



**Nicholas County Commission
Request for Proposal (RFP)**

**ISP/Private Partner(s) for Design Assistance, Construction, Deployment, Operation, and
Maintenance of Broadband Network**

Nicholas County Broadband Project

**Attn: Lloyd Adkins
Nicholas County Commission
700 Main Street, Suite 1
Summersville, WV 26651
Date: January 21st, 2022**



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NICHOLAS COUNTY BROADBAND PROJECT

The Nicholas County Commission will accept sealed proposals to enable the County to identify one or more ISP (Internet Service Provider)/Private Partners interested in construction, deployment, operation and maintenance of Broadband Internet Network in Nicholas County, WV as well as key target areas within the County as specified.

RFP documents and specifications may be obtained in person from the Nicholas County Commission 700 Main Street, Suite 1, Summersville, WV 26651. A copy of the RFP documents can also be downloaded from Region 4 Planning and Development Council web site at <https://reg4wv.org>. Inquiries may be made by calling (304) 872-7830.

All interested respondents must submit a Letter of Intent to the Nicholas County Commission on or before **Friday, January 14th, 2022 at 2:00 P.M.** (local time). Sealed RFP's must be submitted to the Nicholas County Commission 700 Main Street, Suite 1, Summersville, WV 26651 on or before **Friday, January 21st, 2022 at 2:00 P.M.** (local time). All respondents are required to submit five (5) copies and an electronic copy or link of their RFP's documents at the time of submission. All RFP's submitted should be enclosed in a sealed envelope and clearly marked "Broadband Network RFP" on the outside of the envelope. Any RFP's received after the time due will not be considered and shall be retained as documentation for the RFP file.

The Nicholas County Commission reserves the right to accept or reject any or all RFP's, to cancel this request for information and to waive technicalities in any part thereof deemed to be in the best interest of Nicholas County.

By Order of the Commission

Lloyd Adkins
Nicholas County Commission
700 Main Street, Suite 1
Summersville, WV 26651
ncc_pattyneff@yahoo.com



TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	4
II.	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	4
III.	GOALS OF THIS PROCUREMENT	4
IV.	SCOPE OF SERVICES	5
V.	ORGANIZATION OF THE PROPOSAL	5
VI.	SUBMITTAL OF THE PROPOSAL	6
VII.	PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE	8
VIII.	NICHOLAS COUNTY COMMISSION REQUIREMENTS	8
IX.	NICHOLAS COUNTY COMMISSION CRITERIA FOR SELECTING AN ISP/PRIVATE PARTNER	9
X.	SELECTION PROCESS	9
XI.	LIMITATIONS	10



NICHOLAS COUNTY BROADBAND PROJECT:

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

I. INTRODUCTION & PROJECT PURPOSE

The Nicholas County Commission is seeking proposals from qualified respondents interested in providing the services as described in this request for proposals (“RFP”). The primary purpose of the project is to deploy a fiber solution that will provide the businesses and residents of the project areas with broadband services of at least 25/3 Mbps, although higher speeds such as 100/100 Mbps will receive a higher ranking. In addition, it is also desired for the selected ISP to aid in future development of broadband services throughout Nicholas County, WV.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Broadband project will bring a cost-effective broadband network throughout much of Nicholas County. This procurement process, as mandated by the requirements for federally funded publicly owned projects, is being completed to procure a qualified provider for purposes of operating and maintaining fixed fiber or fixed fiber/wireless combination throughout the project area. This project will be constructed by an openly procured broadband deployment contractor, owned by the Nicholas County Commission, will be operated, and maintained by an Internet Service Provider (ISP) selected by the Nicholas County Commission. A copy of draft Operation and Maintenance Agreement is included with the RFP and specification information.

III. GOALS OF THIS PROCUREMENT

Funding Availability

Attention is directed to the fact that the project may be undertaken with the combination of State and/or Federal funds and all work must be performed in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Technical Goals

The Nicholas County Broadband Project is proposed as a predominately fiber broadband solution using aerial fiber optic lines to provide service of at least 25/3 (25 MBPS download & 3 MBPS upload) to customers in rural Nicholas County, 100/100 Mbps is preferred.

There is limited access to redundant, gigabit level fiber network in the project area. To get reliable Internet backhaul for this project, a middle-mile network is required. The most likely means to provide Internet backhaul for the proposed last-mile network is by an extension of an existing broadband provider service. The ISP/Partner selected is responsible for collaborating with the broadband contractor in establishing sufficient internet middle mile and last mile service.



