

THE FAYETTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

# REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

FOR

Completion and Presentation of the

## **Fayette County Rural Broadband Coverage and Feasibility Study (RFQ # 22-01)**

### **INQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:**

Mark Rafail

Fayette County Economic Development Coordinator

E-mail Address: [FayetteBroadbandRFQ@gmail.com](mailto:FayetteBroadbandRFQ@gmail.com)

Telephone Number: 724-430-1200 ext. 1501

### **QUALIFICATION PROPOSALS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:**

Controller's Office

Fayette County Courthouse

61 East Main Street

Uniontown, PA 15401

Telephone Number: 724-430-1200

The Fayette County Board of Commissioners is  
an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer

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***I. GENERAL INFORMATION***

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**A. Purpose**

This is a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the compilation and timely completion (by December 5, 2022) of a comprehensive analysis and feasibility study consisting of current rural broadband accessibility along with a needs assessment and strategy for future rural broadband access, development and expansion in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. The preferred end result is the availability of highspeed internet to the home at a speed of 100 mg upload; 100 mg download.

**B. Who May Respond**

Any organization/firm, or team of organizations/firms, with appropriate expertise may respond.

**C. Description of Entity**

The contracting agency will be the Fayette County Board of Commissioners.

**D. RFQ Time Frame**

**1. Schedule**

The schedule below is expected to be followed during the procurement period of this RFQ:

RELEASE of RFQ.....May 5, 2022

MANDATORY MEETING... May 11, 2022; A mandatory meeting will be held at 2:00 p.m. on May 11, 2022 at the Fayette County Commissioners Conference Room in the Fayette County Courthouse, 61 East Main Street, Uniontown, PA 15401 to detail the scope of services and answer any questions of consultants. Any interested consultant must attend the meeting (either in person or virtually) to submit a response.

RECEIPT OF RFQ.....June 2, 2022; Qualifications must be *received by the Controller's Office no later than 2:00 P.M.* on **June 2, 2022** and will be *publicly opened at 3:00 P.M.* on same date in the Fayette County Commissioners Conference Room. At time of opening, the qualifications will be acknowledged, but will not be read aloud nor any information disclosed.

**2. Inquiries**

Questions regarding the Request for Qualifications, the proposal process and program specifications shall be in writing via email only and sent to Mark Rafail at [FayetteBroadbandRFQ@gmail.com](mailto:FayetteBroadbandRFQ@gmail.com) no later than **3:00 p.m.** on **May 24, 2022**. Broadband Subcommittee and Fayette County staff will not conduct private or unilateral consultations with Respondents prior to the receipt of RFQ proposals. Response to all questions shall be simultaneously emailed by Mark Rafail to all registered perspective respondents.

**3. Submission Instructions**

Qualification proposals must be submitted in written/typed format (a total of **5 copies in a sealed envelope** marked “**RFQ # 22-01**” to the following address:

**Controller’s Office**  
Fayette County Courthouse  
61 East Main Street  
Uniontown, PA 15401

It is the responsibility of the consultant to ensure that the proposal is received by the Fayette County Controller’s Office by the date and time specified above. Late proposals will not be considered.

**4. Conditions of Qualifications Proposal**

All costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal responding to this RFQ will be the responsibility of the consultant and will not be reimbursed by the Fayette County Board of Commissioners.

**5. Right to Reject/Accept**

Following receipt and review of the qualifications, interviews may be conducted with the responsible offerors who submitted qualifications. The Fayette County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to select for contract negotiations, the responsible offeror whose qualifications are determined to be most advantageous to the County. The RFQ may be canceled or any or all qualifications may be rejected, in whole or in part, when the County determines that it is in their best interest to do so.

**6. Notification of Award**

Upon conclusion of final negotiations with the successful consultant, all offerors submitting proposals in response to this RFQ will be informed, in writing, of the name of the successful consultant.

**E. Rural Broadband Coverage Analysis and Feasibility Study (Study) Contract Information**

**1. Type of Contract**

The Study contract will be a negotiated fixed price. The Fayette County Board of Commissioners will prepare a written agreement for execution between the successful consultant and the Fayette County Board of Commissioners. The general provisions of this agreement, the final work study and requirements placed on the project shall be made a part of this agreement. The consultant shall have authorization to proceed upon a written notice from the Fayette County Board of Commissioners.

