

Rush County Rural Broadband Project

Rush County, Indiana

Request for Proposals (RFP) Notification

For

*Private Provider(s) to Deploy, Operate, and Maintain a
Broadband Internet Network Which Delivers High-Speed
Broadband to Currently Underserved Premises in Rush County*

Issued: August 30, 2021

Summary Page:

Project Location: Rush County, Indiana

Response Due Date and Time: By 4:00 PM EST – Friday, October 22, 2021

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is official notification of needed professional services. This RFP is being issued to solicit a response and other documents from Internet Service Providers qualified to deploy, operate, and maintain a broadband internet network ensuring that currently underserved premises in Rush County are served by high-speed broadband. A submittal does not guarantee that the Applicants will be contracted to perform any services but only serves notice that the Applicant desires to be considered. Rush County is not responsible for any costs incurred by the Applicants for the preparation of any materials required for responding to this RFP.

Contact for Questions: Carole Yeend, co-chair
Rush County Broadband Task Force
Phone 317-407-3221
Email: broadbandconnect@rushcounty.in.gov

Submittal requirements:

RFP Response (required content and instructions follow); five (5) copies submitted to:

Submit To: Rush County Commissioners
C/O Auditor of Rush County
101 East Second Street, Room 212
Rushville, IN 46173

Selection Procedure:

Applicants will be selected for work items further described herein, based on the evaluation of the RFP response and other required documents as submitted. Analysis and scoring of responses shall be based on the major criteria identified in Section 6 of the RFP. Rush County may make one or multiple awards but is not required to make an award.

The RFP is particularly interested in Applicants' ability to meet the funding eligibility requirements set forth in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA).

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Summary Page: | 1 |
| 1. Introduction | 4 |
| 2. Project Overview, Purpose and Objectives | 5 |
| 2.1 Provide High-Speed Service to Unserved and Underserved Premises | 5 |
| 2.2 RFP Schedule and Publication | 5 |
| 2.3 RFP Submittal process | 6 |
| 2.4 RFP Question and Answer Process | 6 |
| 2.5 Rush County Financial Contribution | 6 |
| 2.6 General RFP Requirements, Considerations, and Anticipated Contract Terms | 7 |
| 3. Service Areas | 8 |
| 4. Project Requirements | 8 |
| 4.1 Technical Requirements | 10 |
| 4.2 Open Access Requirements | 10 |
| 4.3 Network Construction Standards | 10 |
| 4.4 Network Equipment, Design and Technical Specifications | 11 |
| 4.5 Network Test and Acceptance Standards | 12 |
| 4.6 Presence in County | 12 |
| 4.7 Network Deployment Timing | 12 |
| 5. Applicant information | 12 |
| 6. Rating Criteria | 13 |
| 7. RFP Response Format | 14 |
| 7.1 Cover Sheet | 14 |
| 7.2 Executive Summary of Scope of Work | 14 |
| 7.3 Cost Proposal | 14 |
| 7.4 Technical Approach and Work Plan | 15 |
| 7.4.1 Technical and Procedural Concerns | 15 |
| 7.4.2 Technical Alternatives | 15 |
| 7.4.3 Implementation Schedule | 15 |
| 7.4.4 Staff Capabilities and Experience | 15 |
| 7.4.5 Project Location | 15 |
| 7.4.6 Service Delivery and Design | 15 |
| 7.4.6.1 Wireless Solutions | 15 |

| | | |
|--|--|-----------|
| 7.4.6.3 | Point-to-Point Solutions..... | 16 |
| 7.4.6.4 | Services Required..... | 17 |
| 7.4.6.5 | Service Level Agreements | 17 |
| 7.5 | Company Background | 17 |
| 7.6 | Statement of Qualifications | 17 |
| 7.7 | Company Financial Statement | 18 |
| 7.8 | Appendices..... | 18 |
| 8. | Network and Testing Standards..... | 18 |
| 8.1 | Fiber and Cabling Infrastructure: | 18 |
| 8.1.1 | Insertion Loss Test | 18 |
| 8.1.2 | OTDR Testing..... | 18 |
| 8.2 | Wireless Elements | 18 |
| 8.2.1 | Coverage Mapping | 18 |
| 8.2.2 | Simulated End User Testing | 19 |
| 8.3 | Leased Capacity or Wireless Point-to-point | 19 |
| 8.4 | Speed test to POP..... | 19 |
| ATTACHMENT A: COVER SHEET | | 20 |
| ATTACHMENT B: NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATE | | 21 |
| ATTACHMENT C: COST PROPOSAL..... | | 22 |
| ATTACHMENT D: TECHNICAL ALTERNATIVES (OPTIONAL) | | 23 |

1. Introduction

This RFP reflects the commitment of Rush County to ensure high-speed broadband is available to as many residents and businesses in Rush County (hereinafter primarily referred to as “County”) as possible. The successful Internet Service Provider(s) or other organization(s) responding to this RFP (hereinafter referred to as “Applicant”) will be expected to deploy a network that meets the eligibility requirements set forth in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), PL 117-2 (March 11, 2021), which amends Title VI of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 801 et seq.). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to deliver high-speed, reliable, and affordable broadband communications services in one or more un/underserved area in Rush County.