Financial Goals

The Nicholas County Commission seeks an ISP/Private Partner who is willing and financially able to share financial risk with the County in building and operating the proposed network. The County desires a Partner that will collaborate with it to pursue additional state and federal funding to expand broadband access and capacity to meet current and future demand.

The local match requirements to satisfy the required funds needed to award the State and/or Federal funds associated with the project cost shall be provided by the applicant and/or the selected ISP respondent. ISP shall be capable of facilitating the entire match requirement if necessary. **The anticipated match is roughly 25% of the total project cost.**

Service Goals

The Nicholas County Commission seeks an ISP/Private Partner who will deliver broadband services that meet at minimum the current FCC definition of broadband (25Mbps/3Mbps) to any customer in unserved areas with a preference for more up to date and desirable speeds such as 100/100Mbps. The Nicholas County Commission desires cost-effective services that are reasonably priced given the target market. The network should be neutral and non-discriminatory regarding applications, websites, type of use, and type of end-user device. The Partner should not impose caps on a user's total upload and download data capacity. The Nicholas County Commission desires a network that encourages increased Internet use to enable economically desirable activities such as home-based business, telework, telemedicine, and distance learning.

IV. SCOPE OF SERVICES

Proposers must submit a detailed scope of work outlining the project plan, tasks, scheduling, and milestone events. Services are expected to include, at a minimum, the following:

- Assist in provide system design
- Provide customer recruitment, sign ups and end user hookups. Provide all operation and maintenance(including customer billing) of the system. Contract time period is expected to be 5 yrs.
- Call Center available 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Higher rank may be given to any ISP who can provide this option.

V. ORGANIZATION OF THE PROPOSAL

The organization of the proposed scope of work is described in this section of the Proposal guidelines. The proposal shall be limited to 10 pages, exclusive of pre-printed resumes, and similar material that the proposing firm believes will aid in determining its qualifications for the project. The following guidelines must be followed by all potential ISP/Private Partners.

A. General Provisions

Responses to this RFP must include the following information:

1. The name, address and telephone number of the proposing firm.
2. Identification of the individuals and/or vendors comprising the project team for



this project and what specific role each will take in completing the work.

3. A summary of your experience completing similar projects. Please provide examples of the design, equipment and results of these projects. Also include any names, addresses and phone numbers of clients involved with these projects.
4. A detailed work plan describing your approach to design, installation, testing and training.
5. Describe your training program.
6. Provide detailed support information.

B. Introduction

A general introduction and description of the proposed approach and methodology shall be provided. The introduction should include a statement of the firm's approach to providing design assistance, achieving the require middle-mile backhaul and providing business & internet service to the end users.

C. Scope of Work

Describe the work program to accomplish the scope of work described above. The work program should address issues identified in the Project Description and shall provide a detailed description of the work to be accomplished.

D. Relevant Experience

Provide the name and background information of each member of the firm who will perform the actual work described in the RFP and who will work with the team on a regular basis. Additionally, provide the names and background of all other professional staff that will be working as part of your project team. An organizational chart should be included as well as resumes for each participating staff person.

Provide the relevant previous experience of the lead person for the project. Do not include work done by the firm that the lead person did not have a primary role in managing.

List at least three projects of a similar scope and nature to this proposal that the lead person from your firm had primary responsibilities including:

1. Project Address
2. Reference (with telephone number)
3. Year of Completion
4. Brief written description of the project

The Nicholas County Commission reserves the right to contact a proposing firm's previous clients at any time.

E. Cost

- F. A cost proposal should be prepared to demonstrate the anticipated rate structure for service,



internal cash flow including revenues and operation and maintenance expenses.

VI. SUBMITTAL OF THE PROPOSAL

- A. Respondents shall submit five (5) copies and an electronic copy or link of their RFP's documents at the time of submission. The completed proposal package must be received by the Nicholas County Commission, **700 Main Street, Suite 1, Summersville, WV 26651 by 2:00 p.m. on Friday, January 21st, 2022.** Please provide an electronic copy of the submitted RFP to asmarr@reg4wv.org. Faxes will not be accepted.
- B. All proposals, as well as any modifications, received at the Nicholas County Commission office after the hour and date specified above, will not be accepted. Postmarks are not accepted. All proposals will become the property of the Nicholas County Commission and will not be returned.
- C. The proposal shall be signed by an officer or officers authorized to execute legal documents on behalf of the Proposer and shall contain a statement to the effect that the proposal is a firm offer for a 90-day period.



VII. PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE

Primary consideration will be given to the general appropriateness of the proposal for the project, the technical competence and creative ability of the ISP/Private Partner, the internet speeds being offered and the firm's willingness to work closely with the Nicholas County Commission and project team. The Nicholas County Commission reserves the right to reject all proposals that are inappropriate or inadequate.

