



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO
ESTABLISH QUALIFYING
BROADBAND SERVICE IN
ELIGIBLE SERVICE AREAS
GORDON COUNTY, GEORGIA**

Contact Information:

Gordon County
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1.0 Introduction

The Gordon County Board of Commissioners is soliciting sealed proposals for the selection of a partner to bring broadband services to unserved areas of the County. The qualified respondent must be a fixed broadband service provider which will provide “qualifying broadband service” in an “eligible service area”.

The term “qualifying broadband service” means broadband service with: (A) a download speed of not less than 25 megabits per second; (B) an upload speed of not less than 3 megabits per second; and (C) a latency sufficient to support real time, interactive applications. For purposes of this RFI, the 25/3 standard means the ability to provide 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream simultaneously to every household in the eligible service area. For purposes of this RFI, latency means 95 percent or more of all peak period measurements of network round trip latency [*i.e.*, the total round-trip latency between the customer premises and the closest designated Internet core peering interconnection point] are at or below 100 milliseconds.

The term “eligible service area” means a census block in which broadband service is not available at one or more households or businesses in the census block, as determined by the Assistant Secretary on the basis of: (A) the maps created under section 802(c)(1) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 642(c)(1)); or (B) if the maps described in subparagraph (A) are not available, the most recent information available to the Assistant Secretary, including information provided by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

1.1 Submission

If you choose to submit a bid for this service and products, the County requires the vendor submit four (4) sealed original and copy printed bid/proposals (e-mail or faxes are not accepted). Your sealed bid/proposal must be marked, “**Broadband Partnership**”, and be delivered to the Gordon County Administration Building at 201 N. Wall Street, Calhoun, Georgia 30701 **no later than 2:00 p.m. on August 25, 2021**. Proposals submitted after the 2:00PM deadline shall be considered non-responsive and will not be opened. The bid response shall be in the form defined in **4.0 Proposal Package**.

Any response received after the deadline date and time shall be returned unopened. Incomplete responses may not be considered if the omissions are determined to be significant. The vendor bid list will be posted online at www.gordoncounty.org the day after the bid opening.

The Gordon County Board of Commissioners reserves the right to accept, or reject, any and all bids received and/or disregard informalities in the bids received. If additional information is needed, contact Regan Bramblett, Gordon County Purchasing Director, at rbramblett@gordoncounty.org

1.2 Communication with Gordon County

All Communications regarding this bid should be communicated through Gordon County Purchasing. Telephone inquiries will not be accepted. Any questions regarding this bid should be submitted to Regan Bramblett via e-mail – rbramblett@gordoncounty.org. Your inquiry must contain “*Broadband Partnership*”, your company name, and telephone number. Information obtained from any other source is not official and should not be relied upon.

1.3 Award

While the County is entertaining a bid, it will not be bound to award the bid.

The County may contact and evaluate the vendor’s and any subcontractor’s references, contact any vendor to clarify response, and/or contact any current or past users of a vendors or subcontractors services.

The County will not be obligated to accept the lowest offer but will make an award in the best interest of the County after all factors have been evaluated.

The County will be the sole judge of the successful offer. The County reserves the right to negotiate with any and all vendors. Vendors are advised that it is possible that an award may be made without discussion or any contact concerning the bid received. Accordingly, bids should contain the most favorable terms from a price and technical standpoint, which the vendor can submit to the County. **DO NOT ASSUME** that you will be contacted or afforded an opportunity to clarify, discuss or revise your proposal.

2.0 Scope of Work

The intention of a Public Private Partnership (PPP) is to use the strengths and assets of each entity to negotiate a balanced partnership that is equally beneficial to the network end user, the Gordon County Board of Commissioners, and the selected provider.

The proposed PPP will include establishing a formalized agreement between all parties outlining the roles and responsibilities of the various partners. These roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- The private partner will be an ‘Approved broadband partner’ as a result of the state-sponsored process.
- The private partner will work collaboratively with the Gordon County Government staff to identify a broadband infrastructure project that will support the overall objectives of the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative.
- The proposed infrastructure project will bring broadband services to as many unserved areas as possible in Gordon County.
- The proposed infrastructure project will be highly competitive for a grant application to the One Georgia Authority Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative Fund, or other State or Federal program, grant, initiative or fund as may be applicable to this project. (hereinafter referred to as “Grant”)
- The private partner will assist the Gordon County Board of Commissioners staff in the writing of the grant application.