**2. Period of Performance**

The period of performance for completion of the Study will be from June 16, 2022 through December 5, 2022. (Study estimated to take a maximum of 5.5 months to complete).

**3. Payment**

Mutually agreeable payment terms for preparation and completion of the Study shall be defined during the negotiations however quarterly payments with invoices detailing work performed that allows the Fayette County Board of Commissioners to determine that satisfactory progress is being made is preferred. Upon delivery of the final copies of the Study to the Fayette County Board of Commissioners and its acceptance and approval, the consultant may submit a bill for the balance due on the contract.

**4. Options**

At the discretion of the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, this contract can be terminated at any time or extended beyond the specified contract period.

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## **II. QUALIFICATIONS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

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### **A. RFQ Proposal Format**

Proposals should not exceed 15 pages in length and should be typed on 8.5 X 11 inch pages with margins no smaller than one inch. Font size should be no smaller than 12 point.

The Broadband Subcommittee may also require a perspective consultant to attend a meeting and/or participate in a conference call in order to discuss the proposal.

### **B. RFQ Proposal Outline**

#### **1. Executive Summary**

This section shall consist of the RFQ proposal cover letter, highlighting the contents of this proposal, and bearing the authorized representative's signature. Briefly state your understanding of Fayette County's needs. Summarize your firm's qualifications for providing these services in a timely manner. Include any material assumptions that either enhance or limit service performance.

#### **2. Understanding of Work to be Performed**

The consultant should demonstrate its understanding of why this program is needed and how it will meet the customers' needs. The consultant shouldn't repeat the scope of work but rather the role of the consultant's organization in the implementation and completion of the study.

#### **3. Technical Approach**

This section shall include, in narrative, outline, and/or graph form the proposed approach to accomplishing the tasks outlined in the Scope of Work section of this RFQ. A description of each task and deliverable and the schedule for accomplishing each shall be included. The narrative should provide detailed expectations (if any) of the Broadband Subcommittee and/or Fayette County staff for support, as well as any hardware, software, or office space needs.

#### **4. Service Delivery Process**

The RFQ must describe how the consultant proposes to complete all tasks identified in the Statement of Work included in Section IV of this RFQ. The consultant must also include a timeline that denotes the completion of each task within the limits of the specified period of performance.

#### **5. Organizational Experience/Past Performance**

The consultant should describe its organization, size, and structure. The consultant should describe its prior experience that qualifies the consultant's organization to fill the role based on past performance of the same or similar programs. The consultant must identify any subconsultants and their qualifications.

Each consultant must provide a list (not to exceed 5) of prior customers for whom related work was performed. The list shall include the company name, contact person's name and title, full mailing address, telephone, e-mail address, and fax number for the contact person.

## **6. Staff Qualifications**

The consultant should identify all personnel that will be assigned to the project, including contact information such as address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail address. The consultant should also describe the relevant qualifications of staff to perform the proposed service, including technical, educational, and work background. This section of the proposal should include descriptions of staff team makeup, overall supervision of staff, and prior experience of the individual staff team members. Once the contract period starts, the consultant may not change staffing for the project unless agreed upon by the Fayette County Board of Commissioners. The consultant must submit the requested staffing change to the Fayette County Board of Commissioners in writing.

## **7. Performance Measurement**

Explain the mechanisms within the agency to track, monitor, and ensure the attainment of work elements.

## **8. Administrative Assurances**

Administrative Assurances are included in Section V. of this RFQ. Proposals must contain a statement verifying that the consultant will agree to these assurances if selected for award.

## **9. Cost Proposal**

The consultant is required to include (under sealed, separate attached cover) an estimated budget with its RFQ detailing how money would be spent for the tasks listed in Section IV. Statement of Work. The cost of each work activity defined under the Objectives/Scope of Work must be identified separately.

