



May 18, 2022

The Honorable David Wallace, Co-Chairperson
The Honorable David Hillman, Co-Chairperson
Uniform Personnel Classification and
Compensation Plan Subcommittee
Joint Budget Committee
State Capitol Building, Room 315
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Senator Wallace and Representative Hillman:

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) submits a request from the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Economic Development Commission for your review. Economic Development Commission is requesting one (1) new classification and three (3) positions from the growth pool established by Ark. Code Ann. §21-5-225. The classifications requested are listed below:

CLASSIFICATIONS REQUESTED

| <u>CLASS CODE</u> | <u>TITLE</u> | <u>GRADE</u> | <u>SALARY RANGE</u> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| NEW | Director – State Broadband Office | SE04 | \$149,862 - \$181,500 |
| (2) D006N | State Systems Architect | IT10 | \$89,541 - \$129,835 |

JUSTIFICATION

Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in November 2021. Arkansas is expected to receive over \$1 Billion in federal funding as a result of this Act. Economic Development Commission is responsible for using these funds to provide broadband to all Arkansans. The Director of the Broadband Office position will be responsible for developing and subsequently implementing a broadband strategy for Arkansas. It will additionally be responsible for monitoring their broadband grant program and creating new programs to address digital literacy and inequity. One of the State Systems Architect positions will be responsible for more in-depth monitoring of the grant program. The other State Systems Architect position will be responsible for managing their digital equity initiatives and working directly with community-based stakeholders. The agency states that existing personnel cannot handle these additional responsibilities. The cost for these growth pool positions is approximately \$422,502.44.

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Furthermore, Economic Development Commission indicates that due to the competitiveness of job market the Director of the Broadband Office position may require an annual salary that exceeds maximum level of their requested pay grade. Therefore, the agency additionally requests approval to offer an annual salary up to \$200,000.

RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Personnel Management has reviewed this request from the Arkansas Department of Commerce, Economic Development Commission and recommends approval of one (1) new classification and three (3) growth pool positions authorized as the abovementioned classifications. OPM additionally recommends approval for the agency to offer an annual salary up to \$200,000, exceeding maximum level of the recommended pay grade. The agency guarantees our office that it possesses sufficient funding to support this growth pool position request.

Your consideration of this request is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Kay Barnhill, Director
Office of Personnel Management



SECRETARY OF TRANSFORMATION & SHARED SERVICES



DATE

KB/jlh:1-2

1326



Michael Preston
SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Arkansas Economic
Development Commission

April 28, 2022

Ms. Kay Barnhill, Director
Office of Personnel Management
Department of Transformation and Shared Services
501 Woodlane, Suite 205
Little Rock, AR 72201

Re: Request for Growth Pool Positions

Dear Ms. Barnhill:

The Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC), a division of the Department of Commerce, requests to utilize three (3) growth pool positions maintained by OPM under A.C.A. § 21-5-225(b). AEDC requests the following positions from the pool:

| Requested Positions | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|--------------|------------|
| Class Code | Title | Grade | Entry Salary | Max Salary |
| New | Director - State Broadband Office | SE04 | \$149,862 | \$181,500 |
| D006N | State Systems Architect | IT10 | \$89,541 | \$129,835 |
| D006N | State Systems Architect | IT10 | \$89,541 | \$129,835 |

As has been discussed publicly by Governor Hutchinson, me, and various members of the General Assembly, there is an acute need to increase the capacity of the broadband office housed within AEDC. It is estimated that under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Arkansas will receive over \$1 billion in federal funding for broadband improvements in Arkansas. This is in addition to the significant funding still available to the state under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The above positions are needed to ensure that Arkansas effectively and efficiently deploys these funds to provide affordable broadband to all Arkansans, especially those 110,000 households presently lacking 100/20 mbps broadband. Having a broadband office with adequate capacity is also a factor the federal government will consider in its award of broadband funding.

The Director of the State Broadband Office will serve as the overall leader of the state's broadband efforts and report directly to me. The pay grade and salary range are indicative of the skills and work experience the ideal candidate must possess. The director will work closely with the Governor, members of the cabinet, the legislature, and community stakeholders to develop and implement a broadband strategy for Arkansas, leveraging the significant work already undertaken by the Broadband Development Group in its

Ms. Kay Barnhill

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broadband master plan. The director's duties will be both technical and policy-based, overseeing our broadband grant program and developing new programs to address digital literacy and inequity (particularly as it relates to affordability). A detailed job description for the director position is attached to this letter.

The two systems architect positions will serve as the chief deputies for the director. One position will have responsibility for overseeing the grant program (including monitoring the performance of our technical contractor, UAMS). The other deputy will give oversight to the office's digital equity initiatives and work directly with community-based stakeholders, including county judges and mayors. Once the deputy positions are filled, I expect that they will identify additional staff needed for the office.

All three positions are expected to be funded by ARPA, IJJA, and a private foundation grant, subject to approval by the Arkansas Legislative Council. It is possible that the ideal candidate for the director position will require a salary in excess of the authorized maximum for the grade, therefore we are requesting approval to pay that position a salary of up to \$200,000. Given the competitiveness of the current job market, particularly for technical talent, we are requesting this approval now so that we have certainty in negotiating with a prospective candidate.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter. Please contact me or my chief of staff, Jim Hudson, should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Preston".

