

Jefferson County Broadband Task Force Is Requesting Project Management Services to Improve and Expand Broadband Services in Jefferson County, Ohio

PURPOSE

Jefferson County Task Force seeks a qualified private contractor or consultant team (as Project Manager) to complete the following tasks to improve and expand broadband fiber to the premise services to each household and business in Jefferson County, Ohio.

1. Use existing Broadband Ohio and Connecting Appalachia mapping and profiles to define areas of Jefferson County that are not-served (<10/1 Mbps), underserved (<100/20 Mbps), or well-served (>100/20 Mbps) by broadband services. The high-speed broadband services shall specifically provide a service designed to reliably meet or exceed symmetrical speeds, and be scalable to a minimum of 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload. Further, identify areas in the county where communities and groups of residents are well-served but the services are not affordable and inaccessible. Based upon these findings, create and prioritize logical project zones in consultation with the Jefferson County Task Force.
2. Generate counts of households, public entities, households, and businesses in each of the project zones. Estimate the amount of accessible middle-mile and/or last-mile fiber in each project zone, starting with the highest prioritized area.
3. Project the range of subsidy levels required to attract Fiber-Optic Service Providers (SP) and/or Internet Service Providers (ISP) to build middle-mile and/or last-mile networks in each of the priority zones.
4. Generate a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking SP and/or ISP to co-invest, seek out, and prepare applications to relevant local, state, and federal programs to construct middle-mile and last-mile broadband improvements in selected project zones.
5. Invite SP(s) and ISP(s) to participate in the RFP process. Manage the RFP process including facilitating a scoring team drawn from the Jefferson County Task Force.
6. Assuming acceptable RFP responses received, negotiate engineering and construction contracts with selected SP(s) and ISP(s).

BACKGROUND

The Jefferson County Task Force is a group of professional individuals dedicated to bringing high-speed internet access to all parts of Jefferson County, Ohio. The Task Force is seeking opportunity to use recent funding opportunities through county, cities, villages, and township American Rescue Plan (ARP) allocations (the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund), the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), as well as other state and federal programs to create impactful progress to close the digital divide and achieve broadband equity in Jefferson County, Ohio.

SCOPE OF WORK

This RFP is to procure a Project Manager that will assist the Task Force in developing a county-wide program of broadband projects and maximize the use of private, local, state, and federal resources to expand broadband access throughout all of Jefferson County, Ohio. The Task Force, under the administrative guidance of the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission, and the Project Manager will work in collaboration under a negotiated not-to-exceed budget for a twelve-month period. The Task Force and the Project Manager, by mutual agreement, may extend the period of performance (no more than an additional twelve months) and the not-to-exceed budget after the initial twelve-month period.

Given the significant amount of broadband planning and mapping that has already been conducted for Jefferson County, Ohio, the Task Force anticipates that the Program Manager will begin with a strong foundation for the delivery of the proposed scope of work.

SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work consists of the following tasks. The Taskforce may accept additional information the Project Manager may believe pertinent to the success to improve and expand broadband services in Jefferson County, Ohio.

Task 1: Evaluate County-Wide Broadband Services

- Provide an overview of the county, through mapping using acceptable data resources, zones not-served (<10/1 Mbps), underserved (<100/20 Mbps), or well-served (>100/20 Mbps).
- Identify and map the demographics of the well-served zones where the services are not affordable or inaccessible.
- Based upon the mapping, generate counts of households, public entities, businesses, and estimates of fiber miles
- Create logical project zones, based upon the geography and factors listed above to improve deficiencies, affordability, and/or inaccessibility to high-speed Fiber-to-the-Premise (FTTP) internet services or Wireless Internet Services (WISP), where FTTP is feasibly not constructible.

Deliverable for Task 1:

An exhibit of deficiencies and strengths of broadband services in Jefferson County logically divided project zones compliant with the goals, objectives, and criteria of readily known local, state, and federal grant programs.

Task 2: Develop a County-Wide Broadband Network

- If possible, identify the extent of existing middle-mile networks that may be accessible to expand high-speed broadband service in Jefferson County
- In consultation with the Task Force, create and prioritize project zones based on key factors identified in the evaluation process,
- Starting with the highest prioritized zone, develop engineering and construction cost estimates

SCOPE OF WORK

- The high-speed broadband services shall specifically provide a service designed to reliably meet or exceed symmetrical speeds, and be scalable to a minimum of 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload.
- Project a cost estimates to subsidize private investments with local, state, and federal sources required to attract Fiber-Optic Service Providers and/or Internet Service Providers to build a Fiber-to-the-Premise (FTTP) services or a Wireless Internet Service (WISP), where FTTP may not be constructible, in each of the project zones.

Deliverable for Task 2:

Determine if a middle-mile network is adequate and accessible to deliver last-mile broadband services to all parts of Jefferson County. If not, determine costs to expand the middle-mile network to inaccessible areas of the county, or the cost to construct an entirely new middle network. A prioritized list of last-mile project zones, with engineering and construction estimates for at least two of the highest prioritized zones.

Task 3: Generate a Request for Proposal (RFP) process and fully fund a construction project

- Seek out Service Providers to build and co-invest in, if needed a new or expanded middle-mile network, and/or last-mile FTTP and/or WISP networks.
- Invite the Service Providers to participate in the RFP process,
- Manage the RFP process and facilitate a scoring team drawn from the Jefferson County Task Force.
- Negotiate contracts with Service Providers assuming acceptable RFP responses received
- Prepare applications to relevant local, state, and federal programs to construct and implement broadband improvements in selected project zones.