In order to facilitate the construction of high-capacity, redundant fiber for residents and businesses of unincorporated Gordon County, the Gordon County Board of Commissioners intends to work with the private partner to apply for a Grant to help fund the design and construction of the proposed broadband infrastructure project in Gordon County.

Eligible use of the Grant will include those activities and the provision of facilities and services as described in O.C.G.A. 50-40-1 et seq. These activities include, but are not limited to, the provision of such public infrastructure, services, facilities, and improvement needed to implement broadband services or enhance existing broadband services in unserved areas as designated by the Department of Community Affairs.

The scope of work contemplates three (3) phases: design and engineering, construction, and service. The initial breakdown of the three phases is detailed below. A more detailed breakdown of these phases will be included in a future formalized agreement between all parties.

Design and Engineering

Gordon County is seeking a partner that can design and engineer a fiber optic network that will extend fiber to areas of the county currently classified as ‘unserved’ by the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative. The goal is to connect residents, businesses, and anchor institutions to internet services with capabilities of at least sustaining the minimum download and upload speeds as established by the Georgia Broadband program with upgrades to 1 Gbps/ 1 Gbps symmetrical dedicated internet service preferred (hereinafter referred to as “Service”).

Responsibilities of the partner will include activities required to undertake and accomplish a full and complete project design, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Conducting and attending meetings and design conferences with all stakeholders of Gordon County to coordinate or resolve design matters.
- Preparing detailed design and construction plans, technical specifications, and documents.
- Developing design schematics, sketches, environmental and esthetic considerations, project recommendations, preliminary layouts and cost estimates.
- Providing copies of plans, specifications, and contract documents for review.
- Preparing necessary engineering reports.

Design Phase Expectations

- Gordon County shall remain fully engaged in the design process, able to provide input, able to understand the design approach and rationale, and able to adjust the approach as the project proceeds.
- Drawings should be provided in a format compatible with Gordon County’s GIS system.
- Intelligent expansion and extension of the fiber pathways and counts should be addressed to include running enough capacity for future expansion of the fiber network beyond this initial phase of construction to outer lying residential and commercial areas within the County.

- All engineered stamped designs, plans and permitting will be submitted to the Gordon County Planning Office.

Construction

Responsibility of the partner during the construction phase includes all basic services of a construction contract, including, but not limited to the following:

- Acting as project manager for all construction phases.
- Preparing construction management plan and reviewing of contract construction schedule.
- Observing or reviewing performance test(s) required by specifications.

Construction phase expectations:

- Construction should commence as quickly as possible after receiving notice to do so, and work should be done in a timely manner as to fully support the completion of the project within the construction timeline.
- As available, fiber drops should be installed, and fiber should be lit to expedite service to end users.

Service

This phase includes the partner assuming the operations and maintenance functions of and delivery of services to the residents and businesses. The service phase includes but is not limited to:

- Operating and maintaining functions of the network.
- Ability to provide the “Service” to all end users with future enhancement capabilities.

Service expectations:

- The selected provider will be the face of the project to the customer. They will install equipment and services into the customer premises, maintain the equipment and services, provide end customer service, provide equipment and service upgrades, and be responsible for customer service and satisfaction.

Timeline

The complete project timeline proposed is to be determined. Below is a summary of key action items known at this time.

- July 28, 2021: Issue RFP
- August 25, 2021: RFP responses due no later than 2:00pm EST
- August 25 - September 3, 2021: RFP evaluation
- September 7, 2021: Present recommendation to the Board of Commissioners

Partnership Considerations

Gordon County is investing in this project in order to enhance the infrastructure of the County and to assist with the infrastructure needs of our businesses, community organizations, and residents.

