

Vanderburgh County Rural Broadband Project

Vanderburgh County, Indiana

Request for Proposals (RFP) Notification

For

**Private Provider(s) to Deploy, Operate, and Maintain a Broadband
Internet Network Ensuring That Currently Underserved Premises in
Vanderburgh County Are Served by High-Speed Broadband**

Contract number: _____

Issued:

September 15, 2020

1 Summary Page:

Project Location: Vanderburgh County, Indiana

Response Due Date and Time: By 5:00 PM CST – Monday, November 9, 2020

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is official notification of needed professional services. This RFP is being issued to solicit a response and other documents from Internet Service Providers qualified to deploy, operate, and maintain a broadband internet network ensuring that currently underserved premises in Vanderburgh County are served by high-speed broadband. A submittal does not guarantee that the Applicants will be contracted to perform any services but only serves notice that the Applicant's desires to be considered. Vanderburgh County is not responsible for any costs incurred by the Applicants for the preparation of any materials required for responding to this RFP.

Contact for Questions: Audrie Burkett
Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana
318 Main Street, Suite 400
Evansville, IN 47708
Phone 812-423-2020
Email: aburkett@southwestindiana.org

Submittal requirements:

RFP Response (required content and instructions follow); one digital copy submitted to:

Submit To: Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana
318 Main Street, Suite 400
Evansville, IN 47708
Email: aburkett@southwestindiana.org

Selection Procedures:

Applicants will be selected for work items further described herein, based on the evaluation of the RFP response and other required documents as submitted.

The major criteria to be used for the evaluation of the RFP Submissions are as follows:

- Understanding of the requested work
- Ability to respond in a timely manner
- Proposed Capital Cost to County
- Knowledge and technical competence
- Completeness of RFP
- Experience, background, qualifications, and capabilities
- Financial stability

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1. Introduction

This RFP reflects the commitment of Vanderburgh County to ensure high-speed broadband is available to as many residents and businesses in Vanderburgh County (hereinafter primarily referred to as “County”) as possible. The County seeks to provide an immediate solution to rural areas, leveraging existing infrastructure, whether publicly or privately owned. The successful Internet Service Provider or other organization responding to this RFP (hereinafter referred to as “Applicant”) will be expected to deliver 100 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload (i.e., 100/10) service to the largest geography in the most expeditious time frame.

The County recognizes many residents already have access to high-speed service because they live in areas where it is technically feasible and cost-effective for local internet service providers (ISP) to provide this service. However, such service is not available everywhere in the County due to the high cost of construction and, with respect to wireless coverage, technical challenges related to wireless propagation. These hurdles include low-density development, long driveways, and requirements for underground construction, tree cover, and topography. In short, ISPs cannot provide ubiquitous coverage and obtain a reasonable rate of return everywhere in the County.

The County has decided to explore the potential for closing this broadband availability gap by offering direct capital funding to support deployment to qualified and committed private sector partners. The goal is to stimulate economic development activity in the targeted geographical areas. The County understands that an increase in economic development activity cannot happen without access to critical broadband infrastructure. In this RFP, the County offers to provide up to **\$ 1.069 million** to one or more Applicants that commit to meeting the goals and conditions outlined in this RFP and in subsequent negotiations. The purpose of the funding will be to defray the cost of the infrastructure necessary to meet the requirements of the RFP, which might include construction of fiber optics and conduit and/or poles to mount wireless facilities (collectively this infrastructure is hereinafter referred to as “Assets”). Applicants may submit more than one RFP response if one project has a faster time frame than another.

Through this RFP, the County seeks proposals from Applicants to build, operate, and maintain Assets to provide internet service of at least 100/10 service throughout Vanderburgh County, outside the Evansville City limits. For the purposes of this RFP, the County is particularly interested in addressing “underserved” premises, or those unable to receive at least 25 Mbps download, 3 Mbps upload service (25/3 service). The County understands providing 100/10 service to 100 percent of premises in the Vanderburgh County may be infeasible for a range of reasons. The County seeks proposals that come as close to ubiquitous service as possible; that state clearly how many premises will be covered and how many potentially left underserved or with no service; and that state what it would cost to provide service to these additional premises.

