



**Request for Proposals (RFP) for  
Broadband Planning Coordinator**

**Due Date: October 23, 2020**

General Information

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Contract Period: December 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022

Point of Contact:

John W. Hemmings III

Executive Director

Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission

(740) 947-2853

[jhemmings@ovrdc.org](mailto:jhemmings@ovrdc.org)

**Request for Proposals**

The Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission (OVRDC) is requesting proposals from experienced firms, groups, or individuals to perform Broadband Planning Coordinator duties in the 12-county OVRDC region in southern Ohio. This is a contract-based position, and the selected contractor shall be responsible for all expenses incurred while performing services. Compensation which shall include related expenses will be negotiated but will include consideration for experience. This project and RFP are supported by CARES Act funding through the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA).

**Background & Description**

The successful RFP respondent will serve as the Broadband Planning Coordinator for the 12-county OVRDC region in southern Ohio under the general supervision of the OVRDC Executive Director.

The Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission (OVRDC) is a public regional planning commission established in 1967 that serves as a Local Development District for the Appalachian Regional Commission, as an Economic Development District for the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, and as a Regional Transportation Planning Organization for the Ohio Department of Transportation. OVRDC coordinates federal, state and local resources to encourage development and improve quality of life by offering technical assistance, planning and support for economic development, community development and transportation projects in 12 southern Ohio counties: Adams, Brown, Clermont, Fayette, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton.

### **Scope of Services/ Specific Responsibilities**

This is an independent contractor/consulting position. The Broadband Planning Coordinator will be offered a contract of up to nineteen (19) months.

The firm, group, or person selected should be flexible and able to work independently, able to structure their own workdays and able to complete their work within the general timetable established by OVRDC per the contract.

Other relevant skills include the ability to work well with others and undertake joint projects; and a willingness to participate in special training programs, conferences, workshops, and classes as required. The work environment may involve flexible hours, including availability outside normal office hours, as needed. The Broadband Planning Coordinator must be available for travel.

Specific Responsibilities include:

#### **1. Service and Infrastructure Analysis**

Complete an analysis of the incumbent Internet service providers (ISPs) and existing broadband infrastructure in the region. Provide a clear picture of the state of broadband in the study area and how any forthcoming network(s) will fit into that landscape. Analysis should identify service models that could be utilized in the region. Outcomes will include GIS maps detailing the physical extent of fiber-optic lines, service areas, incumbency, and level of service provided to all parts of the region. Areas served by fixed wireless should also be documented. A geographic information system (GIS) map of the twelve-county area will be developed that includes known fiber assets, fixed wireless, FAA-registered vertical structures, business data (if purchased) and household locations. While not all ISPs may provide the data, available fiber records will provide a useful basis for planning and analysis, aiding the project team, informing businesses considering locating in the area and helping communications companies considering deployments. OVRDC will be able to add the layers with this new information along with business locations (data to be purchased by OVRDC), population, and household (by age and income) data by census block. Consultant will be expected to directly contact ISPs, the FCC, and other agencies for broadband specific data and include any field verification being conducted by Connected Nation or other entities.

- 2. Technology and Trends Review**  
Conduct a review of current trends in telecommunications technologies and the industries they support. Assess which technologies are most viable to serve the entire region and to safeguard against obsolescence.
- 3. Site Analysis**  
Complete a site analysis to discover whether existing public assets and/or land can be used to better facilitate network construction and operation.
- 4. Needs Assessment and Outreach**  
Complete a needs assessment for larger-scale use of broadband for area businesses, industrial/manufacturing industries, schools (K-12 and post-secondary), medical facilities, and other anchor economic development institutions. Receive and take into consideration stakeholder concerns and input and ensure the needs of the business community are known and met. This will be facilitated through online surveys, community interviews, enterprise business interviews, and small and medium business interviews. The selected Consultant will interview a cross-section of businesses and “anchor” institutions such as K-12, colleges and universities, healthcare, and government. A sufficient number of interviews should be conducted to ensure a representative sampling of the service area to support region-wide extrapolation and validity. OVRDC will provide a purchased database of businesses in the region and will assist with facilitating responses through OVRDC’s existing members and contacts.
- 5. Project Identification**  
Working with OVRDC stakeholders, develop a prioritized list of projects for expansion of broadband service to unserved and underserved areas including rural, remote, and residential areas. Identify potential ISPs, technologies, funding strategies for project implementation to include potential for public/private partnerships, affordability, financing, and sustainability. OVRDC stakeholders will include the Executive Board, local economic development professionals, representatives of the business community, schools, and hospitals.
- 6. Progress Reports**  
Consultant will prepare written quarterly progress reports to include major work activities completed, issues of concern, schedule update, and costs.
- 7. Stakeholder Meetings**  
In conjunction with OVRDC, Consultant will facilitate three stakeholder meetings during the course of the project. These meeting may be conducted virtually or in-person.
- 8. Final Report**  
Develop a final report so that the OVRDC region will be equipped with the tools necessary to facilitate deployment of high-speed, reliable, affordable broadband throughout the entire region. Short-term and long-term solutions shall be identified along with associated costs for deployment. Consultant shall prepare a draft report by March 2022 for review by OVRDC with the final report due by June 1, 2022.