Partner Contributions

The Gordon County Board of Commissioners, Gordon County Planning Office, and/or Gordon County Public Works contributions include:

- Access to County Street and Alley Right-of Ways
- Ability to expedite right-of-way permitting for identified partner
- Eligible applicant for One Georgia Authority Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative Fund grant opportunity

Partner assets should include:

- Design and engineering expertise and capabilities
- Construction experience, expertise, and capabilities
- Financial and other resources necessary to complete the build out and operate
- Ability to act as service provider
- Maintenance capabilities for broadband/fiber network
- Other assets not included to be identified by partner

3.0 Contract Limitations

All parties are advised that some of the services listed may not be required and Gordon County reserves the right to initiate additional procurement actions for any services not included in the initial procurement.

4.0 Proposal Package

Each Proposal Package should be prepared to include the information outlined below and be tabbed to denote the sections noted below. In order for the Proposal Package to be considered responsive, sections need to be completed as described below.

The Proposals should include:

Project Overview

- I. A description of the covered broadband project proposed for funding, including the cost of the project and the speed of the broadband service offerings;
- II. A description of how the proposal is consistent with Eligible and Ineligible Uses of Funds in in connection with State and Federal programs to establish qualifying broadband service in eligible service areas;
- III. A detailed budget for the covered broadband project;
- IV. The proposed service area of the project, including but not limited to a description of whether there are service providers already present in all or part of the area, as well as the pricing, coverage, and available capacity of those providers;
- V. Proposed project timeline and major milestones, including whether the construction is capable of completion within a one-year award period;

- VI. A description of any future-proofing infrastructure included in the covered broadband project (e.g. fiber) and how such infrastructure has the ability to evolve, sustain, and scale for future advanced services;
- VII. To the extent the proposal includes a Last Mile project or middle mile network, a description of how the proposal complies connection with State and Federal programs to establish qualifying broadband service in eligible service areas;
- VIII. To the extent the proposal includes a middle mile network, a description of how the proposal complies with connection with State and Federal programs to establish qualifying broadband service in eligible service areas;
- IX. The extent to which the proposal includes a cost sharing mechanism from the Respondent;
- X. Include any business plans, market projections, third-party funding commitments, and other relevant data to demonstrate the ability of the project to be sustained beyond the award period, including but not limited to demonstrations of community commitments or anchor tenant commitments, or interoperable interfaces for fifth generation fixed wireless capability or by deploying fiber;

Respondent Overview

- I. A description of any other federal or state support that the broadband service provider has received to deploy broadband service in the proposed service area;
- II. A description of the Respondent and its project management team;
- III. A description of projects deployed by the Respondent of a similar size and scope, including but not limited to broadband service projects in unserved areas;
- IV. A description of any partnerships with government entities to seek grants or other funding opportunities.
- V. Describe any litigation, disputes, claims or complaints, or events of default or other failure to satisfy contract obligations, or failure to deliver products, involving Respondent or an affiliate of Respondent, and relating broadband;

Customer Overview

- I. The population of the eligible service area the covered broadband project is designed to provide broadband service, including but not limited to:
 - a. the number of total households, businesses and community anchor institutions that the project will connect in the proposed service area;
 - b. the total number of unserved households that the project will connect in the proposed service area;
 - c. the total number of households, businesses, and

- community anchor institutions that will receive qualifying broadband service; and
- d. the total number of households, businesses, and community anchor institutions that will receive broadband service at speeds greater than qualifying broadband service;

Service Overview

- I. The download speed (megabits per second) and upload speed (megabits per second) of the covered broadband project;
- II. The prices of the broadband services to be offered in the eligible service area;

Labor Standards

- I. A description of labor standards that will be used in the covered broadband project, including but not limited to project labor agreements and community benefit agreements that offer wages at or above the prevailing rate and include local hire provisions; and
- II. A description of how your response to Question e(i) above is consistent with any applicable labor standards.

5.0 Evaluation Criteria

The following topics will be considered in the selection of a partner:

	<i>POINTS POSSIBLE</i>
Strong sense the proposer is genuinely interested in the Gordon County community and providing quality services now and in the future.	30
Ability to meet schedules within budget.	25
Degree to which the response demonstrates the capability to perform all aspects of the project.	20
Demonstration of the desire and commitment to developing a successful partnership & collaborative project.	15
Familiarity with the project location and understanding of the proposed project.	10

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS

100