The County encourages collaboration among Applicants as necessary to meet the goals of this RFP.



Figure 1: Evansville City Limits outlined in blue and is not the focus of this RFP.

2. Project Overview, Purpose and Objectives

The following are the County's requirements and goals under this RFP.

2.1 Provide 100/10 Service to Underserved Premises

The County seeks to make available broadband services—defined as 100 Mbps download/10 Mbps upload—to as many premises in the County as possible. The purpose of the RFP is to select the best Applicant(s), based on RFP responses, to finalize project details which will include moving forward with the creation and execution of a contract with the County.

The County acknowledges many rural areas of Vanderburgh County are currently considered unserved or underserved with adequate broadband. Independently creating adequate broadband in these areas would likely require a private enterprise to invest capital and operational expense “in advance of demonstrated, adequate market demand” for the defined products. For this reason, the County also acknowledges the need for its financial participation to catalyze the creation of adequate broadband capabilities in rural areas.

The County intends to contribute direct capital funding to support deployment of Rural Broadband Coverage infrastructure and specified products in order to stimulate economic development in the targeted rural geographical areas.

The Applicant(s) whose proposal best meets the requirements outlined in this RFP, and whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous to the County, will have the opportunity to negotiate a final contract with the County for deployment of new infrastructure and services.

The Rural Broadband Coverage project is technology agnostic. While it is assumed there is a high likelihood that wireless technology and infrastructure will be deployed in the delivery of new broadband to unserved or underserved areas, any technologies utilized may be diverse. What is required is a) universal coverage across an Applicant's identified project geography and b) delivery of desired levels of broadband products at price points consistent with other projects similar in scope.

The County does not intend to enter the broadband business as a competitive service provider.

The County does not intend to own the network infrastructure Assets it financially supports through this RFP process.

The County does not intend to operate the network enterprise it financially supports through this RFP process. The network enterprise will be owned and operated by the selected Applicant, and/or Applicant's subcontractor, as per the contract to be negotiated with the County.

If the Applicant is already providing service in some areas of the County, the County requires that the Applicant provide the same pricing and service tiers for data services (at least 100 Mbps download, 10 Mbps upload) over the Assets in the newly served areas, as in the currently served areas of the City of Evansville. Essentially, the County seeks parity.

In addition to outlining requirements, processes, and desired outcomes, the purpose of the RFP is also to engage in a fair, open, and transparent process for selection of a Rural Broadband Project candidate.

The County acknowledges that the project outlined in this RFP has not been fully engineered.

The County acknowledges and expects that interested Applicants may approach satisfying the requirements specified in this RFP in a manner unique to their current network capabilities and market position. Each Applicant's individual approach to creating the products specified in the RFP will be deemed acceptable only to the extent that products are universally available within the specified coverage areas at designated bandwidth requirements and acceptable price points.

The County will analyze and compare all proposed approaches used to meet the REQUIRED geographic coverage, technical/design requirements, and required outcomes of the RFP in combination with Applicant's qualifications and proposed County capital contributions to the project.

The role of the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana as it relates to this RFP is to foster the creation of an additional layer of broadband service providing universal coverage of adequate broadband products in all rural areas previously unserved or underserved.

The County reiterates that for the purposes of this RFP, "underserved" is defined as premises unable to receive at least 25/3 service. The County understands some premises may already be able to get or currently have between 25/3 and 100/10 service. The County expects many of these premises may also benefit and be able to obtain better service as a result of this planned effort.

This request for proposals does not constitute a contract for services performed or to be performed.

2.2 RFP Schedule and Publication

The County intends the project be deployed in a continuous fashion commencing immediately upon contract execution.

The County desires that the Rural Broadband Project be completed within a 6-month window from the date of the contract with the County. Within their RFP response Applicants are expected to provide a proposed schedule for implementation that reflects the most expeditious timeline possible.

Applicants s to the RFP shall provide an estimated deployment time frame from contract finalization which is to include any required engineering.