**9. Final Presentation**

Consultant will conduct a final presentation documenting the results and recommendations of the study at an OVRDC Executive Committee Meeting. Final presentation shall to the OVRDC Executive Committee shall be no later than the June 2022 meeting.

**Questions and Clarifications**

Any questions concerning this RFP may be submitted by email on or before October 21, 2020 as follows:

John W. Hemmings III  
Executive Director  
Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission  
[jhemmings@ovrdc.org](mailto:jhemmings@ovrdc.org)

Entities are expected to raise any questions, exceptions, or additions they have concerning the RFP document or its requirements at this point in the RFP process. If an entity discovers any significant ambiguity, error, conflict, discrepancy, omission or other deficiency in this RFP, the entity should immediately notify OVRDC.

**Procedure for RFP Submittal**

Submit electronic copies of Proposals. Submittals should include the information outlined below. Proposals should be submitted electronically by 12 Noon EST on October 23, 2020:

John W. Hemmings III  
Executive Director  
Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission  
[jhemmings@ovrdc.org](mailto:jhemmings@ovrdc.org)

Proposals received after 12 Noon EST October 23, 2020 will not be considered.

Proposals should be limited to no more than 25 pages including attachments.

Failure to respond to each of the requirements in the RFP may be the basis for rejecting a response. Entities should respond clearly and completely on all requirements. Entities must be as concise as possible with respect to presenting a clear and complete proposal.

Deviations and exceptions from terms, conditions, or specifications from this RFP shall be described fully on the entity’s letterhead, signed, and attached to the response. In the absence of such statement, the proposal shall be accepted as in strict compliance with all terms, conditions, and specifications and the entity shall be held liable.

This RFP is the official media governing proposal procedures. No other documents, letters, or oral instructions shall have any influence whatsoever, unless incorporated by reference herein, or unless an official amendment is made to this document by OVRDC.

## **Qualification Statements**

Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) should include the following:

- Qualifications, Experience and Capabilities:** Describe the qualification and capabilities of implementing the scope of services. Include qualifications associated with writing & managing federal & state grants, working with multiple stakeholders, experience in broadband planning and/or implementation particularly in rural and Appalachian areas. Include knowledge and familiarity with the people and socio-economic conditions of the Appalachia Ohio and the OVRDC region. Include project summaries of relevant projects completed. Summarize the scope of services and provide client contact information.
  
- Key Staff Assigned to Project:** Provide an organization chart identifying personnel assigned to this proposal, including their roles and anticipated level of involvement. Personnel identified in the proposal must be the principal staff that will work with OVRDC and represent the majority of hours billed. Resumes shall not exceed 3 pages in length.
  