The County is offering direct capital funding to qualified and committed private sector partners to support deployment. Furthermore, to achieve its goal, the County understands it may need to fund more than one Applicant.

The purpose of the direct capital funding will be to defray the cost of the infrastructure necessary to meet the requirements of the RFP, which might include construction or improvement of fiber optics, cabinets, pedestals, poles, pole attachments, towers, wireless equipment, CPE, etc. (collectively this infrastructure is hereinafter referred to as “Assets”). Applicants may submit multiple responses to this RFP for proposals that differ in service areas, technology, requested County funding, timing of deployment, eligibility requirements or any combination thereof.

Through this RFP, the County seeks proposals from Applicants to build, operate, and maintain Assets to provide broadband internet service throughout one or more geographic area(s) of Rush County.

The County understands providing broadband internet to 100 percent of premises in Rush County is infeasible for a range of reasons. Thus, the County seeks proposals that state clearly how many premises will be covered and at what levels of service.

The County encourages collaboration among applicants as necessary to meet the goals of this RFP.

The County recognizes that ISPs must make a profit in their proposed networks. However, the county clearly recognizes that there is a vast difference between availability and affordability. To this end, the proposal should ensure that the minimum offering will meet the 25/3 requirements and will be affordable to the vast majority of citizens. At a conceptual level, the minimum standard of service should probably be in the \$65/month range.



Figure 1: Rush County - Blue

The inability of an Applicant’s proposal to meet the technical requirements and speeds of this RFP is not an automatic means of disqualification. The Applicant shall clearly and thoroughly define

any proposed solutions or technical alternatives which may not meet the eligibility requirements of ARPA due to constraints with geography, topography, or excessive costs, but will expand high-speed internet to un/underserved premises.

2. Project Overview, Purpose and Objectives

The following are the County's requirements and goals under this RFP.

2.1 Provide High-Speed Service to Unserved and Underserved Premises

The County seeks to make available reliable, and affordable high-speed broadband services to as many premises in the County as possible, specifically to underserved or unserved households and businesses, defined as those not currently served by a connection that reliably delivers at least 50 Mbps download speed and 10 Mbps upload speed.

The high-speed broadband services shall specifically provide a service designed to reliably meet or exceed a speed of 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload; or in cases where the symmetrical 100/100 Mbps service is not practicable, provide a service designed to reliably meet or exceed 100 Mbps download and at least 20 Mbps upload speeds, and be scalable to a minimum of 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload. Interim Rule, 31 C.F.R § 35.6(e)(2), 86 Fed. Reg. 26786, 26823.

The purpose of the RFP is to seek innovative or traditional broadband solutions from one or more Applicants proposing one or multiple solutions over all or portions of the County. From these RFP responses, the County will select the best Applicant(s), to finalize project details by creation and execution of a contract with the County.

The County does not intend to enter the broadband business as a competitive service provider.

The County does not intend to operate the network enterprise it financially supports through this RFP process. The network enterprise will be owned and operated by the selected Applicant, and/or Applicant's subcontractor, as per the contract to be negotiated with the County.

If the Applicant is currently providing service in some areas of the County, the County requires that the Applicant provide similar pricing and service tiers for data services the Assets in the newly served areas.

This request for proposals does not constitute a contract for services performed or to be performed.

2.2 RFP Schedule and Publication

The County intends the project be deployed in a continuous fashion commencing immediately upon contract execution.

The RFP Schedule is as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| RFP Publication and Post Date: | Monday, August 30, 2021 |
| Written Questions Due: | By 4:00 PM EST - Friday, September 24, 2021 |
| Written Answers Delivered: | By 4:00 PM EST - Wednesday, October 6, 2021 |
| RFP Response Due Date: | By 4:00 PM EST – Friday, October 22, 2021 |
| RFP Public Reading: | Tuesday, October 26, 2021 |
| Analysis and Scoring Complete: | Friday, October 29, 2021 |
| Notice of Award: | Monday, November 22, 2021 |

2.3 RFP Submittal Process

RFP responses must be complete and submitted using the formats, processes, and timelines outlined in the RFP. Final RFP submittal information documents will **only** be accepted in paper format, submitted in a sealed envelope, with the required number of copies. The outside of the sealed envelope shall be marked with the identifier:

“Rush County - Rural Broadband Coverage – 2021 RFP Response”

Responses received after the specified due date and time shall result in disqualification of the Applicant's RFP submittal and will not be accepted.

All proposals submitted become the property of Rush County.

Facsimile, printed, electronically submitted, or telephoned proposals will not be considered.

2.4 RFP Question and Answer Process

Written questions are the sole responsibility of the Applicant regarding inquiry about any requirement of this RFP that is not fully understood.

RFP Applicants must submit any technical or procedural questions related to the RFP in writing via e-mail to the following e-mail address:

rjarman@rushcounty.in.gov copy to: broadbandconnect@rushcounty.in.gov

All questions related to the RFP must contain in the subject line of the e-mail the following identifier:

“Rush County - Rural Broadband Coverage – Questions”

All questions must be submitted by the Written Questions Due date specified in 2.2.

The County reserves the right to directly contact Applicants (via e-mail or phone) to clarify questions received.

