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Organization:	Merit Network, Inc.
Project Name:	REACH Michigan Middle Mile Collaborative II
Project Type:	Comprehensive Community Infrastructure
States:	Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin
Federal Award:	\$69,639,291

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Community anchor institutions in rural northern Michigan often face high costs and/or limited Internet technology options, resulting in inadequate service for organizations in this economically distressed region. **Merit Network** proposes to address this problem by constructing a 1,210-mile fiber network offering speeds between 100 Mbps and 10 Gbps in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Lower Northern Peninsula, with additional connections to research and educational networks in Green Bay, Wisconsin and Duluth, Minnesota. Merit, whose existing network serves many of Michigan's government, public safety, and health care organizations, plans to connect 61 anchor institutions, including public universities, community colleges, K-12 schools, libraries, health research institutions, Michigan's Next Generation 911 system, and various local governments.

The REACH Michigan Middle Mile Collaborative also proposes to:

- Facilitate more affordable and accessible broadband service for up to 733,000 households and 49,000 businesses by enabling local Internet service providers to utilize the project's open network.
- Provide high-speed capabilities to three tribes in the region: Sault Ste Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, and Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa.
- Complement Merit's \$33.3M BTOP Round One infrastructure award for west, south, and central Michigan by leveraging its existing platform, billing, and operations.
- Collaborate with several small businesses in building out the new network.

ORGANIZATION'S HISTORY

Merit Network, Inc., a not-for-profit broadband service provider, has built and run networks for anchor institutions throughout the state of Michigan for 43 years, supporting the education and not-for-profit community. Michigan State University uses Merit's network and high definition video to teach remote medical school classes around the state. Merit currently operates over 1,600 fiber miles, including the Michigan Lambda Rail and Blue Line fiber projects in its network.

PROJECT PARTNERS

- ACD.net
- Boardman River Communications
- CCI Systems
- Great Lakes Comnet
- LYNX Network Group
- Peninsula Fiber Network
- Zayo Bandwidth
- The Michigan 911 Administrator's Office

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.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandusa.

For press-related inquiries, contact 202-482-7002 or press@ntia.doc.gov. For the general public, contact BTOP@ntia.doc.gov.

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