- History of Company (if applicable):** Full disclosure regarding the company status, and status of parent companies, subsidiaries, affiliates, and subcontractors as potential responsible parties, including but not limited to:
  - o Business Background
  - o Legal name of business
  - o Age of business
  - o Names, addresses, position of all persons having a financial interest in the company
  - o State of formation
  - o Number of employees
  - o Licenses and certifications relevant to the described work
  
- Professional Practice (Limited to the Project Team, all employees assigned to this project):**
  - o Ever been cited by any authority for unscrupulous practice?
  - o Have any past or present suits with any current or former clients? Explain as necessary
  - o Including parent company, subsidiaries, affiliates, and subcontractors, ever been or are currently disbarred from receiving Federal funds?
  - o Any certification indicating that staff assigned to this project is equipped to carry out the provisions of this proposal
  - o Three (3) references from clients for which the firm or person has provided similar services
  - o Other: Provide any other information that may be useful when reviewing this proposal

## **Non-Discrimination Requirements**

No person in the United States must, on the ground of race, color, national origin, handicap, age, religion, or sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under, any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

To effectuate compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ( 42 U.S.C. Section 2000d et seq.); as amended, OVRDC is required to include the following in any solicitation or

contract and these provisions will be incorporated into the contract between OVRDC and the selected Consultant. The Consultant will need to abide by these provisions:

1. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d *et seq.*) and DOC implementing regulations published at 15 C.F.R. Part 8 prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin under programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance.
2. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 *et seq.*) prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex under Federally assisted education programs or activities.
3. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 *et seq.*) prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability under programs, activities, and services provided or made available by State and local governments or instrumentalities or agencies thereto, as well as public or private entities that provide public transportation.
4. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794), and DOC implementing regulations published at 15 C.F.R. Part 8b prohibiting discrimination on the basis of handicap under any program or activity receiving or benefiting from Federal assistance.

For purposes of complying with the accessibility standards set forth in 15 C.F.R. § 8b.18(c), non-federal entities must adhere to the regulations, published by the U.S. Department of Justice, implementing Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (28 C.F.R. part 35; 75 FR 56164, as amended by 76 FR 13285) and Title III of the ADA (28 C.F.R. part 36; 75 FR 56164, as amended by 76 FR 13286). The revised regulations adopted new enforceable accessibility standards called the “2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design” (2010 Standards), which replace and supersede the former Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards for new construction and alteration projects.

5. The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§ 6101 *et seq.*), and DOC implementing regulations published at 15 C.F.R. Part 20 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of age in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance.
6. Any other applicable non-discrimination law(s).

### **Estimate of Cost**

Proposals must include a total cost to complete the scope of work as provided above. Please be advised this will be a contract position and all cost associated with completing the scope of work above, including travel, supplies, office, etc., should be included in the total cost figure.

### **Consultant Selection**

Proposals will be evaluated and ranked based on the selection criteria outlined below. The OVRDC may ask the top ranked firms, groups, or persons to interview as part of the evaluation process. After the conclusion of the evaluation process, the firms, groups, or persons will be ranked in priority order with the highest-ranking firm, group, or person being selected to negotiate a contract and scope of services with OVRDC. If a contract satisfactory to both parties cannot be negotiated, OVRDC will then enter negotiations with the next highest ranked firm, group, or person and so on until an agreement is reached.

In the event OVRDC elects to negotiate a contract with a selected firm, group, or person, OVRDC reserves the right to negotiate such terms and conditions of the contract, including, but not limited to scope, role, price, and staffing which may be in the best interests of OVRDC. The selected firm, group, or person shall provide written proof of insurance coverage for personal injury and property damage, including comprehensive general and automobile liability and contractual liability.

OVRDC member organizations are not eligible for consideration under this RFP.

### **Selection Criteria**

OVRDC will evaluate the proposals based upon the following criteria:

- Experience and ability to successfully complete the scope of services within the 19-month period
- Demonstrated experience including successful broadband planning and/or implementation work for similar clients
- Familiarity with the Appalachia Ohio region, particularly the OVRDC region
- Proven track record of effective broadband planning efforts in other rural communities
- Ability to complete the scope of work within the project budget (budget maximum is \$175,000 for up to a 19-month contract)

### **Rights Reserved**

OVRDC reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to reject all submissions, reissue a subsequent RFP, terminate, restructure, or amend this procurement process at any time. Evaluation criteria contained herein shall be used in evaluating interested firms, groups, or persons for selection. OVRDC may contact any RFP respondent after receiving its submittal to seek clarification on any portion thereof. OVRDC reserves the right to request additional information from any RFP respondent if OVRDC deems such information necessary to further evaluate selection. OVRDC reserves the right to select several consultants to perform task under the contract. All RFP material submitted to OVRDC becomes property of OVRDC and will not be returned to the RFP respondents.