



Asa Hutchinson
GOVERNOR

Michael Preston
SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

December 2, 2021

Ms. Elizabeth T. Smith
Secretary, Ark. Dept. of Inspector General
Chair, CARES Act Steering Committee
323 Center St., Ste. 1200
Little Rock, AR 72201-2620

Dear Secretary Smith:

Presently, the Arkansas Department of Commerce Broadband Office oversees the Arkansas Rural Connect (ARC) program, including oversight of incoming federal grants to facilitate the deployment of high-speed broadband service to rural communities across Arkansas. To date, ARC has made 132 awards from multiple funding sources, including from state funds, from CARES Act funds, and from ARP funds since SFY 2020. Awarding of grants is an ongoing process.

The Department of Commerce respectfully requests **\$382,00.00** in final CARES Act funding for the ARC program for calendar year 2021. This final CARES Act funding will help administratively support broadband construction projects currently in development across Arkansas through December 2021.

AEDC Rural Connect Emergency Coronavirus Program Administrative Costs (CARES)

<u>Current Funding</u>	<u>Final Funding Request</u>	<u>Funds Being Returned</u>
\$2,452,251.72	\$382,000.00	\$2,070,251.72

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David L. Bell".

David L. Bell
Cabinet CFO

cc: Mike Preston, Cabinet Secretary
Betty Anderson, COS
Jim Hudson, COO
Steven Porch, Chief Legal Counsel and Broadband Exec. Manager
Alisha Curtis, Chief of Communications and Leg. Dir.