

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE ASHTABULA COUNTY FARM BUREAU'S PARTNERSHIP LETTER IN SUPPORT OF ASHTABULA COUNTY'S 2023 ARC POWER GRANT

WHEREAS, the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau has presented a partnership letter stating its commitment to working with Ashtabula County, Ohio on the Appalachian Regional Commission 2023 POWER Grant project for the acceptance of the Board; and

WHEREAS, Broadband is a priority of the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau, Ohio Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau in recent years due to the overwhelming lack of internet or unreliable internet in rural areas and is essential to modern agriculture, the farmers who grow our food, and the quality of life for rural Americans; and

WHEREAS, access to broadband is essential for farmers to follow commodity markets, communicate with their customers, gain access to new markets around the world, and, increasingly, for regulatory compliance; and

WHEREAS, to support the project and its partners, the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau commits that over two years they will partner with organizations such as OSU Extension, Soil & Water, United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Agency and Farm Service Agency, Ohio Department of Agriculture, and the local grain cooperative, Centerra to name a few to host and/or sponsor at least 10 educational seminars that provide farmers, business owners, and residents the knowledge and tools they need to improve their farms/businesses, their livelihoods, and their communities; and

WHEREAS, the programs will focus on topics that improve agricultural productivity, efficiency, and sustainability such as precision agriculture, financial planning, (retirement, life insurance, transition planning, long-term healthcare, and market insights), marketing, woodland management, farm and roadway safety, and mental health awareness and resources; and

WHEREAS, the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau is prepared to work with an Ag-Business Technology Consultant who would help organize and host events over years two (2) and three (3) of the grant cycle, with the goal to directly assist at least 10 ag businesses in the area; and

WHEREAS, Ashtabula County appreciates and applauds the efforts of the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau and welcomes the opportunities this potential partnership would create; and

WHEREAS, if the POWER Grant funds are obtained, Ashtabula County would commit a total not to exceed \$10,000, (\$5,000 per FY year 2025 and 2026); now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, By the Board of Commissioners of Ashtabula County, Ohio that does hereby accept the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau's partnership letter in accordance with the copy now on file in this office.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the partnership acceptance is contingent upon the award of \$2,500,000 of ARC POWER grant funds.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Ashtabula County grant will require a sub recipient agreement be developed and agreed to by the parties specifying the terms and conditions and will stipulate said funding is to be spread out over two years, FY 2025 and 2026.

**ASHTABULA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CERTIFICATION PAGE**

Resolution No. 2023-216

April 11, 2023

**RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE ASHTABULA COUNTY FARM BUREAU'S
PARTNERSHIP LETTER IN SUPPORT OF ASHTABULA COUNTY'S 2023 ARC
POWER GRANT**

Upon the motion of Kathryn L. Whittington, seconded by J.P. Ducro IV.

VOTE:

**Casey R. Kozlowski
Kathryn L. Whittington
J.P. Ducro IV**

**Aye
Aye
Aye**

CERTIFICATE OF CLERK

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of a resolution acted upon and duly passed by the Board of County Commissioners of Ashtabula County, Ohio, on the date noted above.



Lisa Hawkins, Clerk of the Board
Board of County Commissioners
Ashtabula County, Ohio

April 8, 2023

Mr. Brandon McBride, Executive Director

Appalachian Regional Commission
1666 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20009

Ref: Ashtabula County's POWER Grant Application

Dear Mr. McBride,

I am writing on behalf of the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau, whose mission is "working together with Ohio farmers to advance agriculture and strengthen our communities." Broadband has been a priority issue of the Ashtabula County Farm Bureau, Ohio Farm Bureau, and the American Farm Bureau in recent years due to the overwhelming lack of internet or unreliable internet in rural areas. Rural broadband is essential to modern agriculture, the farmers who grow our food, and the quality of life for rural Americans. Access to broadband is essential for farmers to follow commodity markets, communicate with their customers, gain access to new markets around the world, and, increasingly, for regulatory compliance. Therefore, Ashtabula County Farm Bureau commits to working with Ashtabula County, Ohio on its Appalachian Regional Commission 2023 POWER grant project.