The RFP Schedule is as follows:

RFP Publication and Post Date:	Tuesday, September 15, 2020
Written Questions Due:	By 5:00 pm CST – Thursday, October 1, 2020
Written Answers Delivered:	By 5:00 pm CST – Thursday, October 8, 2020
RFP Response Due Date:	By 5:00 PM CST – Monday, November 9, 2020
RFP Public Reading:	Tuesday, November 10
Analysis and Scoring Complete:	By 5:00 pm CST Monday, November 23, 2020
Notice of Award:	Tuesday, December 1, 2020
Notice to Proceed:	Tuesday, December 1, 2020

2.3 RFP Submittal process

RFP responses must be complete and submitted using the formats, processes, and timelines outlined in the RFP. Final RFP submittal information documents will **only** be accepted in an electronic document format (PDF preferred) delivered via e-mail. All communication related to the RFP must contain in the subject line of the e-mail the following identifier:

“Vanderburgh County - Rural Broadband Coverage – RFP Response”

Responses received after the specified due date and time shall result in disqualification of the Applicant's RFP submittal and will not be accepted.

All proposals submitted become the property of Vanderburgh County.

Facsimile, printed, or telephoned proposals will not be considered.

2.4 RFP Question and Answer Process

The Vanderburgh County Rural Broadband Project intends to afford all RFP Applicants equal access to information related to the project in order to execute a fair, open, and transparent process for the selection of a candidate to move forward with to the contracting phase.

RFP Applicants must submit any technical or procedural questions related to the RFP in writing via e-mail to the following e-mail address:

aburkett@southwestindiana.org

All questions related to the RFP must contain in the subject line of the e-mail the following identifier:

“Vanderburgh County Rural Broadband Coverage – Questions”

All questions must be submitted by the Written Questions Due date specified in 2.2.

The County reserves to right to directly contact Applicants (via e-mail or phone) to clarify questions received.

All submitted questions will receive a written response with the resulting written communications containing questions and answers forwarded to all organizations receiving the original RFP. All question responses will be distributed by the Written Answers Delivered date specified in 2.2.

2.5 Vanderburgh County Financial Contribution

The County will provide a direct capital dollar contribution for the project to one or more Applicants under the terms and timelines specified in a negotiated contract. The County funding will be released upon completion and acceptance of agreed upon project milestones.

All network infrastructure will be owned by the Applicant and/or Applicant subcontractor.

All deployment, maintenance and operational costs, including customer acquisition and customer service, will be the responsibility of the Applicant.

The capital financial contribution of the County is explicitly designed to compensate and adjust the overall project's financial metrics to acknowledge that the selected Applicant will be creating and

making available specific, pre-defined broadband products within specified geographic areas of Vanderburgh County.

Applicants to this RFP are encouraged to consider the following criteria when specifying their proposed County financial capital contributions:

- Applicant's current existing network infrastructure capabilities able to serve the specified geography
- Applicant's ability to leverage appropriate existing Assets and operational resources in the RFP response
- The competitive strength of other Applicant product offerings that are not specified requirements of the RFP
- The ability of the Applicant to acquire new customers
- The ability of the County to enact a recovery fee to recapture the initial investment

Although there will be network deployment requirements combined with long term network performance requirements associated with the negotiated contract, the County's financial contribution will be in the form of direct dollar capital contributions made at such time as specified in the negotiated contract.

2.6 General RFP Requirements, Considerations, and Anticipated Contract Terms

Written questions are the sole responsibility of the Applicant regarding inquiry about any requirement of this RFP that is not fully understood.

There is no guarantee a contract will successfully be awarded related to a winning Applicant's response.

The County reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time.

The County is not required to accept the lowest cost proposal.

The County reserves the right to reject any proposal if the evidence submitted by, or investigation of, such Applicant fails to satisfy the County that such Applicant is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and to complete the work contemplated therein.

The County, at its option, may make a single award for the entire requirement identified in this RFP. The County may also, at its option, make multiple awards. The contract may be awarded on the merits of the whole proposal or only a part of it. By submission of a proposal, each Applicant offers or acknowledges the right of the County to make the award, which is in its best interest. The County may also make no award after the completion of this RFP process.

The County reserves the right to accept any proposal, to reject any or all proposals, to reissue a request for proposals, to waive irregularities and/or informalities in any proposal, and to make the award in any manner deemed in the best interest of the County.

The County reserves the right to disqualify any proposals at any stage of the evaluation or procurement process upon evidence of collusion with intent to defraud or any other illegal practices on the part of the Applicant.

