

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Lincoln County Fiscal Court

2020 BROADBAND FEASIBILITY STUDY

Contact:

Bluegrass Area Development District

699 Perimeter Drive, Lexington, KY 40517

phone: (859) 269-8021, email: cclark@bgadd.org

PROPOSALS DUE BY 4:30PM, DECEMBER 8, 2020

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Proposed Schedule

Legal Notice in Local Newspapers November 19, 2020

Last Day for Questions December 1, 2020

Questions Answered by PMIDA December 4, 2020

Proposals Due to Bluegrass Area Development District December 8, 2020

Fiscal Court Review by December 15, 2020

**Recommendation of Provider to Center for Rural Development December 18,
2020**

1. Lincoln County Information

Lincoln County is a rural county in south-central Kentucky that covers 337 square miles. It has a population of 24,549 and three incorporated cities in the boundaries. Those three cities are Stanford, which has a population of 3,662, Crab Orchard, which has a population of 825, and Hustonville, which has a population of 369.

Lincoln County has been identified by the Appalachian Regional Commission as a Distressed County for decades. Of non-governmental employment, the Healthcare and Social Services industry employs the most workers in Lincoln County, followed by Retail Trade, Professional Scientific and Technical Services, and Manufacturing, in that order. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis' Small Area Income and Poverty estimates (SAIPE), in 2018, Lincoln County's poverty rate was 20.6 and the county's 2018 median household income was \$ 42,190.

Since March of 2020, Covid19 has resulted in loss of work opportunities and access to education for a significant portion of our population. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistic's Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), in February 2020 (prior to the Covid-19 pandemic), Lincoln County's unemployment rate was 5%, then with the Covid-19 pandemic went up to 20.9% in April, and was at 9.4% unemployment in August of 2020. Despite the challenges in 2020, in this October, Kentucky Fresh Harvest opened its \$20 million 15-acre high-tech

greenhouse in Stanford, KY where 3 to 4 million pounds of cherry tomatoes will be produced for sale on the national wholesale market, and creating up to 75 jobs with about 37 jobs filled to date. A robust telecommunications infrastructure is vital for continued job growth, to improve the quality of education, and to provide resiliency during a crisis.

Lincoln County is seeking a detailed analysis of the fundamental 21st century broadband needs of the county.

2. Invitation

Lincoln County is seeking proposals from highly qualified firms with expertise in municipal governmental entities, qualifications and background to the fundamental broadband needs assessment and feasibility studies for the Utility. The goal is to create access to affordable and reliable high-speed broadband for residents and businesses, improving the quality of life for this and future generations by enhancing economic development opportunities, education, healthcare, tourism and government services.

Upon selection of a provider, the Lincoln County Fiscal Court will submit an application for funding assistance for the project to the Center for Rural Development in Somerset, Kentucky.

A. Scope of Services

The selected firm must be able to provide the following services including, but not limited to:

- 1. Assess current infrastructure and network capabilities within Lincoln County and provide inventory of existing facilities and broadband assets (i.e. towers, wireless facilities, fiber, conduit) within or adjacent to the county and evaluate existing broadband and wireless coverage.**
- 2. Conduct a local broadband market assessment – Identify existing broadband options and costs across community. Provide an assessment of the telecommunications environment detailing types of services, pricing, availability and limitations.**

- 3. Assist with stakeholder outreach.**
- 4. Provide a listing and informational analysis of potential providers – Identify and engage potential provider-partners with intent to:**
 - a. Identify entities that can be service provider to end-users**
 - b. Engage providers early to understand network infrastructure and operations**
 - c. Determine if providers can bring financial resources and investment to the project**
- 5. Provide assessment of the benefits/risks, gap analysis, and a project map. Identify key issues limiting broadband expansion.**
- 6. Create a comprehensive map that provides analysis of the local broadband environment.**
- 7. Make recommendations for broadband strategies – Based on the consultant’s analysis and feedback from Lincoln County and key stakeholders, the respondent will conduct an analysis of business models, identify cost options based on various or optional levels of service, identify potential funding sources and provide an outline for Lincoln County to indirectly or directly improve and/or provide broadband services within the county. This should include consultant’s recommended approach to implementation of preferred business model strategies.**
- 8. Develop a network conceptual design – Ensure the business model is viable and develop network footprint and conceptual design.**
- 9. Conduct a cost analysis – Conduct thorough cost analysis to provide critical information regarding network capital expenditure estimates, financing alternatives, market penetration, rates and service offering information.**
- 10. Evaluate financing and funding availability – Evaluate financing needs including:**
 - a. Stakeholder or potential third-party contributors**
 - b. Grant funding options**
 - c. Establishing a public-private partnership, if viable**
 - d. Capital, revenue bond and municipal self-funding options.**

Once responses are received and reviewed, an application for Feasibility Study and Analysis Funding will be forwarded to the Center for Rural Development. Upon receipt of approval for funding by the Center for Rural Development, an Agreement for Services will be executed with the selected respondent.

All payments to the respondent upon execution of an Agreement for Services will be invoiced to and provided by the Center for Rural Development.

