

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
RURAL BROADBAND COVERAGE & FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Proposals Solicited by:

SEDA-Council of Governments
201 Furnace Road
Lewisburg, PA 17837

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR
RURAL BROADBAND COVERAGE & FEASIBILITY STUDY
For Clinton, Lycoming, Northumberland, and Union Counties**

SEDA-Council of Governments is requesting proposals (RFP) for a broadband coverage and feasibility study for Clinton, Lycoming, Northumberland, and Union Counties. The purpose of this RFP is to provide the Counties with the information needed to analyze, select and implement the best solutions to improve broadband connectivity across the four-county region, which will be an asset for community and economic development. This project will commission an analysis of regional broadband needs to identify three key areas of need in each participating county, and the development of a model RFP that will be used for an implementation project in one of the prioritized areas in each county. Proposals are to be received by the SEDA-Council of Governments no later than 2:00 pm on February 22, 2019. The SEDA-Council of Governments reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, in part or in total.

Complete proposal details, including the required proposal format, may be obtained by contacting Scott Kramer, SEDA-COG, 201 Furnace Road, Lewisburg, PA 17837, (570) 524-4491.

Proposal details are also available at www.seda-cog.org – News, Notices & Publications.

Proposals will be accepted until 2:00 PM on Friday, February 22, 2019, at which time they will be publicly opened at the offices of SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG). Proposals shall also include the required information (Section V), sealed and clearly marked on the outside, "RURAL BROADBAND COVERAGE & FEASIBILITY STUDY Proposal," and submitted to: Scott Kramer, SEDA-COG, 201 Furnace Road, Lewisburg, PA 17837.

SEDA-COG encourages MBE/WBE firms to submit proposals.

Proposals that are faxed or e-mailed to SEDA-COG cannot be accepted.

Section I: Project Narrative and Primary Scope

Providing broadband to underserved rural areas, although often discussed as a major issue within the region, has not been widely acted upon because of the lack of information about the tasks, activities, and costs of developing, testing, and maintaining a high-speed broadband infrastructure. This proposal will provide the needed information to help local leaders and stakeholders make prudent decisions about next steps to expand broadband access. Additionally, most local governments have found that their rural businesses, who are in the coverage areas, may only have limited connection speeds well below, 25MB down and 5MB up, which is the Federal definition of Broadband. This study will provide local governments with a set of short term and longer-term strategies to address these rural broadband deficiencies.

This project goes beyond identifying areas unserved or underserved by broadband. Specifically, this project will commission an analysis of regional broadband needs, with a focus on business needs, evaluate the current broadband infrastructure and services, and identify three key areas of need in each participating county. The study will contain system engineering and design as well as cost estimates for the build out of broadband in those areas. Finally, in order to begin implementation of a broadband project in each county, a model Request for Proposals (RFP) will be created and utilized for a future implementation project in a prioritized area.

This project will address the lack of broadband infrastructure in the region, which is the predominant concern for emerging industries such as life sciences, technology, and health services. Economic developers and Chambers of Commerce have identified broadband connectivity as a key indicator for economic opportunities within the region.

The primary scope of this project involves:

1. Review of county assets: private and public.
2. Provide a regional field survey in all four participating counties to establish a dataset of broadband access, needs, and technology used throughout the region.
3. Assess the potential customer demand and estimate new service uptake rates.
4. Compile survey data and work with local government and service providers to isolate and prioritize three key rural areas in each county that are in need of adequate broadband access.
5. Map the location of existing broadband-related technologies, broadband speeds and providers. This information should be provided in a format usable by the Counties GIS systems.
6. Determine the best technology (i.e. Fiber, Microwave, Cable, DSL or combinations thereof) options for priority areas based upon:
 - a. Technologies best suited to the various areas of the county based on geography and demographics.
 - b. Proximity to anchor institutions such as schools, libraries, hospitals, public safety, cities, institutions of higher education and community support

- organizations, as well as Industrial & Business Parks, and other commerce clusters.
- c. Analysis of regulatory/legal issues as they pertain to the various options.
 - d. Cost of implementation for each option and potential financing solutions for each.
 - e. Potential affordability to the end customer.
7. Provide cost estimates for various deployment strategies.
 8. Create a model RFP that will be used for an implementation project in one of the prioritized areas in each county.