The County reserves the right to disregard all non-conforming, non-responsive, or conditional proposals.

Discrepancies between words and figures will be resolved in favor of words.

Discrepancies between the indicated sum of any column of figures and the correct sum thereof will be resolved in favor of the correct sum.

The County may make such investigation as deemed necessary to determine the ability of the Applicant to perform the work, and the Applicant shall furnish to the County all such information by the date specified by the County.

The County may conduct such investigations as it deems necessary or appropriate to assist in the evaluation of any RFP response and to establish the responsibility, qualifications, and financial ability of the Applicant, their proposed subcontractors, and other persons or organizations submitted within an Applicant's response to do the work to the County's satisfaction within the prescribed time.

The submission of an RFP response will constitute representation by the Applicant that it understands and has complied with the requirements of the RFP. Submission of a response indicates the RFP information provided was sufficient in scope and detail to convey understanding of anticipated terms and conditions for performance of the work.

While not shown in the schedule above, the County reserves the right to conduct interviews of short-listed Applicant(s) prior to making a final selection.

The information contained in proposals submitted for consideration by the County will be held in confidence only to the extent allowable by law. The County will honor specific requests for confidentiality for information of a proprietary nature only to the extent allowed by law if clearly marked by Applicant as "Proprietary" or "Confidential."

All proposals become public documents and are subject to public review (upon request). "Proprietary" or "Confidential" items should be noted and will not be eligible for public review to the extent allowed by law. During the RFP process itself, and until a contract is awarded or this process is canceled, all information and documents received are confidential.

RFP Applicants assume all costs of preparation of the proposal.

RFP responses become the property of Vanderburgh County.

By submitting an RFP response, the Applicant agrees that the specifications are adequate and accepts the terms and conditions outlined. Any exceptions to stated specifications should be noted in the RFP response.

In submitting an RFP response, the Applicant is not required to submit a bid bond, certified check, or other evidence of financial responsibility.

Unless specified to the contrary, all proposals shall be valid for 180 days from the due date of the submission.

Vanderburgh County is exempt from State, Federal, and Local taxes. Vanderburgh County will not be responsible for any taxes levied on the Applicant as a result of the contract resulting from this RFP.

The County acknowledges the potential for a variety of contract frameworks that may result from this RFP process; however, any final contract must comply with County requirements.

If chosen for contract negotiation, the selected Applicant candidate must provide a description of all liability and property insurances that would be in place relative to the contract as outlined in this RFP.

If chosen for contract negotiation, the selected Applicant candidate must provide a description of their ability to collect a user fee on behalf of the County.

The Applicant agrees to comply fully with the Minority Business Enterprises/Women's Business Enterprises (MBE/WBE) provisions of 25 IAC 5 and Vanderburgh County Code 2.26.010-090. Applicant must identify MBE/WBE anticipated to be participants in this project as part of the RFP response.

The successful Applicant should expect to enter into a contract for deployment of specific infrastructure, network operation and availability, and delivery of defined broadband services. The parties will arrive at a specific contract containing mutually agreed to terms consistent with Vanderburgh County requirements and contracting processes.

The Applicant will be required to execute a contract within 60 days of notification they have been selected by the County as the awarded candidate. The County reserves the right to select another candidate if a contract is not executed within the 60-day timeline.

The Applicant should expect that disbursement of County capital fund participation will be coordinated with the achievement of specific, mutually agreed-to project milestones.

3. Service Areas

The County seeks to close the broadband availability gap throughout Vanderburgh and understands the problem is primarily present in the low-density, Northern and Western portions of the County, outside the City of Evansville. The County does not have a precise count of underserved premises but believes approximately 35% of this population does not have access to fixed broadband solutions.

Based on survey feedback from Vanderburgh County residents, the County has identified 3 priority areas to encourage Applicants to first focus on. RFP responses can include one or all of the areas. Other areas outside of these priority areas excluding the City of Evansville are also eligible; however, the County felt it important to highlight the areas residents have shared the most need.

The underserved areas of the County very generally, but not precisely, correlate to the areas shown in Figure 2. These areas are identified on maps tangential to County line and street boundaries. The County has address-level data available highlighting homes without access. This data will be provided to the selected RFP Applicant(s).

