



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2022.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Alleghany County

Program Title: ALLEGHANY HIGHLANDS UNIVERSAL FIBER BROADBAND COVERAGE IN LUMOS SERVICE AREA

Program Category: Regional Collaboration

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Reid Walters

Title: County Administrator

Signature: *Reid Walters*

VACO ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINATION

ALLEGHANY HIGHLANDS UNIVERSAL FIBER BROADBAND COVERAGE IN LUMOS SERVICE AREA

This nomination for a VACO Achievement Award could technically fit into multiple program categories, from Information Technology to Community & Economic Development to Regional Collaboration. Because this was a true regional effort to bring universal broadband to the Lumos service area within the Alleghany Highlands - which is roughly 95% of the area - these entities including Alleghany County and its sister towns of Clifton Forge and Iron Gate and the city of Covington - perhaps “regional collaboration” is the best fit.

OVERVIEW

As Delegate Terry Austin expressed at the November 12, 2021 community celebration, ““This milestone culminates a monumental collaborative public-private partnership effort between the leadership in the county, city, and towns in the Alleghany Highlands. This type of alliance for the greater good of the region is what makes this area special, and we will continue to highlight the region as a great place to live and work, now with the huge asset of universal fiber broadband.”

The Alleghany Highlands is an extremely rural and mountainous area and therefore is a very costly area in which to build fiber optic cabling. The completion of the Alleghany Highlands fiber project last year demonstrates the effectiveness of public/private partnerships to bring broadband to rural communities, helping close the digital divide. It’s also a great example of

utilizing joint funding to get further faster. We are in the midst of a once in a lifetime opportunity to change peoples' lives as broadband is no longer a luxury, but now an essential need, vital for improving educational success for children, for public health and for public safety, to grow small businesses and for our residents who may need to work remotely. Combining resources, we are able to get to these constituents who need fiber connectivity sooner than later.

The local governments of the Alleghany Highlands worked with Lumos and the US Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service initiative to bring universal coverage to the Lumos coverage area which is approximately 95% of the Alleghany Highlands. Since then, Lumos has continue investing in the community to bring universal fiber internet with a total investment of over \$21 million. The completion of the fiber expansion marks a significant increase of over 12,000 fiber-capable addresses and the addition of more than 650 route miles of fiber within the Alleghany Highlands.

This 100% fiber broadband network places Alleghany Highlands among the most tech-enabled communities in the world with a future-proof, multi-gig speed network. It ties in perfectly to the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce's "Live Uniquely, Work Remotely" campaign which focuses on this economic boom and the ability to attract gig workers who want to live, learn, work, and thrive in the region.

Only a 100% fiber network can provide the reliability and consistently fast download and upload connections necessary for ultra-high-bandwidth applications, especially live applications like HD quality video meetings and virtual learning. During COVID, we consistently heard from

constituents and Lumos heard from its customers how grateful they were for this service, and compared to other regions of the country, students were able to learn at home while many parents worked at home and they were not forced to drive to WiFi locations or fight for bandwidth.

Comments from Matt Garten, Chair of the Allegheny Highlands Board of Supervisors

These technological advances in the area that will benefit us by leaps and bounds...I still remember dial up and you had to wait to get online and now material the size of a human hair transports more information through a line than we ever anticipated.

It truly is a historic day for Allegheny County and the surrounding areas, Covington and Clifton Forge. I used to say we were the best kept secret in Virginia but now the secret is out. The opportunities are now available with broadband. You can work from anywhere, and I cannot think of a better place to do live and do business from. We appreciate the investment and all that has gone into it from the area leaders to the state leaders, and the monies that have been put into it.

Comments from Tom Sibold, Mayor of Covington

The Chamber of Commerce put together the “Live Remotely and Work Unqiely” (campaign). We need to be promoting, (and) we need to focus on what’s important to our community. When Covington went through the midst of the pandemic, we had to shut down the city. What was so neat was that we could give everyone a laptop and send them home and because of internet service at that time, people were able to get their jobs done. There were hiccups but not internet hiccups. As I traveled around the state and met with other mayors, I heard horror

stories of how they couldn't get done what they needed to get done. Again, Lumos created (this opportunity) for us.

We were able to send students home with Chromebooks and most of the students had internet access and were able to get their work done. It's all about what Lumos has done in this area. Years ago we started these discussions about high speed internet in the Alleghany Highlands and it has progressed to where it has today and we need to really promote "Live Uniquely and Work Remotely."

Comments from Pam Marshall, Mayor of Clifton Forge

I remember when I was a reporter when we started talking about this years ago, and I thought that really sounds like a good idea. Later I saw them climbing the polls and I thought, this may happen. Today, it has happened!

Our previous town manager pushed to make this happen in the town of Clifton Forge and surrounding areas. The Alleghany Highlands is ensuring that all of our citizens have access to the internet. I think we can all agree that the pandemic has taught us that if we have access to broadband that life, business, education, governments will go and be creative, productive and successful in ways than we could not have imagined.

Comments from David Smith, Lumos CNO and native of Falling Springs in the Alleghany Highlands

I grew up here, went to school here and have been with Lumos for almost 10 years now. One thing I can say is the dedication Lumos has to its communities.

More than ten years ago this process got started and kicked off with the RUS program which was completed in 2015. Since then we have been pushing to build more fiber in the Alleghany Highlands. What we saw is that we'd build another 500 addresses and the County would respond by taking our service. That speaks volumes for this community, for the employees we have locally and our employees that support us remotely. That is one of things we take pride in is our customer service.

Do something today that your future self will thank you for. That is a vision. Ten years ago, people in this community and Lumos had this vision – here we are as our future selves thanking ourselves. As a native of this community, this means a lot to me.

ADDITIONAL INFO FOUND BELOW

[Link](#) to announcement event press release and agenda

Press Coverage:

[Lumos completes fiber broadband network in Alleghany Highlands, VA | Broadband Technology Report \(broadbandtechreport.com\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBEfwiLcfA0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rd-jYTuE8hU>