



FAIRVIEW

TOWNSHIP

ERIE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS: BROADBAND EXPANSION AND DEPLOYMENT

ISSUED: April 10, 2023

CONTACT: Mark Gennuso, Supervisor

Cohen Law Group

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS: BROADBAND EXPANSION AND DEPLOYMENT

I. REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

- A. Request for qualifications.** The Township of Fairview, located in Erie County, Pennsylvania, (hereinafter the “Township”), is requesting Statements of Qualifications (“SOQs”) from interested firms for the provision of high-speed broadband Internet services in the Township. The Township is requesting SOQs from capable wireline Internet Service Providers (“ISPs”), Wireless Internet Service Providers (“WISPs”) and other firms with a demonstrated capability of providing high-speed broadband Internet service at the service levels and to the geographic areas described herein. The purpose of this RFQ is to identify firms with whom the Township may collaborate to expand high-speed broadband Internet service availability to areas of the Township in which such service is not currently available. This document is not a formal Request for Proposals, nor should it be treated as such by applicants.
- B. Timeline for submission; Selection.** This RFQ is issued as of April 10, 2023. The Township must receive all SOQs submitted in response to this RFQ either in hard copy or electronically within forty-five (45) days of the issuance of this RFQ, or by 12:00 PM on May 25, 2023. A final decision regarding selected applicants will be made no more than ninety (90) days following the end of the submission period, or by 12:00 PM on August 23, 2023. Proposals received after 12:00 PM on May 25, 2023 will be returned unopened. No exceptions will be made.
- C. Address for submission.** SOQ’s may be submitted electronically or in hard copy. SOQs that are submitted electronically must be submitted to Supervisor Mark Gennuso at mgennuso@fairviewtownship.com with a copy to Michael D. Roberts at the Cohen Law Group at mroberts@cohenlawgroup.org. SOQs that are submitted in hard copy must be submitted to the following address:

Fairview Township
Attn: Mark Gennuso, Supervisor
7471 McCray Road
Fairview, PA 16415

With a copy to:

Michael D. Roberts
Cohen Law Group
413 South Main Street
Third Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15215

- D. Questions.** Please direct any questions regarding this RFQ in writing by email to Michael D. Roberts of the Cohen Law Group. Mr. Roberts' email address is mroberts@cohenlawgroup.org. All questions must be received at least thirty (30) days before the due date for the SOQs. All questions and any responses by the Township in response to submitted questions will be shared with all known applicants.
- E. Revisions.** Any SOQ submitted in response to this RFQ may be revised by the applicant by submitting an updated SOQ to the addresses noted above prior to the deadline for submission. The revised SOQ must be complete and all information contained in previously submitted SOQs will be disregarded upon submission of a revised SOQ.
- F. Withdrawal.** Any SOQ submitted under this RFQ may be withdrawn at any time by notifying in writing Supervisor Mark Gennuso at mgennuso@fairviewtownship.com with a copy to Michael D. Roberts at mroberts@cohenlawgroup.org.
- G. Extension; Postponement.** The Township reserves the right to extend or postpone the date and time for accepting or issuing a decision on SOQs. Notice of such extension or postponement shall be included as an addendum to this RFQ and shall be provided to all applicants from whom SOQs or questions have been received as of the time of the extension or postponement.
- H. Additional Information.** The Township reserves the right to request any additional information necessary to confirm that the applicant's qualifications, business organization, and financial resources are sufficient to be selected as a potential partner. Requests for additional information will be made in writing to the applicant from whom such additional information is being requested.
- I. Operation of Network.** The firm(s) selected as part of this RFQ will be required to operate the broadband Internet network to provide high-speed broadband internet service to the identified areas. Evidence of the firm's capability to operate such a network shall be a prerequisite to the selection of an applicant by the Township as detailed herein.