Michael Preston
Secretary of Commerce
Executive Director, Arkansas Economic Development Commission



Michael Preston
 Secretary of Commerce,
 Executive Director
 Arkansas Economic Development
 Commission

Director of State Broadband Office
 Functional Job Description

Identification

| | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|
| <i>Position Number:</i> | <i>Revision Date:</i> | April 28, 2022 |
| <i>Internal Title:</i> Director, State Broadband Office | <i>Grade:</i> | SEO4 |
| <i>Unit:</i> Commerce Secretary's Office | <i>OPM Title:</i> | |
| <i>Unit Leader:</i> Commerce Secretary | <i>Class Code:</i> | |

Position Summary

The Director is responsible for overall management of the State Broadband Office and is the liaison from the Executive Branch of the State of Arkansas to all parties relating to broadband policy within the state.

Key Business Processes (in priority order)

1. Provides policy advice to the Governor, the Secretary of the Department of Commerce, and other members of the Governor's cabinet and staff on key issues related to deployment of broadband throughout Arkansas.
2. Leads the Agency's legislative efforts concerning broadband by submitting periodic reports to the legislature, responding to legislative inquiries, attending committee meetings, providing feedback on proposed legislation, and seeking input on new policy initiatives.
3. Develops and oversees an initial 3 year plan to provide broadband access to 110,000 underserved households in Arkansas.
4. Regularly assesses the degree to which Arkansans are adequately served by broadband and updates strategies to reach the underserved.
5. Oversees broadband grant programs to address gaps in broadband coverage.
6. Develops and implements policy initiatives to address affordability of broadband services and to educate Arkansans on the importance of broadband.
7. Serves as the primary liaison from the State of Arkansas with various stakeholders involved in broadband policy, including providers of broadband services, non-profits, cities and counties, educational institutions, and the business community.
8. Provides leadership to the staff and contractors supporting the State Broadband Office and ensures that the office operates effectively and efficiently consistent with its mission.
9. Travels extensively around the state to meet with stakeholders and members of the community.

Responsibilities

Provides policy advice to the Governor and the Secretary of the Department of Commerce and other members of the Governor's cabinet and staff on key issues related to deployment of broadband throughout Arkansas. Monitors

Director of State Broadband Office
Functional Job Description

technological developments and legislative and regulatory actions that could impact broadband policy in Arkansas. Serves as Governor's designated State Broadband Manager.

Leads the Agency's legislative efforts concerning broadband through submission of periodic reports to the legislature, by responding to legislative inquiries, attending committee meetings, providing feedback on proposed legislation, and seeking input on new policy initiatives. Ensures that legislators are briefed on initiatives and seeks to preserve a collaborative relationship in addressing broadband needs in the state.

Based on key findings in the Arkansas Broadband Master Plan published by Broadband Development Group, along with input from the Governor, Secretary, legislators, broadband providers, and other key stakeholders, develops an initial 3 year plan to provide broadband access to 110,000 underserved households in Arkansas Regularly assesses the degree to which Arkansans are adequately served by broadband and develops strategies to reach the underserved. Maintains databases and maps documenting broadband service in the state and ensures regular updates to take into ongoing deployment of broadband. Monitors broadband coverage maps maintained by the federal government and seeks to correct any coverage errors.

Oversees broadband grant programs to address gaps in broadband coverage. Ensures State Broadband Office staff process grant applications in a timely fashion, validate that applications meet all applicable technological specifications, and monitor broadband project execution to assess compliance with grant program terms. Aligns grant program terms to comply with funding requirements.

Develops and implements policy initiatives to address affordability of broadband services and to educate Arkansans on the importance of broadband. Ensures that programs take into account needs of historically underserved communities and leverages public and private resources to increase inclusion.

Serves as the primary liaison from the State of Arkansas with various stakeholders involved in broadband policy, including legislators, providers of broadband services, non-profits, city and county government leaders, educational institutions, and the business community. Engages with stakeholders in a collaborative fashion to ensure that the state's broadband initiatives are reflect a consensus, to the greatest extent possible. Identifies and leverages state and national networks and partnerships (both from the public and private sector) that have capabilities related to broadband.

Provides executive leadership to the staff and contractors supporting the State Broadband Office.

Minimum Qualifications

The formal education equivalent of a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Information Technology, General Business, Business Administration or a related field; plus 10 years executive leadership in business, government, or broadband-related "think-tank" or nonprofit, with at least 6 years experience (i) leading in an information-technology setting, and (ii) developing and leading "matrix" styled teams.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities and Other Functions

Knowledge of best practices in the operation of an enterprise.

Knowledge of current technology as it relates to the provision of broadband services.

Knowledge of federal and state policy initiatives supporting broadband deployment.

Director of State Broadband Office
Functional Job Description

Ability to interpret data sets concerning broadband availability, adoptability, and affordability and develop actionable plans to address deficiencies

Ability to develop and interpret budgets and financial models related to broadband programs

Ability to assess emerging technology and its impact on solutions for addressing broadband needs in the state.

Ability to build teams of diverse stakeholders (internal and external to state government) and collaborate toward meeting identified goals.

Ability to formulate and communicate vision and direction and to lead the process of strategic and tactical implementation.

Ability to develop key performance metrics for programs, assess effectiveness, and make adjustments as needed

Ability to design, negotiate and close multimillion-dollar grant projects.

Ability to lead, mentor, model, coach and reinforce leaders.

Strong written and oral communication skills, including ability to engage in issue advocacy