

Request For Proposals

Broadband Expansion for Rural Areas of Shelby County, OH

1. Basic Information

RFP Issue Date: Tuesday, February 15th, 2022

Proposal Due Date: Tuesday, March 8th, 2022 2:00 p.m.

Eligibility: Experience and expertise to implement broadband infrastructure, inter-operative with existing fiber and Ethernet network in Shelby County

Issuer: Shelby County Commissioners

Address: 129 E. Court Street, Sidney, OH 45365

In an effort to develop a broadband strategy to benefit the entire county, the Shelby County Commissioners are seeking a proposal for the expansion of middle mile broadband services of a ring to network system. The proposal would provide the ability to expand broadband service to unserved and underserved residents using the County's existing fiber and Ethernet network infrastructure in the following rural areas of the County:

- Houston (Washington Township) to Russia (Loramie Township)
- Jackson Center (Jackson Township) to Port Jefferson (Salem Township)

Investment of current broadband infrastructure in Shelby County is required. The entity must be willing to collaborate with County officials and community leaders in villages and townships. Proposal should allow "open access" for last-mile connections in order to allow for use by multiple providers.

The project shall be completed no later than December 31st, 2023.

2. Executive Summary

Broadband access is critical to education, healthcare, economic development and workforce development efforts in Shelby County. Lack of reliable and affordable broadband is a significant barrier to remote learning for the youth of Shelby County. Access to telehealth services for residents of all ages and the increase in work from home options requires enhanced broadband infrastructure, equipment, and access. Currently many households in the rural areas of Shelby County lack the resources needed for broadband services.

3. Background Information

Shelby County is comprised of one city, 8 villages and 14 townships. The County has a population of 48,337 with approximately 21,046 residents living in the rural areas of the county. Over the past several years, Shelby County (MPO: Sidney) has enjoyed significant economic growth, placing as one of the top 25 performing micropolitan areas in the nation in recent years.

Broadband access is an increasingly important factor in advancing the economic development of a community, by lowering business costs, improving productivity, attracting businesses, retaining highly skilled residents, and improving economic vitality. Ready access to broadband also promotes community goals related to education, quality of life, and operational efficiency of local government.

Shelby County Commissioners are in strong support of expanding broadband access in rural areas of Shelby County. Prior to the pandemic, it was known the rural areas did not have adequate access, yet it was difficult to determine if the impediments were due to affordability, accessibility or knowledge of available solutions.

Spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an upswing of remote learning from local school districts to colleges, implementation of telehealth services by health care providers as well as work-from-

home opportunities. The current state of broadband availability in Shelby County presents a challenge for residents to have reliable services to meet the bandwidth needs of single or multiple online users.

It is recognized that a strong and reliable backbone is necessary for current broadband needs as well as meeting the needs of the future. By investing in a middle mile solution, the County's long-term goal of full deployment of broadband Internet service throughout all of the county's townships and villages will be possible.

4. Project Description

This Request for Proposal is seeking experience and expertise of broadband infrastructure for middle mile implementation in rural areas of Shelby County, specific to the areas of Houston (Washington Township) to Russia (Loramie Township) and Jackson Center (Jackson Township) to Port Jefferson (Salem Township).

4.1 Objectives

More specifically, the County expects to achieve the following objectives:

- identify assets that can facilitate the deployment of broadband infrastructure
- construct middle mile infrastructure for long term goal of full deployment of broadband Internet services
- open access for last mile connection, allowing for a competitive marketplace for end-users

4.2 Key Issues and Areas of Concern

4.2.1 Definitions

Broadband – It is realized the term 'broadband' has a wide range of speed, for this proposal, we are seeking middle mile Gigabit delivery via fiber

Middle Mile – the physical mid-section of the infrastructure required to enable internet connectivity for government services

4.2.2 Use of Existing County Infrastructure

An inventory of proposed service towers in Shelby County are as follows:

Jackson Center Water Tower, 523 N. Main Street, Jackson Center, Ohio 45334

Russia Water Tower, 110 Russia Road, Russia, Ohio 45363

Houston Volunteer Fire Department Inc., 5055 Russia Houston Road, Houston, Ohio 45333

4.2.3 Infrastructure Assistance & Funding

The submitter shall be responsible for all permits and easements.

The Shelby County Commissioners have identified a significant portion of County ARPA funds to be dedicated to broadband expansion for the County. A portion, related to the population served for these projects, will be made available for this project.