Should Lincoln County determine to advance the project beyond the needs assessment and feasibility study phase; at its sole and absolute discretion, Lincoln County reserves the right to amend the existing agreement and or enter into a new agreement with the successful firm or elect to use the material provided and issue a new RFP.

Lincoln County reserves the option to award contracts to multiple firms but prefers to award to a single firm which is able to provide all the services requested.

B. Submittal Instructions

Submittals are due to Chip Clark (cclark@bgadd.org), Bluegrass Area Development District, 699 Perimeter Drive, Lexington, KY 40517 on or before 4:30PM December 8, 2020.

Deliver via hardcopy or email clearly marked as:

2020 LINCOLN COUNTY BROADBAND FEASIBILITY STUDY

If there are any questions; contact, Chip Clark at cclark@bgadd.org or calling (859)269-8021.

Any responses received after due date and time will be returned to the Respondents.

The Lincoln County Fiscal Court reserves the right to reject any and all responses, to waive any informalities or irregularities therein, and to accept the proposal that, in its opinion, is in the best interest of Lincoln County.

Digital and hard copies of the Bidding Documents will be available as of November 19, 2020 by contacting Chip Clark at cclark@bgadd.org or calling (859)269-8021.

3. Terms and Conditions

- 1. Each Respondent shall furnish the information required in the proposal.**
- 2. The contract will be awarded to the Respondent whose submittal is the most advantageous to Lincoln County Fiscal Court with price and other factors considered after approval for funding assistance is granted by the Center for Rural Development.**
- 3. No submittal shall be withdrawn for a period of thirty (30) days subsequent to the opening of RFPs without the consent of the Lincoln County Judge Executive, or his designated representative.**
- 4. A signed purchase order or contract furnished to the selected firm results in a binding contract without further action by either party. The Respondent understands that no contract or purchase order can be executed until and unless the Center for Rural Development accepts, reviews and approves the Application for Funding Assistance. At that time, the Respondent will be notified of the proper submittal process for invoices for the services rendered.**
- 5. Late or unsigned RFPs will not be accepted or considered. Respondents are responsible to ensure that the RFP arrives at the Bluegrass Area Development District no later than 4:30PM December 8, 2020.**
- 6. The proposed price shall be exclusive of any Federal or State taxes from which the Lincoln County Fiscal Court is exempt by law.**
- 7. Any interpretation, correction or change of the RFP documents will be made by Addendum. Interpretations, corrections and changes of the RFP documents made in any other manner will not be binding, and Respondents shall not rely upon such interpretations, corrections and changes. Lincoln County Fiscal Court will not be responsible for oral clarification.**
- 8. Confidential/Proprietary Information: RFPs submitted in response to this "Request for Proposal" and any resulting contract is subject to the provisions of the Kentucky Open Records Act of 1992, KRS 61.870 to 61.884, as amended. Any restrictions on the use or inspection of material contained within the proposal and any resulting contract shall be clearly stated in the RFP itself.**

Confidential/proprietary information must be readily identified, marked and separated/packaged from the rest of the proposal. Co-mingling of confidential/proprietary and other information is NOT acceptable. Neither a proposal, in its entirety, nor proposed price information will be considered confidential/proprietary. Any information that will be included in any resulting contract cannot be considered confidential.

9. Lincoln County Fiscal Court reserves the right to modify the Scope of Services and request revisions to proposals prior to entering into a written contract.

4. Evaluation Criteria

Please respond to the evaluation criteria with comments that are concise and to the point. The best fit will be reviewed and voted on by the Lincoln County Fiscal Court who will forward the service agreement to the Center for Rural Development for funding assistance approval before entering into any agreement.

The selection committee will evaluate and score the submittals based upon:

A. Statement of Interest (SOI). In up to two (2) pages, express your interest in the project, specifically addressing:

- 1. Specialized experience in community broadband planning services.**
- 2. Analysis/identification of issues – identify constraints as well as opportunities.**
- 3. Goals – identify how your project goals meet or exceed the project goals.**

B. Project Approach

- 1. Examples of similar projects – quality finished projects.**
- 2. Innovative solution – discuss project alternatives, and/or opportunities to add value to the project.**
- 3. On-time and budget – accountability for time, budget and value engineering if needed.**
- 4. Availability.**
- 5. Provide a detailed project schedule highlighting critical path and milestones for completion of the project.**

C. Project Team Listing

1. Provide a listing of team members that will be involved in the process, relevant experience and other material that is pertinent and concise.

D. References

1. Submit three references for similar projects completed within the last three years, along with contacts for the project.

E. Cost Proposal

1. A not-to-exceed amount for all phases of the Scope of Services.

5. Submittal

Please submit the following information in the order listed below:

- 1. Name of your company/organization**
- 2. Type of Organization (Corporation, Partnership, etc.)**
- 3. Address**
- 4. Names and Address of Project Team or Firm**
- 5. Contact Person(s)**
- 6. Telephone, Fax, Email**
- 7. Statement of Interest**
- 8. Project Approach**
- 9. Project Team Listing**
- 10. References**
- 11. Cost Proposal**