Deliverable for Task 3:

Attract a wide range of public-private entities to invest in middle-mile and last-mile construction. Identify, fully funded, and ready for construction, at least one project (either a middle-mile or the highest prioritized last-mile project) within one year (date of signed Program Management contract).

LETTER OF INTEREST

COMMUNICATIONS RESTRICTIONS

Please note the following policy concerning communication between Consultants and the Task Force during the announcement and selection process:

During the time period between advertisement and the announcement of final consultant selection, the Task Force shall limit communication with consultants (or their agents) as follows:

Communications strictly prohibited:

Any discussions or marketing activities related to this specific project.

Allowable communications include:

Technical or scope of services questions specific to the project or RFP requirements.

SELECTION PROCEDURES

The Task Force will directly select consultant services based on the Letter of Interest (LoI). Shown below are the requirements for the LoI and the Programmatic Consultant Selection Rating Form used to select the consultant services.

Interested firms should submit the Letter of Interest by email 06/09/2022 by 4:00 p.m. to: award@bhjmpc.org.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMITTING LETTERS OF INTEREST

Prepare and Submit the Letter of Interest in the following manner:

1. Submit all Letters of Interest
2. Provide the information requested in the Letter of Interest Content (Item B below), in the same order listed, in a letter signed by an officer of the firm. Do not send additional forms, resumes, brochures, or other material.
3. Limit the Letter of Interest to ten (10) 8½" x 11" single-sided pages.
4. Adhere to the following requirements in preparing a Letter of Interest:
 - a. Use a minimum font size of 12-point and maintain.
 - b. Type all narrative single-spaced, on letter-sized (8.5 x 11-inch) paper, with margins of 1" on all four sides, and with a 12-point font size using a standard Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri font.
 - c. Center page numbers at the bottom of each page.

LETTER OF INTEREST

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE LETTER OF INTEREST (LOI)

A. Content of the LOI:

1. Team Approach – Not to exceed five (5) pages
 - a. Identify the qualifications of your firm to perform the tasks described.
 - b. List significant subconsultants, their current prequalified categories, and the percentage of work performed by sub-consultants.
 - c. List the Project Manager and other key staff members; including key subconsultant staff. Include project engineers for important disciplines and staff members that will be responsible for the work.
2. Experience – Not to exceed three (3) pages
 - a. Describe the capacity of your staff and their ability to perform the work in a timely manner, relative to present workload, and the availability of the assigned staff. Address the experience of the key staff member on similar projects, and the staff qualifications relative to the selection subfactors noted.
3. Project Approach – Not to exceed two (2) pages
 - a. Provide a description of your Project Approach, not to exceed two pages. Address your firm's technical approach, understanding of the project, innovative ideas and any other relevant information concerning your firm's qualifications for the project. Address your firm's project-specific plan for ensuring increased quality and reduced project delivery time.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The Task Force will evaluate each response in four phases:

1. Review of all proposals for timely submission;
2. Review proposals for defects and scoring;
3. Request for more information (clarifications, interviews, presentations, and/or demonstrations); and,
4. Negotiate terms of contract services and cost.

LETTER OF INTEREST

SELECTION RATING FORM

Project:

Selection Committee Members: _____

Firm Name: _____

Category	Total Value	Scoring Criteria	Score
Management & Team			
Project Manager	15	See Note 1, Exhibit 1	
Strength/Experience of Assigned Staff including Subconsultants	20	See Note 2, Exhibit 1	
Firm's Current Workload/ Availability of Personnel	5	See Note 3, Exhibit 1	
Project Approach	10		
Total	50		

LETTER OF INTEREST

Exhibit 1 - Consultant Selection Rating Form Notes

1. The proposed project manager for each consultant shall be ranked, with the highest-ranked project manager receiving the greatest number of points, and lower-ranked project managers receiving commensurately lower scores. The rankings and scores should be based on each project manager's experience on similar projects and past performance for the LPA and other agencies. The selection committee may contact ODOT and outside agencies if necessary. Any subfactors identified should be weighed heavily in the differential scoring.

Differential scoring should consider the relative importance of the project manager's role in the success of a given project. The project manager's role in a simple project may be less important than for a complex project, and differential scoring should reflect this, with higher differentials assigned to projects that require a larger role for the project manager.

2. The experience and strength of the assigned staff, including subconsultant staff, should be ranked and scored as noted for Number 1 above, with higher differential scores assigned on more difficult projects. Any subfactors identified in the project notification should be weighed heavily in the differential scoring.

As above, other agencies may be contacted.

3. The consultant's workload and availability of qualified personnel, equipment, and facilities shall be ranked and scored on a relative, differential scoring type basis. The scoring shall consider quantifiable concerns regarding the ability of a firm (or firms) rated higher in other categories to complete the work with staff members named in the letter of interest.

TERMS AND ACRONYMS

ARP – American Rescue Plan

RFP – Request for Proposal

BEAD – Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program

FCC – Federal Communications Commission

FTTP - Fiber-to-the-Premise

IIJA – Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

LOI - Letter of Interest

Mbps - Mega Bits per Second

NOFO – Notice of Funding Opportunity

NTIA – National Telecommunications and Information Administration

SP - Fiber-Optic Service Provider

ISP - Internet Service Provider

WISP - Wireless Internet Service Provider