The County acknowledges that proposals submitted will not be fully engineered at the time of submission. The RFP is not designed to award a fully defined project but rather is designed to select the most appropriate Applicant(s) with which to negotiate a contract for a project that meets the County's requirements.

Applicants are encouraged to provide response information engineered to the highest level of detail possible for an RFP of this nature.

Submission of detailed information will better support the County's ability to properly select the Applicant candidate for the contract negotiation phase.

Vanderburgh County GIS mapping resources can be found at: <http://dev.evansvilleapc.com/gis.html>

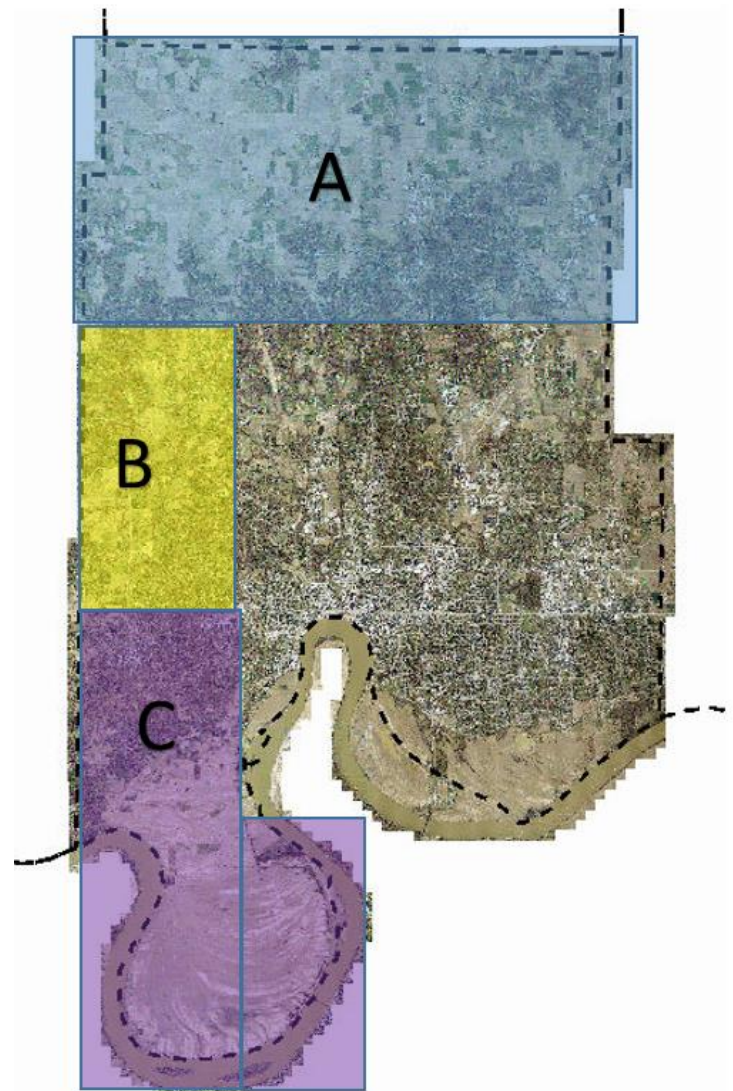


Figure 2: Designated Priority Areas

3.1 Priority Area A: Northern Vanderburgh County

Description

Priority Area A is comprised of the Armstrong and Scott Township. Some of the towns and communities within Area A are: Armstrong, Darmstadt, Daylight, Earie, Hillsdale, Inglefield, and Stacer.

Dead Zones

Some of the identified dead zones within Area A are the following:

- Large area bordered by the Vanderburgh-Posey County Line, Interstate 64, Old Princeton Road and Boonville New Harmony Road.
- Less than a mile south of St. Wendel community located in the Vanderburgh-Posey County line.
- A community on Apache Dr. just south of Booneville New Harmony Road.
- Intersection between Owensville Road and W Baseline Road.
- Eastern area boarded by Old State Road, Interstate 64, Highway 57 and Baseline Road.