Section II: Alternate Scope

In addition to the primary scope, the local project team requests an alternate work scope to:

1. Have an analysis completed outlining options that may be considered relative to the ownership entity of the preferred system(s) and the delivery / maintenance / operations of such system.
2. This analysis shall take into consideration, but not be limited to a stand-alone public system or a public/private partnership and the general legal assessment of each.

Section III: Project Partners

The Planning Departments of Clinton, Lycoming, Northumberland, and Union County will be involved with planning and implementing the proposed project.

Clinton County - Clinton County, PA has a population of 39,536 people with a median age of 37.9 and a median household income of \$47,163. Between 2015 and 2016 the population of Clinton County, PA declined from 39,614 to 39,536, a 0.2% decrease and its median household income grew from \$45,078 to \$47,163, a 4.63% increase.

Lycoming County - Lycoming County, PA has a population of 116,313 people with a median age of 41.2 and a median household income of \$48,731. Between 2015 and 2016 the population of Lycoming County, PA declined from 116,656 to 116,313, a 0.29% decrease and its median household income grew from \$47,313 to \$48,731, a 3% increase.

Northumberland County - Northumberland County, PA has a population of 93,590 people with a median age of 44.2 and a median household income of \$43,701. Between 2015 and 2016 the population of Northumberland County, PA declined from 94,006 to 93,590, a 0.44% decrease and its median household income grew from \$42,406 to \$43,701, a 3.05% increase.

Union County - Union County, PA has a population of 45,178 people with a median age of 39.1 and a median household income of \$51,349. Between 2015 and 2016 the population of Union County, PA grew from 44,958 to 45,178, a 0.49% increase and its median household income grew from \$49,803 to \$51,349, a 3.1 % increase.

Section IV: Project Schedule

1. All proposals due at 2:00 pm EST on Friday, February 22, 2019.
2. Project implementation schedule and phasing - Please provide an estimated project timeline. Timeline should include:
 - a. Estimated project start and end dates.
 - b. Proposed date(s) for pre-project meeting with project committee.
 - c. Proposed date for presentation of findings to project committee which consist of SEDA-COG and representatives of each participating county.
3. Consultant will provide biweekly updates on progress during the work period, via either email, or phone calls, to the designated Project Representative and/or steering committee.
4. Consultant will provide 17 copies of final study along with a digital copy.

Section V: Proposal Submission

The following will be considered minimal contents of the proposal. Limit proposal to 10 pages.

1. Provide a restatement of the goals, objectives and project tasks to demonstrate the responder's view of the project and your approach to this project. Please reference the Project Scope sections in your responses.
2. Provide on your background and experience in the following areas:
 - a. Network: Outline the direct knowledge and experience your company has regarding broadband solutions.
 - b. Regulatory/Legal: Describe any direct experience and knowledge your company has in analyzing and interpreting the regulatory and legal landscape and providing analysis and guidance on these issues as they pertain to the various options contained in the proposal.
 - c. Services: Describe any direct experience and knowledge your company has in providing community and business community analysis and guidance surrounding broadband services.
 - d. Project Management: Outline your company's direct knowledge and experience with structured project management.
 - e. Partnerships: Share your company's experience in working with state and local governments and public-private sector collaborations.
3. Conflicts of Interest: Provide any information on prospective conflicts of interests, including existing or financial relations with equipment vendors, ISPs or other firms.
4. References: Include at least three references from previous similar projects. Identify key personnel who will conduct the project and provide detail of their training and work experience. No change in key personnel assigned to the project will be allowed without the approval of the local project team. Address experience in working with rural communities, schools and townships in regard to this type of study.
5. Include MBE/WBE certifications and list potential MBE/WBE subcontractors.