Proposal costs must include:

- a. Personnel costs (including hourly rates and total hours)
- b. Travel and Subsistence Expenses
- c. Subconsultant Costs (if any)
- d. Other Costs (e.g., office expenses)
- e. TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: This amount shall not be binding to either party as the contract price shall be negotiated between parties upon award of the RFQ.

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### **III. QUALIFICATIONS PROPOSAL EVALUATION**

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#### **A. Qualifications Proposal Contents**

All proposals must follow the specified format and include all required elements listed in Section II of this RFQ.

#### **B. Non-responsive Qualifications Proposals**

Proposals may be judged non-responsive and removed from further consideration if any of the following occur:

1. The proposal is not received **by Thursday, June 2, 2022 at 2:00 P.M.**
2. The proposal does not follow the specified format.
3. The proposal does not include a statement regarding agreement with Administrative Assurances.
4. The Consultant does not acknowledge receipt of email and/or other correspondence.

#### **C. Review Process**

All prospective consultants must provide an email address to which responses to questions will be sent. Should the consultant have questions concerning the RFQ they must be in writing and received by Mark Rafail / Economic Development Coordinator at [FayetteBroadbandRFQ@gmail.com](mailto:FayetteBroadbandRFQ@gmail.com) no later than 3:00 p.m. on May 24, 2022. All responses to questions will be provided via email to all consultants of record. The Coordinator and Fayette County Board of Commissioners will make every effort to provide the written responses in a timely fashion, but failure to do so will not affect the sole authority of the Fayette County Board of Commissioners to complete the RFQ process.

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## IV. STATEMENT OF WORK

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### Fayette County Rural Broadband / Coverage and Feasibility Study

#### Scope of Work:

**General Scope of Work:** The consultant shall coordinate this scope of work with the staff of Fayette County and the County's Partners for the compilation and timely completion (by December 5, 2022) of a comprehensive analysis and feasibility study consisting of current rural broadband accessibility along with a needs assessment and strategy for future rural broadband access, development and expansion in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. The preferred end result is the availability of highspeed internet to the home at a speed of 100 mg upload; 100 mg download.

#### Detailed Scope of Work (Tasks):

1. Review Fayette County's assets (including agriculture and tourism), coordinate with the 2019 Fayette County Comprehensive Plan's mapped assets of critical infrastructure, Federal Opportunity Zones, and Pennsylvania Keystone Opportunity Zones. (Task to be completed by July 18, 2022).
2. Conduct a field survey to establish a baseline of existing broadband access, broadband speeds and providers, and other existing internet technology throughout the County, as well as currently planned and in process expansion through public and private partnerships. Information obtained through this process will be mapped as part of the study.
3. Determine potential customer demand, including agriculture and tourism, and estimate new service uptake rates; coordinate with the 2019 Fayette County Comprehensive Plan's Priority Investment Areas. (Task to be completed by September 19, 2022).
4. Compile survey data to isolate and prioritize areas that need broadband access. (To be completed by October 17, 2022).
5. Define the gaps in service, meet and review assessments and planned projects with existing broadband providers, determine the best and most feasible technology for each service area (i.e., dark fiber, towers, white space, cable, etc.), and recommended broadband speed based on geography, demographics, and proximity to anchor institutions. (To be completed by November 21, 2022).
6. Analyze all regulatory/legal issues pertaining to service areas. (To be completed by November 30, 2022).
7. Develop an implementation matrix that includes roles/responsibilities, timeframe for implementation, and a funding strategy (including funding source description, source anticipated application period, award range, eligible projects/costs, match amount, and ineligible costs). Identify coordination efforts required on federal, state (legislative caucuses, Broadband sub-committees, Governor's Office of Broadband initiatives, etc.), and local (existing providers) level. (To be completed by November 30, 2022).

#### Deliverables

- Electronic copy and 10 hardcopies.
- Presentation of final report to the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Broadband Subcommittee, and Fayette County staff on December 5, 2022.



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**V. IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND DATES**

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**Important Dates:**

This is a tentative schedule and dates are subject to change. Time is of the essence.