All submitted questions will receive a written response with the resulting written communications containing questions and answers forwarded to all organizations receiving the original RFP. All question responses will be distributed by the Written Answers Delivered date specified in 2.2.

2.5 Rush County Financial Contribution

The County will provide a direct capital dollar contribution for the project to one or more Applicants under the terms and timelines specified in a negotiated contract. The County funding will be released upon completion and acceptance of agreed upon project milestones.

All deployment, maintenance, and operational costs, including customer acquisition and customer service, will be the responsibility of the Applicant.

The capital financial contribution of the County is explicitly designed to compensate and adjust the overall project's financial metrics to acknowledge that the selected Applicant will be creating and making available specific, pre-defined broadband products within one or more specified geographic areas of Rush County. Contiguous geographic areas are not required.

Applicants shall understand that the County may have one or more funding sources, and that the ultimate source(s) of funding may require appropriations or other governmental proceedings to make the source(s) available. Any awards and/or contracts resulting from this RFP will be subject to the available funds.

Applicants shall consider in their responses the ability of the County to potentially enact a recovery fee to recapture its initial investment as allowable by law depending on the funding source(s).

2.6 General RFP Requirements, Considerations, and Anticipated Contract Terms

The County, at its option, may make a single award for this RFP. The County may also, at its option, make multiple awards. The contract may be awarded on the merits of the whole proposal or only a part of it. By submission of a proposal, each Applicant offers or acknowledges the right of the County to make the award, which is in its best interest. The County may also make no award after the completion of this RFP process.

There is no guarantee a contract will successfully be awarded related to a winning Applicant's response.

The County reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time.

The County is not required to accept the lowest cost proposal.

The County reserves the right to reject any proposal if the evidence submitted by, or investigation of, such Applicant fails to satisfy the County that such Applicant is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and to complete the work contemplated therein

The County reserves the right to accept any proposal, to reject any or all proposals, to reissue a request for proposals, to waive irregularities and/or informalities in any proposal, and to make the award in any manner deemed in the best interest of the County.

The County may make such investigation as deemed necessary to determine the ability of the Applicant to perform the work, and the Applicant shall furnish to the County all such information by the date specified by the County.

The County may conduct such investigations as it deems necessary or appropriate to assist in the evaluation of any RFP response and to establish the responsibility, qualifications, and financial ability of the Applicant, their proposed subcontractors, and other persons or organizations submitted within an Applicant's response to do the work to the County's satisfaction within the prescribed time.

The submission of an RFP response will constitute representation by the Applicant that it understands and has complied with the requirements of the RFP. Submission of a response indicates the RFP information provided was sufficient in scope and detail to convey understanding of anticipated terms and conditions for performance of the work.

While not shown in the schedule above, the County reserves the right to conduct interviews of short-listed Applicant(s) prior to making a final selection.

The information contained in proposals submitted for consideration by the County will be held in confidence only to the extent allowable by law. The County will honor specific requests for confidentiality for information of a proprietary nature only to the extent allowed by law if clearly marked by Applicant as "Proprietary" or "Confidential."

All proposals become public documents and are subject to public review (upon request and as allowed by law). “Proprietary” or “Confidential” items should be noted and will not be eligible for public review to the extent allowed by law. During the RFP process itself, and until a contract is awarded or this process is canceled, all information and documents received are confidential.

RFP Applicants assume all costs of preparation of the proposal.

RFP responses become the property of Rush County.

In submitting an RFP response, the Applicant is not required to submit a bid bond, certified check, or other evidence of financial responsibility.

Rush County is exempt from State, Federal, and Local taxes. Rush County will not be responsible for any taxes levied on the Applicant as a result of the contract resulting from this RFP.

The County acknowledges the potential for a variety of contract frameworks that may result from this RFP process and subsequent contract negotiations; however, any final contract must comply with County requirements.

If chosen for contract negotiation, the selected Applicant candidate must provide a description of all liability and property insurances that would be in place relative to the contract as outlined in this RFP.

The Applicant will be expected to execute a contract within 60 days of notification they have been selected by the County as an awarded candidate. The County reserves the right to select other candidates if a contract is not executed within the 60-day timeline.

The Applicant should expect that disbursement of County capital fund participation will be coordinated with the achievement of specific, mutually agreed-to project milestones. Additionally, a performance bond, construction bond, letter of credit, or other method of surety will be required for all or certain portions of the project scope.

3. Service Areas

The County seeks to close the broadband availability gap throughout Rush County and believes approximately ____ of this population does not have access to fixed broadband solutions.

Based on survey feedback from Rush residents, the County has identified areas with a relatively high number of underserved premises – “dead zones.”

Figure 2 on the following page illustrates underserved areas of the County using address-level data collected by the County. This data is also available as a .kmz file type upon request. Applicants are encouraged to supplement this data with other available sources.

Applicants may also provide proof of underserved areas using proprietary data or other state, federal, or private sources.

Applicants are encouraged to provide response information engineered to the highest level of detail possible for an RFP of this nature.

