with the University of Idaho and Lewis-Clark State College, as well as other educational institutions, to provide expanded distance-learning opportunities.
- Connect regional hospitals and clinics with broadband video technology for telemedicine services, X-ray images, and other medical information.
- Complete construction within two years.

**ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY**

First Step Internet has provided network services in Idaho since 1996 and currently manages an existing network of 650 miles it would leverage for this project. The company has garnered the support of 34 anchor institutions, including town and county governments, emergency response agencies, libraries, colleges, the Nez Perce Tribe, and five last-mile providers.

**PROJECT PARTNERS**

- Clearwater County Economic Development Council
- Clearwater Economic Development Association
- Idaho Regional Optical Network
- Nez Perce Tribe
- North Central Idaho Telecommunications Consortium

Data provided in the project description is based on information supplied by the applicant. An executive summary of this application can be found on [www.broadbandusa.gov](http://www.broadbandusa.gov).

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