To support the project and its partners, Ashtabula County Farm Bureau commits that over two years, Ashtabula County Farm Bureau will be pleased to partner with organizations such as OSU Extension, Soil & Water, United State Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Agency and Farm Service Agency, Ohio Department of Agriculture, and the local grain cooperative, Centerra to name a few, to host and/or sponsor at least 10 educational seminars that provide farmers, business owners, and residents the knowledge and tools they need to improve their farms/businesses, their livelihoods, and their communities. Ashtabula County farmers embrace technology that allows their farming businesses to be more efficient, economical, and environmentally friendly. Today's farmers are using precision agriculture techniques to make decisions that impact the amount of fertilizer a farmer needs to purchase and apply to the field, the amount of water needed to sustain the crop, and the amount and type of herbicides or pesticides the farmer may need to apply. These are only a few examples of the ways farmers use broadband connectivity to achieve optimal yield, lower environmental impact, and maximize profits. The programs will focus on topics that improve agricultural productivity, efficiency, and sustainability such as precision agriculture, financial planning (retirement, life insurance, transition planning, long-term healthcare, and market insights), marketing, woodland management, farm and roadway safety, and mental health awareness and resources. Each program is evaluated by attendance as well as follow-up surveys for future planning and program improvement.

If grant monies are obtained, Ashtabula County Farm Bureau would commit to implementing a contractual Ag-Business Technology Consultant who would help organize and host events over years two (2) and three (3) of the grant cycle. The Consultant would also be available for one on one meetings with agri-businesses and residents in the area to assist them with accessing the programs and resources available online that can provide them with the knowledge and tools necessary to run their businesses, improve profits, and strengthen their communities. Our goal is to directly assist at least 10 ag businesses in the area.



ASHTABULA COUNTY

*Working together with
Ohio farmers to advance
agriculture and strengthen
our communities.*

The Consultant could assist with business plan development, data tracking, and collection, accessing online information on programs and funding available to farmers to improve operations,

installing or updating ag software, and more. The Consultant would track hours, tasks, and results dedicated to planning and executing programs and supporting farmers in the target area.

Lastly, we commit to continue supporting and advocating for broadband infrastructure in rural communities at the local, state, and national levels. Our rural communities need access to health care, government services, and educational and business opportunities. For many rural communities, access can only be gained by using broadband services and sophisticated technologies that require high-speed connections


The commitments not only improve success and profitability of ag businesses and residents in the area, but directly impacts the county by creating more income generation opportunities which directly impacts the economy in the county. Agriculture is one of the top industries in Ashtabula County and is the #1 industry in the state of Ohio. More notably, agriculture is essential to each of our daily lives. A strong agriculture industry means lives are sustained. Currently, it is estimated that 18% of farms have no access to the Internet according to the USDA report, "Farm Computer Usage and Ownership, 2021." With the target area being a heavy agriculture area, this funding can positively impact those numbers.

In addition to pledging financial support, Ashtabula County Farm Bureau would expect to receive \$10,000 from Ashtabula County's local funds to support a contractual Ag-Business Technology Consultant and the planning and executing of programs in the area.

We recognize that the POWER program is competitive and funding at this time is unassured. Therefore, should ARC award funding, Ashtabula County Farm Bureau agree to enter into a formal subrecipient agreement with Ashtabula County that would be vetted by the State of Ohio's Basic Agency for compliance with all applicable federal standards.

In conclusion, we highly recommend your support of this funding. Our farmers depend on broadband just as they do highways, railways, and waterways to ship food, fuel, and fiber across the country and around the world.

Sincerely,



Amanda S. Orahood
Organization Director
Ashtabula County Farm Bureau