- J. Agreement Required.** This RFQ is intended to seek information upon which the Township may identify a firm or firms with which to partner to provide high-speed internet service to Township residents and businesses. Any such partnership will be subject to the negotiation and execution of a legally valid agreement between the Township and such firm or firms that is mutually agreeable to both parties. The agreement shall establish the terms and conditions of the partnership. Such agreement shall clearly detail the relationship and obligations of the Township and the selected firm or firms.
-

II. PROJECT DETAILS

- A. Intent.** The Township of Fairview is interested in partnering with one or more firms to facilitate the provision of high-speed broadband Internet service to certain locations in the Township in which such service is not currently available. The selected firm(s) will be expected to collaborate with the Township to develop a targeted plan to construct, operate and maintain a wireline, wireless or hybrid high-speed broadband Internet network capable of offering symmetrical 100Mbps upload and download speeds to all residents in the areas of the Township served by the network, or scalable to provide such service in accordance with applicable federal and state funding requirements. The selected firm or firms will be required to operate the network to provide high-speed broadband internet service to the identified areas.
- B. Area to be Served.** The Township has conducted a preliminary assessment and determination of the areas in the Township in which internet service is available and has identified the areas in the Township that are considered unserved or underserved. As a result of this assessment, the Township has identified 68 locations within the Township that are in need of high-speed internet service. A list of those locations is attached to this RFQ as Exhibit A. Applicants submitting SOQs should clearly identify all locations identified in Exhibit A to which the applicant is proposing to provide service.
- C. Partnership; Funding.** Recognizing that the selected firm will benefit financially from the provision of broadband service to new customers, the Township expects that the firm will invest a proportionate share of the funding for this project. The project may include establishing a public-private partnership through which the Township and the selected firm(s) may pursue additional County, state and/or federal funding. This may include the preparation and submission of an application for federal Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (“BEAD”) Program funding, through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), to the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority. The selected applicant(s) must agree to cooperate with the Township in its efforts to secure such

funding. The Township may also elect to subsidize this project or certain elements thereof via the funding received by the Township under the American Rescue Plan Act.

III. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The schedule for the project(s) proposed by the selected applicant(s) will vary depending on the geographic scope of the area(s) selected and the infrastructure required. Each proposal should detail an anticipated schedule in accordance with the requirements of Section IV below.

IV. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

A. Requirements. All SOQs submitted in response to this RFQ must include the following information and materials:

1. **Statement of interest and qualifications.** Each SOQ must include a statement of interest outlining why the applicant is interested in the project, the applicant's technical and operational experience and qualifications, and why the applicant should be selected for this project.
2. **Description of firm.** Each SOQ must include a description of the firm for whom the SOQ was prepared. The description should include the firm name, specific information regarding firm ownership, primary contact information, primary office location, general qualifications, and a demonstration of the technical expertise sufficient to complete the construction and operation of the proposed network. The firm description should also list each member of the firm that the applicant anticipates will work on the project, along with a brief description of their relevant experience and the anticipated hierarchy of any such participants with respect to this project.
3. **Description of approach.** Each SOQ must include a comprehensive description of the firm's intended approach to the project. This description should identify with specificity the following: (a) the area or areas of the Township to which the applicant intends to provide service; (b) the means by which such service will be provided, including the proposed network architecture; (c) a general plan for the construction of all necessary facilities; (d) the infrastructure and technology necessary to build out the applicant's intended network; (e) any efforts or cooperation expected from the Township to facilitate the efficient completion of the project; and (f) the anticipated long-term operational needs and maintenance plan for the proposed network.

4. **Anticipated timeline.** Each SOQ must include an estimated timeline for completion of the project. The estimated timeline should clearly state the timeframes in which the applicant expects to complete all necessary construction and the timeframe in which the applicant expects to begin providing service to the designated unserved and/or underserved areas. If the project will be completed in phases or otherwise subdivided, the SOQ should clearly delineate each anticipated phase and the corresponding timeframe for completion.
5. **Comparable projects.** Each SOQ must include a description of at least three (3) similar projects, either in-progress or completed, by the applicant that demonstrate that the applicant has the technical and operational expertise necessary to construct, operate and maintain the proposed network. Such descriptions should include the following: (a) the location of each project; (b) a brief description of each project; (c) the number of current subscribers for each project; (d) the type of technology used in each project; (e) the size and scale of the geographic area covered by each project; and (f) a project reference for each project that the Township may contact. Each references should each include the reference's name, title, email address, and phone number.
6. **Cost analysis.** Each SOQ should include an estimated time and materials cost proposal detailing the total anticipated cost of each element of the project. The cost analysis should clearly detail the anticipated expenditures by the applicant, any financial support that will be requested from the Township, a commitment by the firm to invest its portion of the expenditures, and a statement affirming that the applicant will cooperate in full with the Township in its efforts to obtain additional federal and/or state funding as needed to fully fund the project. The cost analysis should also include the applicant's anticipated pricing for all levels of service expected to be offered to subscribers in the Township upon activation of the proposed network.