4.2.4 Affordability and Digital Equity

- Provide current end-user cost structure on a monthly basis from basic package to enhanced level package. Identify how rates would be affected by this project investment.
- Provide resources available for low-income Internet assistance.

4.2.5 Maps & Coverage

Submit a map of current infrastructure, coverage and future build-outs. It is understood maps may be considered proprietary, submitted maps will be reviewed and used for the limited purpose of the technology firms proposal.

4.2.6 Network Redundancy

Proposal should identify how the firm currently ensures network redundancy and will continue to ensure network redundancy in its build-out in Shelby County.

4.2.7 Accessibility

Please list current offices and/or staff who are maintained in the County or closest to Shelby County.

4.2.8

Identify the carriers, ISPs, etc., who are currently utilizing the submitters network(s) within Shelby County

5. Scope of Work

Submitter to provide a scope of work that describes task-by-task how you plan to accomplish the required work. Said scope should include tasks for review of work by the County. Effort should be made to keep the length of this section under three (3) pages.

6. Required Proposal Information

The Technical Proposal and the Cost Proposal are to be submitted together.

6.1 Technical Proposal

- Cover Letter: This letter should introduce your firm and team and should be limited to two (2) pages.
- Statement of Qualifications: Include a statement of your firm's qualifications to perform the work associated with broadband expansion of middle mile implementation in rural areas.
 - The statement should include information describing three (3) completed projects of a similar size and complexity finished within the past five (5) years. Provide client contact personnel and telephone numbers for each project. Similar material should be provided for each sub-consultant participating in the project. This material should be limited to three (3) pages.
- Organization and Staffing: Include an organizational chart showing your firm's project management team and their organizational relationship.
 - Provide resumes for the project team, including a resume for the Project Manager and for each proposed sub-consultant, if applicable. Each resume should be no more than one (1) page in length.
- Project Schedule: Provide a timeline that shows the planned starting time and duration of each task in your scope of work.

6.2 Cost Proposal

- Cover Letter: This letter should point out any conditions which could affect your firm's costs.
- Cost of Services: Provide a table that shows your firm's estimated cost for the services, listed by task.
- Extra Work: Provide any other cost factors which you would need to price extra work.

6.3 Annual Report of Fiscal Assessment

Submit a copy of the technology firms PUCO Annual Report or equivalent.

7. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The County intends to evaluate and rank the technical proposals received by utilizing the following criteria:

- Qualifications of the Firm: Based on experience and projects similar to this project.
- References: Based on quality of references.
- Schedule: Based on thoroughness and reasonableness of the proposed schedule.

The County is not bound to select any of the firms submitting proposals, and is not liable for any costs of preparation and submittal of proposals, including any presentations made to the Rural Broadband Task Force.

8. General Information

- The County reserves the right to reject any and all submittals.
- The proposal and this RFP shall jointly become part of the agreement for services for this project when said agreement is fully executed by the County.
- Subcontractors/subconsultants (subcontractors): The Proposer may utilize the services of subcontractors on those parts of the work which, under normal contracting practices, are performed by specialty subcontractors. Unless a specific subcontractor is listed by the Proposer, Proposer is representing to the County that Proposer has all appropriate licenses, certifications, and registrations to perform the work hereunder. The proposer shall be fully responsible to the County for the performance of his/her subcontractors, and of persons either directly or indirectly employed by them. Nothing contained herein shall create any contractual relation between any subcontractor and the County.

The following is the County's tentative schedule for selection of a firm:

- Issuance of RFP: Tuesday, February 15th, 2022
- Deadline for RFP Submittal: Tuesday, March 8th, 2022 @ 2pm
- Completion of Review of Proposals: Friday, March 18th, 2022
- Interviews (if Necessary): Tuesday, March 15th and/or Thursday, March 17th, 2022
- Selection of Consultant: by Tuesday, March 22nd, 2022

Three (3) hard copies and an electronic copy of each proposal must be received by 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 8th, 2022 at the following physical and email address:

Shelby County Commissioners
129 E. Court Street
Sidney, OH 45365
ahamberg@shelbycountyrpc.com

If there are questions about the RFP, please contact Angela Hamberg, Executive Director, Shelby County Regional Planning Commission, at the following:

ahamberg@shelbycountyrpc.com
937-498-7273