Rush County GIS mapping resources can be found at: <http://rushcounty.in.gov/geographic-information-system/>

Rush County

| | |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Households | 7,508 |
| Population | 17,392 |
| Test locations | 708 |
| Total Tests | 861 |
| Percent participation | 9.43% |
| Participation goal (10%) | 751 |

Download

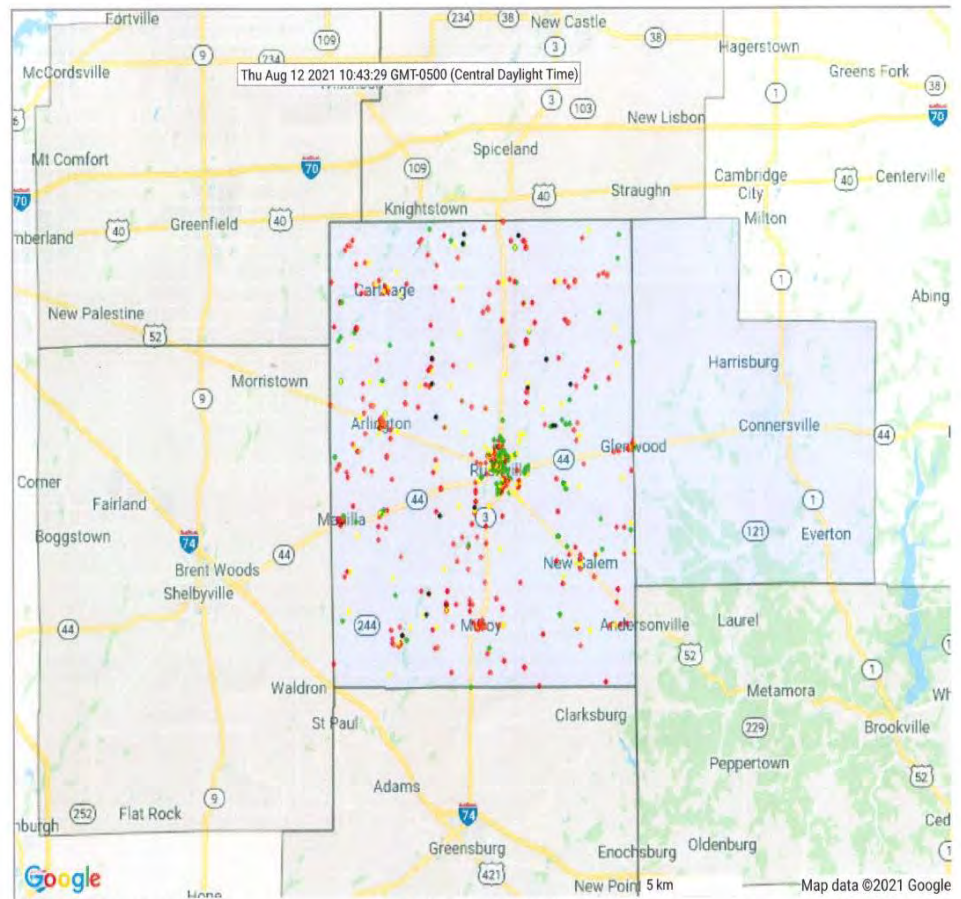
| | | |
|-------------|-----|-------|
| No Service | 24 | 3.4% |
| <0-10 Mbps | 384 | 54.2% |
| 10-25 Mbps | 147 | 20.8% |
| 25-150 Mbps | 132 | 18.6% |
| 150+ Mbps | 21 | 3.0% |

Upload

| | | |
|-------------|-----|-------|
| No Service | 24 | 3.4% |
| <3 Mbps | 385 | 54.4% |
| 3-10 Mbps | 168 | 23.7% |
| 10-25 Mbps | 104 | 14.7% |
| 25-150 Mbps | 17 | 2.4% |
| > 150 Mbps | 10 | 1.4% |

| | Min | Max | Med Mbps |
|-------------------------------------|------|--------|----------|
| Download | 0.01 | 602.37 | 0.95 |
| Upload | 0.01 | 671.33 | 2.14 |
| No service reasons: may total >100% | | | |
| Too Expensive | | | 22.73% |
| Not Available | | | 90.91% |
| Privacy | | | 4.55% |

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Prominent ISPs | 6 of 33 |
| Watch Communications | 147 20.76% |
| Cellco Partnership DBA Verizon W | 145 20.48% |
| Frontier Communications Solution | 120 16.95% |
| Comcast Cable Communications, LL | 112 15.82% |
| no service | 24 3.39% |
| ViaSat, Inc. | 20 2.82% |



Fixed 540 locations

| Download | Upload |
|-------------|--------------------|
| No Service | 24 4.4% |
| 0-10 Mbps | 301 55.7% |
| 10-25 Mbps | 112 20.7% |
| 25-150 Mbps | 82 15.2% |
| 150+ Mbps | 21 3.9% |
| | > 150 Mbps 10 1.9% |

Cellular 168 locations

| Download | Upload |
|-------------|----------|
| 0-10 Mbps | 83 49.4% |
| 10-25 Mbps | 0 0.0% |
| 25-150 Mbps | 50 29.8% |
| 150+ Mbps | 0 0.0% |

CAF Areas

RDOF Areas

Figure 2: Premises Identified Through County Resident Survey

4. Project Requirements

The following section is intended to describe the network and product requirements associated with the Rural Broadband Coverage project.