Note: Subcontractors working for the contractor must meet all the requirements of the Request for Proposal (RFP) and any contract between the contractor and the subcontractor must include all contract terms agreed to between the SEDA-COG and the successful contractor.

6. Detailed work plan to include:
 - a. Tasks to be accomplished and the budget hours to be expended for each task and subtask. (This will be used as a work plan and managing tool for basis of invoicing.)
 - b. Identify project timeline with deliverables and key milestones
 - c. Provide detail regarding local involvement and services expected to complete the project. A minimum of, but not limited to, 3 status meetings are to be contained in the work plan in addition to any data collection or input/review meetings.
 - d. Outline the project management approach that your company will employ to execute this project and identify individual(s) responsible for the various areas in the outline
 - e. Identify areas of risk for the project based on the contractors detailed work plan and schedule for all aspects of the project including but not limited to financial, construction, legal, product availability, environmental and archaeological
 - f. Provide detailed cost estimate of the study, including known project expenses, professional hourly rates and multipliers and estimated service/task hours with a "Not to Exceed" cap. Other ancillary expenses related to the completion of the study will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.
 - g. Commit to working closely with SEDA-COG and county entities

Proposals will be accepted until 2:00 PM on Friday, February 22, 2019, at which time they will be publicly opened at the offices of SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG). Proposals shall include the required information (Section V), sealed and clearly marked on the outside, "RURAL BROADBAND COVERAGE & FEASIBILITY STUDY Proposal," and submitted to: Scott Kramer, SEDA-COG, 201 Furnace Road, Lewisburg, PA 17837.

Section VI: Evaluation Criteria

The local project team will evaluate all proposals using the following criteria to conduct a best value evaluation:

1. Experience and qualifications of the vendor and personnel assigned to this project. (25 points)
2. Clear understanding of this project. (20 points)
3. Clear technical proficiency for the mix of technologies and cohesiveness of the network proposed. (20 points)
4. Project work plan and timeline. (10 points)
5. Work experience in small and rural communities including counties, cities and townships. (10 points)
6. Pricing. (10 points)

- 7. MBE/WBE (5 points)
 - o Extra points will be awarded to those who are MBE/WBE subcontractors.

After evaluating all proposals, the local project team, comprised of SEDA-COG and the Planning Departments of the participating counties, may choose to interview the top candidates.

Section VII: Selection Process

Selection of the consultant for this project will be based on the criteria noted above. Upon approval, SEDA-COG will enter into negotiations with the selected consultant to develop a Professional Services Agreement and finalize the work plan including budget hours. Should SEDA-COG and the selected consultant fail to satisfactorily reach agreement to the work plan, including budget, SEDA-COG may enter into negotiations with the respondent judged second in the evaluation process, or SEDA-COG may re-advertise for proposals.

Section VIII: Primary Contact & Key Dates

Inquiries concerning any aspect of this RFP and potential contract award should be directed to:

Scott Kramer
 SEDA-COG
 201 Furnace Road
 Lewisburg, PA 17837

Key Dates

RFP Release Date.....	January 14, 2019
RFP Opening Date	February 22, 2019 2:00 PM
Review Proposals	Week of February 25, 2019
Interview Qualified High Scoring Proposals	Week of March 4, 2019
Select Desired Contractor	Week of March 4, 2019

Proposals that are faxed or e-mailed to the SEDA-Council of Governments cannot be accepted.

SEDA-Council of Governments reserves the right to accept, reject, or negotiate any and all proposals or to waive any irregularities

STANDARD FEASIBILITY STUDY ESTIMATE

Firm Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Representative: _____

Section I. Primary Scope: \$ _____

Section II. Alternate Scope: \$ _____

Total Lump Sum: \$ _____

Additional Meetings:
Lump sum cost for additional meetings
if requested. \$ _____

I, _____, an authorized representative of the above indicated firm, have reviewed and understand the Rural Broadband Coverage and Feasibility Study Request for Proposal, and I/we am/are prepared to provide the required services for the above costs.

Signature: _____ Date: _____