Release of RFQ	May 5, 2022
Mandatory Pre-Proposal Meeting	May 11, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.
Qualifications Due:	June 2, 2022 at 2:00 P.M.
Approval of Selected Vendor:	June 16, 2022
Task #1 Due Date:	July 18, 2022
Task #2 Due Date:	August 22, 2022
Task #3 Due Date:	September 19, 2022
Task #4 Due Date:	October 17, 2022
Task #5 Due Date:	November 21, 2022
Task #6 Due Date:	November 30, 2022
Task #7 Due Date:	November 30, 2022
Final Presentations:	December 5, 2022

**For all Inquiries Contact by EMAIL ONLY:**

MARK RAFAIL / Fayette County Economic Development Coordinator  
[FayetteBroadbandRFQ@gmail.com](mailto:FayetteBroadbandRFQ@gmail.com)

**Execution of the Contract**

The Respondent that is awarded the Project based on its submitted Qualifications will be notified by the Fayette County Board of Commissioners and contract negotiations will commence immediately thereafter. The contract will be on a form acceptable to the Fayette County Board of Commissioners.

**Right of First Refusal**

The Fayette County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals, to waive any minor irregularities in this Request for Proposal or the Proposal and to make awards in the best interest of Fayette County.

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## **VI. ADMINISTRATIVE ASSURANCES**

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The purpose of emphasizing the following assurances is to highlight specific requirements and does not limit the consultant's other responsibilities in any way. The consultant is required to ensure that all state and federal laws, regulations, and policies are adhered to.

The consultant assures that:

- The consultant will designate a Project Manager to be responsible for the overall implementation of the project, direct interaction with all project partners, resolution of all issues and concerns, and attendance at required meetings.
- The consultant-designated Project Manager will attend project meetings and subcommittee meetings as requested to provide status updates on the project and address any related issues or concerns raised by the project participants. The Project Manager may send a representative to attend meetings in his/her place as long as prior arrangements have been made with Mark Rafail / Fayette County Economic Development Coordinator.
- The consultant will submit monthly progress reports to the Fayette County Board of Commissioners that document the work performed during the past month, work planned for the next month, and all issues or concerns that are pertinent to the project. These reports and invoices will be submitted electronically to Mark Rafail / Fayette County Economic Development Coordinator, before the fifth day of each month.

## Exhibit A

### **NONDISCRIMINATION/SEXUAL HARASSMENT CLAUSE**

During the term of the contract, Consultant agrees as follows:

1. In the hiring of any employee(s) for the manufacture of supplies, performance of work, or any other activity required under the contract or any subcontract, the Consultant, subconsultant, or any person acting on behalf of the Consultant or subconsultant shall not, by reason of gender, race, creed, or color, discriminate against any citizen of this Commonwealth who is qualified and available to perform the work to which the employment relates.
2. Neither the Consultant nor any subconsultant nor any person on their behalf shall in any manner discriminate against or intimidate any employee involved in the manufacture of supplies, the performance of work, or any other activity required under the contract on account of gender, race, creed, or color.
3. Consultants and subconsultants shall establish and maintain a written sexual harassment policy and shall inform their employees of the policy. The policy must contain a notice that sexual harassment will not be tolerated and employees who practice it will be disciplined.
4. Consultants shall not discriminate by reason of gender, race, creed, or color against any subconsultant or supplier who is qualified to perform the work to which the contract relates.
5. The Consultant and each subconsultant shall furnish all necessary employment documents and records to and permit access to their books, records, and accounts by the contracting agency and the [Bureau of Contract Administration and Business Development], for purposes of investigation, to ascertain compliance with provisions of this Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause. If the Consultant or any subconsultant does not possess documents or records reflecting the necessary information requested, the Consultant or subconsultant shall furnish such information on reporting forms supplied by the contracting agency or the [Bureau of Contract Administration and Business Development].
6. The Consultant shall include the provisions of this Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause in every subcontract so that such provisions will be binding upon each subconsultant.
7. The Fayette County Board of Commissioners may cancel or terminate the contract and all money due or to become due under the contract may be forfeited for a violation of the terms and conditions of this Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment Clause. In addition, the agency may proceed with debarment or suspension and may place the Consultant in the Consultant Responsibility File.