4.1 Technical Requirements

This RFP does not dictate which technologies or solutions the Applicant should select or build, but rather leaves it to the Applicant to propose technologies that are suitable for deployment and able to reach the target areas. Applicants' proposed solutions should meet the following technical performance requirements:

- System designed to 99.9% uptime.
- Network backhaul capacity per base station site must be 1 Gigabit per second (Gbps) minimum, but capable of scaling to accommodate the maximum customer capacity as designed. Total Internet peering capacity must accommodate the aggregate backhaul bandwidth of all base stations be scalable if implementing a hub-and-spoke design.
- **All products proposed MAY NOT contain monthly data caps or bandwidth/speed reduction due to metered usage.**
- **If Applicant has a technology or solution which does not meet the speed eligibility requirements of ARPA but the technology or solution will reliably serve un/underserved premises with high-speed internet, Applicant is encouraged to submit a proposal which clearly identifies levels of services obtainable and the anticipated number of premises able to be served.**

4.2 Open Access Requirements

There are no requirements for open access related to the Rural Broadband Coverage RFP.

4.3 Network Construction Standards

Applicants should expect that upon successful completion of a negotiated contract for deployment of a rural broadband network, and commencement of work by the selected Applicant, the County will provide inspection oversight to ensure compliance with design and deployment standards per the negotiated contract.

The selected Applicant will fully engineer and permit the project prior to commencement of construction as a function of the negotiated contract.

Deployment of all fiber and fiber-related infrastructure must comply with all National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) codes and laws at the local, state, federal, and private land levels as they pertain to fiber optic installations.

Should wireless technology be selected for deployment, all towers, antennas, and other components utilized to deliver wireless broadband must comply with all FCC regulations regarding tower construction, spectrum registration, and applicable state/county authority over zoning and land use regulations. All newly constructed towers shall become the property of the Applicant; however, the county reserves the right to attach signal capability for Central Dispatch. This right will expire after 2 years if unused. No fees may be charged to County for Central Dispatch use.

The selected Applicant will be expected to have all routes and tower sites surveyed by a licensed surveyor as well as provide the County with GIS/CAD mapping showing the locations of all facilities deployed and service areas of engineered coverage design(s). The County has available certain GIS layers that may prove useful to the applicant, which can be found at: <http://rushcounty.in.gov/geographic-information-system/>. However, Applicant shall note that GIS layers for parcel lines, public easements, and right of ways do not suffice as a survey of for public routes or tower sites.

Other construction requirements that are the responsibility of the Applicant include:

- Provide the County with periodic reports of daily/weekly activities and progression towards milestones, such reports to include information as negotiated in the contract.
- Work with all appropriate agencies to obtain all required right of way approvals. The County is a Certified Broadband Ready Community.
- Obtain all required permits and private easement approvals.
- Coordinate project deployment with all utilities.
- Obtain any necessary contractor licensing issued by the Rush County Building Commission.
- Provide on-site construction inspections to ensure design.
- Coordinate and resolve third party or private claims.
- Repair any and all damages to private property.
- At all times, maintain an adequate staff of experienced and qualified employees for efficient performance.
- At all times, furnish or perform any services in a safe, proper, and workmanlike, manner.

4.4 Network Equipment, Design and Technical Specifications

The Applicant must provide network architecture documentation. These should include:

- Fiber/circuit/RF utilization
- Equipment to be used
- Active equipment locations
- Logical equipment designs and specifications
- Any other documents necessary to define and describe the intended architecture.

Network architecture should consider a redundant topology that provides resiliency in the network. While not every component of the network can be redundant, where feasible the Applicant should take steps to make service offerings as resilient as possible.

It is expected that an Applicant may have some preexisting core Assets (fiber, towers, hut sites, etc.) they intend to utilize in providing services to the proposed service areas. Applicants utilizing preexisting infrastructure should describe how these Assets fit into their proposed network architecture.

The Applicant will be responsible for selecting equipment that can deliver the service as outlined in section 4.1.

4.5 Network Test and Acceptance Standards

The Applicant will be required to demonstrate network performance to specified test standards. These standards will need to be met for services offered and infrastructure built or contracted. Speeds will be tested and proven as negotiated in the contract.

Test standards are outlined in Section 8.

4.6 Presence in County

While the successful Applicant will receive a capital dollar subsidy from the County, the Applicant may also be contributing significant capital and operational Assets and shall demonstrate they can successfully deliver broadband where the network is required to offer service.

A significant component of the scoring criteria will be the County's assessment of the Applicant's proposed presence within the County, demonstrating its ability to provide adequate service and support to its customers.

4.7 Network Deployment Timing

The County intends the project be deployed in a continuous fashion commencing immediately upon contract execution.

The County desires that all Rural Broadband Project(s) be completed prior to September 2024, preferably sooner, or by the negotiated date of the contract with the County. Within their RFP response, Applicants shall provide a proposed schedule for implementation that reflects the most expeditious timeline possible, including engineering, permitting, licensing, construction, and validation.