B. Format. SOQs may be submitted to the Township in printed, hard-copy format or in electronic format by email. SOQs submitted electronically must be in .pdf format.

V. EVALUATION OF STATEMENTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

A. Criteria. Firms submitting SOQs in response to this RFQ will be evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate the following:

- Qualifications for constructing, operating and maintaining a high-speed broadband Internet network in a suburban/rural setting.

- Experience in successfully constructing and operating other high-speed broadband Internet networks to provide service to residential and commercial customers.
- The staffing and resources available to provide future maintenance and customer service for subscribers in the Township.
- A clear and technically feasible plan for providing the best possible broadband internet service to one or more of the areas identified by the Township in Exhibit A.
- An efficient timeline by which the firm will provide high-speed broadband internet services in the Township in the shortest timeframe reasonably possible.
- A viable funding strategy through which the firm intends to fund the project, including self-funding, public-private partnership, and any additional grant funding. The Township expects that the selected firm(s) will invest a proportionate share of the funding for this project.
- Affordability of broadband service being proposed for residential and commercial customers.
- References that support successful prior experience in building and operating broadband Internet networks.

VI. SELECTION PROCESS

- A. Selection.** The Township will evaluate all SOQs in accordance with the standards detailed in this RFQ and applicable federal and state law. The Township may choose one or more applicants with whom to proceed with this project. The chosen applicants will be those that have clearly demonstrated their ability to construct, operate, and maintain a high-speed broadband Internet network capable of providing affordable service to the unserved and underserved areas of the Township. Selected applicants must further demonstrate their ability to provide such services in the most cost-effective manner. The Township reserves the right not to choose any of the applicants if it believes that no applicants adequately satisfy the objectives contained in this RFQ or for any other reason.
- B. Notification.** All applicants will be notified of the results of the RFQ process in writing upon its completion.

Exhibit A
Locations for Service

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. 3000 Blair Road | 24. 8650 Avonia Road | 47. 8665 Elk Valley Road |
| 2. 3111 Blair Road | 25. 8720 Avonia Road | 48. 8720 Elk Valley Road |
| 3. 3211 Blair Road | 26. 8730 Avonia Road | 49. 8737 Elk Valley Road |
| 4. 3361 Blair Road | 27. 8741 Avonia Road | 50. 8770 Elk Valley Road |
| 5. 3401 Blair Road | 28. 8750 Avonia Road | 51. 8820 Elk Valley Road |
| 6. 8050 Maple Street | 29. 8800 Avonia Road | 52. 8870 Elk Valley Road |
| 7. 8101 Maple Street | 30. 8804 Avonia Road | 53. 8920 Elk Valley Road |
| 8. 8271 Barker Road | 31. 9010 Avonia Road | 54. 7087 Hook Road |
| 9. 8301 Barker Road | 32. 7631 Hawthorne Ridge Road | 55. 7121 Hook Road |
| 10. 8331 Barker Road | 33. 7701 Hawthorne Ridge Road | 56. 7141 Hook Road |
| 11. 8351 Barker Road | 34. 7711 Hawthorne Ridge Road | 57. 7163 Hook Road |
| 12. 8371 Barker Road | 35. 7755 Hawthorne Ridge Road | 58. 7180 Hook Road |
| 13. 8391 Barker Road | 36. 7775 Hawthorne Ridge Road | 59. 7191 Hook Road |
| 14. 8519 Barker Road | 37. 7780 Hawthorne Ridge Road | 60. 7031 Kruse Road |
| 15. 5037 Doblner Road | 38. 7825 Hawthorne Ridge Road | 61. 7041 Kruse Road |
| 16. 8161 Beckman Road | 39. 7631 Van Camp Road | 62. 7131 Kreider Road |
| 17. 8220 Beckman Road | 40. 9040 Seib Road | 63. 7138 Kreider Road |
| 18. 8331 Beckman Road | 41. 9095 Seib Road | 64. 7160 Kreider Road |
| 19. 8400 Beckman Road | 42. 9180 Seib Road | 65. 7181 Kreider Road |
| 20. 8330 Keefer Road | 43. 9195 Seib Road | 66. 5700 Kell Road |
| 21. 8501 Brooks Road | 44. 9211 Seib Road | 67. 6586 West Ridge Road |
| 22. 8521 Brooks Road | 45. 8605 Elk Valley Road | 68. 6590 West Ridge Road |
| 23. 8600 Avonia Road | 46. 8635 Elk Valley Road | |