Anticipated Project Schedule:

Pre-Submittal Meetings, Question Period	Friday, January 7th Thru 2:00 p.m. Friday, January 21st, 2022
Written Proposals Due at 2:00 p.m.	Friday, January 21st, 2022
Announcement of Short List Proposers and Interviews (if required)	The Week of January 24th, 2021
Selection Committee Recommendation	Monday, January 31st, 2022
Contract Negotiation with Successful Proposer	The Week of February 7th, 2022
NCC Approval / Notice to Proceed	Monday, February 14th, 2022
Middle-Mile Portion Completed	February 2023
Last-Mile Portion Completed	June 2023
Project Closeout	September 2023

VIII. NICHOLAS COUNTY COMMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The contract will be awarded only to a responsible ISP/Private Partner. In order to qualify as responsible, a prospective Partner must meet the following standards, as they pertain to this Request for Proposals.

- A. The ISP/Private Partner must have adequate technical and financial resources for performance, as well as adequate equipment, or have the ability to obtain and to manage such resources and equipment as required during the performance period of the proposed contract.
- B. The ISP/Private Partner must have the necessary experience, organization, technical qualifications, skills and facilities or have the ability to obtain and to manage them (including any sub-consultant requirements).
- C. The ISP/Private Partner must be able to comply with the proposed or required performance schedule.
- D. The ISP/Private Partner must have a satisfactory record of contractual performance.
- E. The ISP/Private Partner must maintain the auditable records, documents and papers for inspection by authorized Nicholas County Commission representatives.



- F. Each ISP/Private Partner firm must be able to provide insurance coverage as follows in conformance with the Nicholas County Commission requirements:
- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1) General Liability Insurance | \$1,000,000 |
| 2) Automobile Insurance | \$1,000,000 |
| 3) Workers Compensation Insurance | \$1,000,000 |
| 4) Professional Errors and Omissions Insurance | \$2,000,000 |
- G. The ISP/Private Partner must be otherwise qualified and eligible to receive an award under all applicable laws and regulations.

NICHOLAS COUNTY COMMISSION CRITERIA FOR SELECTING AN ISP/PRIVATE PARTNER

The Nicholas County Commission's criteria in selecting an ISP/Private Partner will include but is not limited to:

- The firm's background and capabilities, including each firm's history and areas of specialization, or particular expertise.
- The background of the individuals who will do the actual design work and who will work with the Nicholas County Commission on a regular basis.
- The background of all team members on the project team who are proposed to assist in the development of this project.
- The relevant experience of the lead person for each firm on the project.
- The firm's expertise with similar projects.
- The firm's expertise in providing accurate and timely cost estimates.
- The firm's ability to provide a system design that meets the project's defined needs.
- The firm's ability to meet the Nicholas County Commission's schedule.
- The firm's ability to meet minimum guaranteed performance requirements and reliability. Preference shall be given to guaranteed performance above and beyond the minimum required 25/3 Mbps threshold for service
- The firm's design of scalability or the seamless ability to easily increase capacity and coverage areas.
- The firm's ability to maintain the system
- Cost of the system.
- Customer Service
- Capabilities to Handle Outages
- Range of monthly fees charged for service and how often price increases may occur
- Estimated number of residences the ISP anticipates providing service

IX. SELECTION PROCESS

Vendors are invited to schedule a voluntary pre-submittal meeting with Nicholas County Commission Staff between the dates of **January 7th, 2022 and January 21st, 2022**. The meetings will provide an opportunity for vendors to ask questions and view project conditions. All proposals are **due on Friday, January 21st, 2022 by 2:00 P.M.**



A Committee will review the Proposals and select firms to be interviewed. It is anticipated the same Committee will be present at the interview.

X. LIMITATIONS

- A. All reports and pertinent data or materials shall be the sole property of the Nicholas County Commission and may not be used or reproduced in any form with the explicit written permission of the Nicholas County Commission.
- B. The Nicholas County Commission reserves the right to extend the time allotted for the proposal to examine verbally the bidder in person, and to request a best and final offer, should the Nicholas County Commission deem that it is in its best interests to do so.
- C. This Request for Proposals does not commit the Nicholas County Commission to award a contract, or to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal. The Nicholas County Commission reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this Request for Proposals, to negotiate with any qualified ISP/Private Partner, or to cancel this request in part or in its entirety. The Nicholas County Commission may require the selected ISP/Private Partner to participate in negotiations and to submit such technical, price, or other revisions to their proposal as may result from negotiations