5. Applicant information

Each Applicant will be requested to provide background history, staff resumes, current capabilities, and financial statements. The County may also request information to support Applicant's track record regarding customer acquisition capabilities and customer service capabilities.

The County may require the successful Applicant(s) to post a letter of credit or performance bond to support its performance obligations. The Applicant shall describe in the RFP response its ability to acquire such surety and denote the limitations of such (e.g., maximum credit lines, bond coverages, etc.)

Startups or new Service Providers with limited performance history are not excluded from participation in the RFP response process; however, they should anticipate providing similar performance and financial due diligence information upon request.

The County reserves the right as a function of the RFP analysis process to require Applicants to identify the source(s) of Applicant's share of project funding.

The County reserves the right to contact references as deemed necessary to complete its analysis.

6. Rating Criteria

The following scoring matrix shall be used to determine successful Applicant(s).

| Criteria | Points | Score |
|--|------------|-------|
| Project Costs and County Contribution | 30 | |
| Overall County contribution - priority given to projects that require less County contribution | 25 | |
| Ability to enact a recovery fee | 5 | |
| Proposed Solution | 35 | |
| Number of premises served – priority given to unserved first, underserved second | 12 | |
| Overall deployment timing - priority given to projects that can be done the quickest | 8 | |
| Adherence to technical requirements set forth in Section 4.1 - priority given to project that can provide at least 100/20 with scalability | 7 | |
| Coverage, topology, and resiliency elements | 3 | |
| Network Design/Proposed Solution | 3 | |
| Reasonably priced product tiers | 2 | |
| Applicant Background, Qualifications, and Capabilities | 35 | |
| Proposed County-wide presence | 12 | |
| Relevant projects | 7 | |
| Knowledge, team, and technical competence | 6 | |
| Financial stability | 5 | |
| Customer service and acquisition capabilities | 5 | |
| TOTAL | 100 | |

7. RFP Response Format

In an effort to expedite the evaluation of the RFP responses received, Applicants are required to organize proposals in the sequence below.

There is no restriction on the number of pages submitted in the proposal.

1. Cover Sheet
2. Executive Summary of Scope of Work
3. Cost Proposal
4. Technical Approach and Work Plan
5. Company Background
6. Statement of Qualifications
7. Company Financial Statement
8. Appendices

7.1 Cover Sheet

Complete the RFP 'Attachment A: Cover Sheet' worksheet provided.

Provide the full legal name of the Applicant, including any previous names or doing-business-as names.

Signature of an owner, corporate officer, or agent authorized by the Applicant is required.

7.2 Executive Summary of Scope of Work

Applicant shall provide an overview of the major features of the RFP submission. Include any suggestions, conclusions, recommendations, or assumptions the Applicant believes are significant to the understanding of the RFP. Sequencing and description of the tasks and/or the time frame for completion of the tasks is required.

7.3 Cost Proposal

Applicant shall provide a detailed breakdown of the total project cost, then clearly indicate the requested County contribution and Applicant's contribution. Attachment C has been provided as a template for the cost proposal. Total project cost shall not include ongoing fees such as licenses, O&M costs, or lease/rent expenses. Additional points will be awarded accordingly for the more Applicant contributes to the total project cost. Should any technical alternatives be included for the County's consideration, a separate cost proposal should be included for each alternative.

7.4 Technical Approach and Work Plan

A detailed scope of work, to include the specific information listed below.

7.4.1 Technical and Procedural Concerns

Address technical and/or procedural concerns that may influence the proposed project. Applicants should also include any assumptions made within their response.

Explain any type of support required from County personnel.

7.4.2 Technical Alternatives

Describe any technical alternatives or exceptions to listed specifications. Cite the applicability of alternative approaches/procedures to address County objectives and the advantages to be gained through their use.

Clearly acknowledge the project technical requirements as outlined in Section 4. Any exceptions the Applicant may have to the technical requirements as outlined in in Section 4 of this RFP must be clearly called out and described.

The inability of an Applicant's proposal to meet the technical requirements and speeds of this RFP is not an automatic means of disqualification. The Applicant shall clearly and thoroughly define any proposed solutions or technical alternatives which may not meet the eligibility requirements of ARPA due to constraints with geography, topography, or excessive costs, but will expand high-speed internet to un/underserved premises.

7.4.3 Implementation Schedule

In this section of the proposal, the Applicant is to describe the anticipated schedule to deploy, operate, and maintain a Broadband Internet Network, including anticipated resources required. Applicant should provide a proposed schedule for design, permitting, construction, and initiation of broadband services to the specified areas of the County. The timeline schedule should include key milestones and phasing plans. Should any technical alternatives be included for the County's consideration, a separate schedule should be included for each alternative.

7.4.4 Staff Capabilities and Experience

Applicant should clearly describe the capabilities, qualifications, and certifications of the staff to be assigned to support the County.

The County realizes that this work effort may require the services of multiple entities organized into a project team. Applicants have the option of engaging the services of subcontractors for completion of this project. If the proposal involves any subcontractors, provide full details on the nature of work to be performed by them.

The division of work assigned to subcontractors must be clearly specified in the Technical Approach and Work Plan section of the Proposal. The subcontractors' qualifications must be detailed in the Company Background section of their proposal. Subcontractor financial statements must also be provided with the Cost Proposal.

7.4.5 Project Location

Describe proposed project location(s). Provide coverage area Asset narratives as applicable to support the proposed design that demonstrates coverage of the project location within the specified area(s). Provide map(s) outlining Asset placement as applicable to support the proposed design that demonstrates coverage of the project location within the specified area(s).

Clearly state how many premises will be covered and at what levels of service.

7.4.6 Service Delivery and Design

Provide detailed service delivery and design information, as outlined in the Applicant's submission, to fully describe the service delivery platform being proposed. Provide a detailed narrative and related diagrams outlining the proposed network design, the specific equipment to be used and verification that it meets the standards specified to deliver the products as outlined in Section 4.

For each product being proposed within the scope of this RFP please provide the following information as applicable:

- Downstream speed
- Upstream speed
- Monthly recurring cost (MRC) – inclusive of estimated taxes and fees.
- One-time non-recurring installation costs (NRC) – inclusive of estimated taxes and fees.
- Narrative of installation requirements/process.
- Service level agreement and performance metrics for each.

7.4.6.1 Wireless Solutions

Wireless solutions are networks that use wireless to reach rural areas for last mile connectivity. Proposed wireless solutions should provide the following information:

- Map of planned tower locations and expected coverage. Coverage maps shall be modeled using equipment that meets County zoning codes.
- Documented tower characteristics such as type and height.
- Document describing Licensed or Unlicensed wireless spectrum to be utilized.
- Detailed description of last mile line of sight requirements.

7.4.6.2 Wireline Solutions

Wireline solutions are networks that utilize fiber or copper (including coaxial cable) for last mile access. Proposed wireline solutions should provide the following information:

- Provide maps describing planned cable installation and preexisting cable routes that support meeting coverage requirements specified in the RFP.
- Document last mile access technology.

7.4.6.3 Point-to-Point Solutions

Applicants may also propose any point-to-point data products or business class Internet products.

7.4.6.4 Services Required

All proposals are required to include a description of the services required as the Applicant's organization would address support of the deployment, operation, and maintenance for the delivery of broadband Internet network products and services throughout the County. Provide a narrative of the current and/or intended presence in the County (i.e., sales, administrative, customer service personnel) in support of the Internet infrastructure established as a result of this RFP.

7.4.6.5 Service Level Agreements

The County has identified the following minimum service level requirements (SLR) which must be followed by the Applicant. Detailed requirements will be mutually defined by the County and selected Service Provider during contract negotiations, and may be amended, added to, and subtracted from by mutual agreement during the contract term.

- ISP Internet access will be available ninety-nine (99) percent of each month.
- ISP Internet access will be expected to deliver 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload.
- ISP will monitor and administer the Internet assets twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week, three hundred sixty-five (365) days per year.
- ISP will provide preventative maintenance whenever possible through proactive installation of patches, upgrades, hot fixes, service packs, and updates.
- ISP will provide constant security monitoring of the Internet assets.
- ISP will provide ongoing capacity management and planning to assure internet traffic throughput meets the required speeds.
- OTHER SLR AS DETERMINED.

General Network and Testing Standard requirements are stated in Section 8 for each type of service.

7.5 Company Background

Please provide the following information as part of the company background and current capabilities:

- Overview of the company history, number of years in operation, and management team. Also, indicate if the company is currently registered to do business in the State of Indiana.
- Overview of the organization's services products and capabilities. Include any brochures or marketing material that would help give the County a better appreciation for its capabilities.
- Outline the company's capacity to handle a project of this size and complexity. If its capacity entails hiring additional staff should the organization be awarded the County contract for this work effort, identify the quantity and type of staff the company envisions adding, and the time frame it anticipates the acquisition to take. The County would prefer that the staff were in place by the time the initial assessment is completed.
- Identify key staff to be assigned to the project with resumes of their personal qualifications.

7.6 Statement of Qualifications

Provide a description of (up to) three (3) projects similar to the one described in this RFP that the company has deployed within the last five (5) years. Outline services offered, geography covered, network design utilized, and customer types served. For each project provide the contact information for the primary reference for each of the projects including: the company/organization name, a primary point of contact, their title, and their phone number. The preference of the County would be to receive a list with both older established sites as well as new installations if possible.

7.7 Company Financial Statement

All Applicants must provide audited financial statements of the entity that would enter a contract with the County (unaudited financial statements are acceptable if Applicant does not have audited financials) from the past three years, and Applicants may also include credit ratings/reports, reference letters from your bank and reference letters from suppliers.

7.8 Appendices

Applicants can attach such documentation as desired to support the RFP response to assist the County to better assess the Applicant's RFP submission. If used, Appendices must be clearly labeled with a purpose for submission.

8. Network and Testing Standards

Applicants will be required to demonstrate network performance to specified test standards. These standards will need to be met for services offered and infrastructure built or contracted.

Test standards will be per user and include the following as outlined:

8.1 Fiber and Cabling Infrastructure:

Applicants shall provide the County with the following testing documentation:

8.1.1 Insertion Loss Test

All optical fiber cables and cable plants shall be tested for insertion loss using Electronic Industries Alliance/Telecommunication Industries Association (EIA/TIA) Standards EIA/TIA 526-14 or EIA/TIA 526-7.

Insertion loss refers to the optical loss of the installed fibers when measured with a test source and power meter (OLTS).

8.1.2 OTDR Testing

The Applicant will be required to test all fiber segments with an optical time domain reflect-o-meter (OTDR). The tests performed are to verify the quality of the installation and for establishing baseline data for future troubleshooting. However, it shall not be used as a measurement of the light loss of the cable.

OTDR measurements should follow procedures outlined in EIA/TIA 455-59, -60, and -61.

The County reserves the right to verify through separate testing the Applicant's test data submitted.

8.2 Wireless Elements:

8.2.1 Coverage Mapping

For all point-to-multipoint wireless technologies, coverage must be tested and documented in a GIS format with documentation provided to the County.

8.2.2 Simulated End User Testing

If a wireless solution is proposed, the County will test Last Mile Elements at a select number of active customer sites per tower deployed. At a minimum, the Applicant will be required to secure and provision one active customer per tower deployed for this test.

To ensure the required coverage specified in Appendix I, the County will also test at the maximum product service delivery levels proposed by the Applicant, at three (3) sites selected by the County. These County selected sites will be located within each specified coverage area. The maximum bandwidth size proposed by the Applicant will be tested at each of these County-selected test sites.

If the selected Applicant's proposed point-to-point data and/or business class Internet bandwidth level products, these are also subject to verification testing by the County at the proposed service delivery level speeds in each Coverage Segment Zone proposed.

Simulated User Testing will consist of:

- Downstream throughput at the speeds proposed by Applicant
- Upstream throughput at the speeds proposed by the Applicant
- Latency of 100 ms or less
- Packet Loss: 99.9% or more packets must be passed

8.3 Leased Capacity or Wireless Point-to-point:

RFC 2544 benchmark testing or equivalent. Test should benchmark throughput, latency, and frame loss at multiple frame sizes to ensure performance is within specifications.

All test results will be documented and delivered to the County.

The County reserves the right to test any and all network components delivered to verify quality standards are met.

8.4 Speed testing to the POP:

Applicant will provide premise by premise speed test results to the Point of Presence at the customer premise at the completion of installation, and will provide a random sample of at least 10% of the connected premises on an annual basis

ATTACHMENT A: COVER SHEET

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of Person, Business or Organization: | |
| Type of Entity: | |
| Federal Tax ID Number: | |
| DUNS Number: | |
| Contact Person – Name | |
| Contact Person – Address | |
| Contact Person – Phone Number(s) | |
| Contact Person – E-mail address(es) | |

By signing this **Cover Sheet** I hereby attest: that I have read and understood all the terms listed in the RFP; have read and understood all terms listed in this proposal; that I am authorized to bind the listed entity into this agreement; and that should this proposal be accepted, I am authorized and able to secure the resources required to deliver against all terms listed within the RFP as published by Rush County, Indiana, including any amendments or addenda thereto except as explicitly noted or revised in my submitted proposal.

Signature of Authorized Representative

Printed Name of Authorized Representative

Date

Printed Title of Authorized Representative

ATTACHMENT B: NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATE

By submission of this proposal, each vendor and each person signing on behalf of any vendor certifies, and in the case of a joint quotation each party thereto certifies, as to its own organization, under penalty of perjury, that to the best of his knowledge and belief:

1. The prices in this quotation have been arrived at independently without collusion, consultation, communications, or agreement for the purpose of restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such prices with any other vendor or with any competitor;
2. Unless otherwise required by law, the prices which have been quoted in this proposal have not been knowingly disclosed by the vendor and will not knowingly be disclosed by the vendor, directly or indirectly, to any other vendor or to any competitor;
3. No attempt has been made or will be made by the vendor to include any other person, partnership, or corporation to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition; and
4. No employee of Rush County, Indiana, has received or will receive any payment or any other form of financial compensation from the Vendor as the result of award of this contract or promise of award to vendor.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Company: _____

Date: _____

Before me, a notary public in and for said county and state, personally appeared

_____, who acknowledged the truth of the statements

In the foregoing affidavit on this _____ day of _____, 2021.

Notary Public: _____

Name: _____

County of Residence: _____

My Commission Expires: _____

ATTACHMENT D: TECHNICAL ALTERNATIVES (OPTIONAL)

Use this form to identify costs only if the Applicant has outlined technical alternatives as part of its response to this RFP

Vendor Name: _____

| CATEGORY* | COST ESTIMATE |
|--|---------------|
| Technical Alternative 1 (SPECIFY)** | |
| A. | |
| B. | |
| C. | |
| D. | |
| E. | |
| Technical Alternative 1 Project Total | |
| | |
| Technical Alternative 2 (SPECIFY) | |
| A. | |
| B. | |
| C. | |
| D. | |
| E. | |
| Technical Alternative 2 Project Total | |

Cost Project Total

NOTES:

*Category - please insert the needed categories for the technical alternative. Insert rows as needed to provide the full cost estimate of the technical alternative.

**Technical Alternative - please be sure to include a cost proposal for each of the technical alternatives provided in the RFP response.