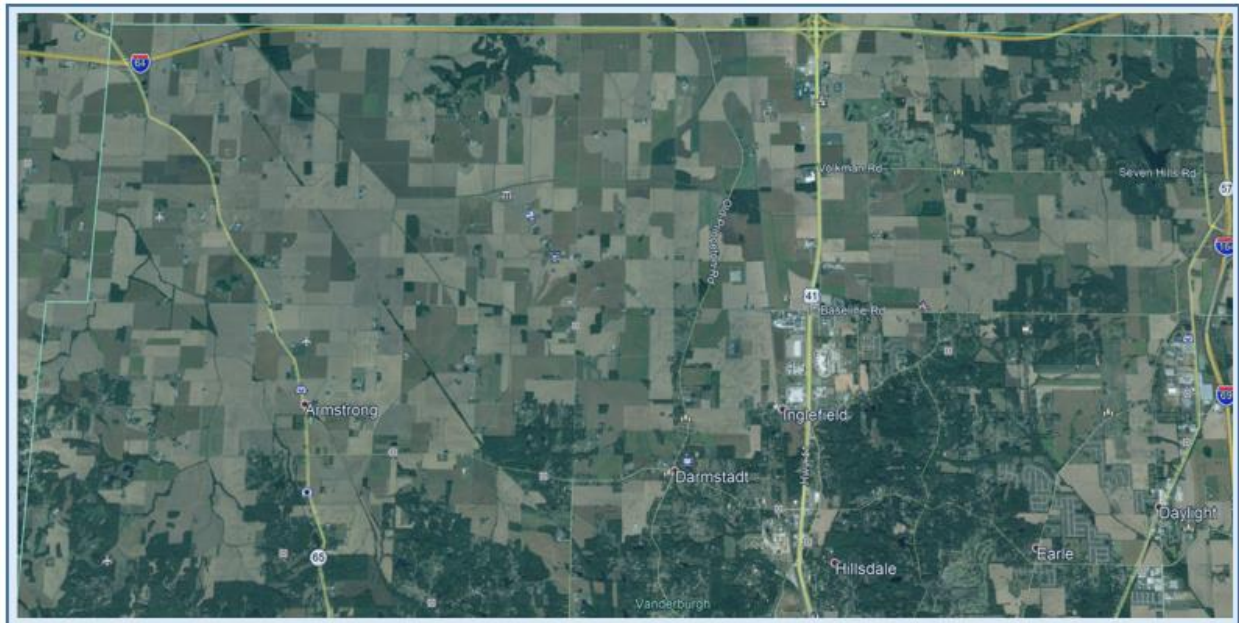


Figure 3: Priority Area A

3.2 Priority Area B: University Parkway

Description

Priority Area B lies within the German Township of Vanderburgh County. The area is subdivided in two blocks. The first block is bounded by University parkway to the east and the Vanderburgh-Posey County line to the west. Furthermore, the first block is enclosed by West Diamond Ave to the north and Pennsylvania Expressway to the south. The second block corresponds to the area south of West Diamond Avenue and north of Upper Mount Vernon Road, while being enclosed by University Parkway to the west and North Red Bank to the east.

Dead Zones

The identified dead zones in Priority Area B according to the survey are the following:

- The community of Parkers Settlement located in the intersection of St. Phillips Road and West Diamond Ave.
- Numerous communities along Denzer Road.
- Intersection between East Copperline Road and St. Phillips Road.
- Communities from St. Phillips intersection to University Parkway along Upper Mount Vernon Road.
- Middle Mount Vernon Road and Country Road 1200 E Intersection.
- Residents located on Koressel Road, Marx Road, and Church Road.



Figure 4: Priority Area B

3.3 Priority Area C: Broadway Avenue area South of University of Southern Indiana

Description

Priority Area C includes the highlighted section in Figure 5 and all of the Union Township depicted in Figure 6. The highlighted area is enclosed to the north by Broadway Avenue and Union Township to the south. It also ranges from the Vanderburgh-Posey County line to the Old Henderson Road from east to west respectively. Within this area are located Burdette Park and Bayou Creek.

Dead Zones

Surveyed dead zones within Priority Area C are:

- Communities along Broadway Road, from the Vanderburgh-Posey County line to the Bayou Creek Road intersection.
- Communities on West Franklin Road.

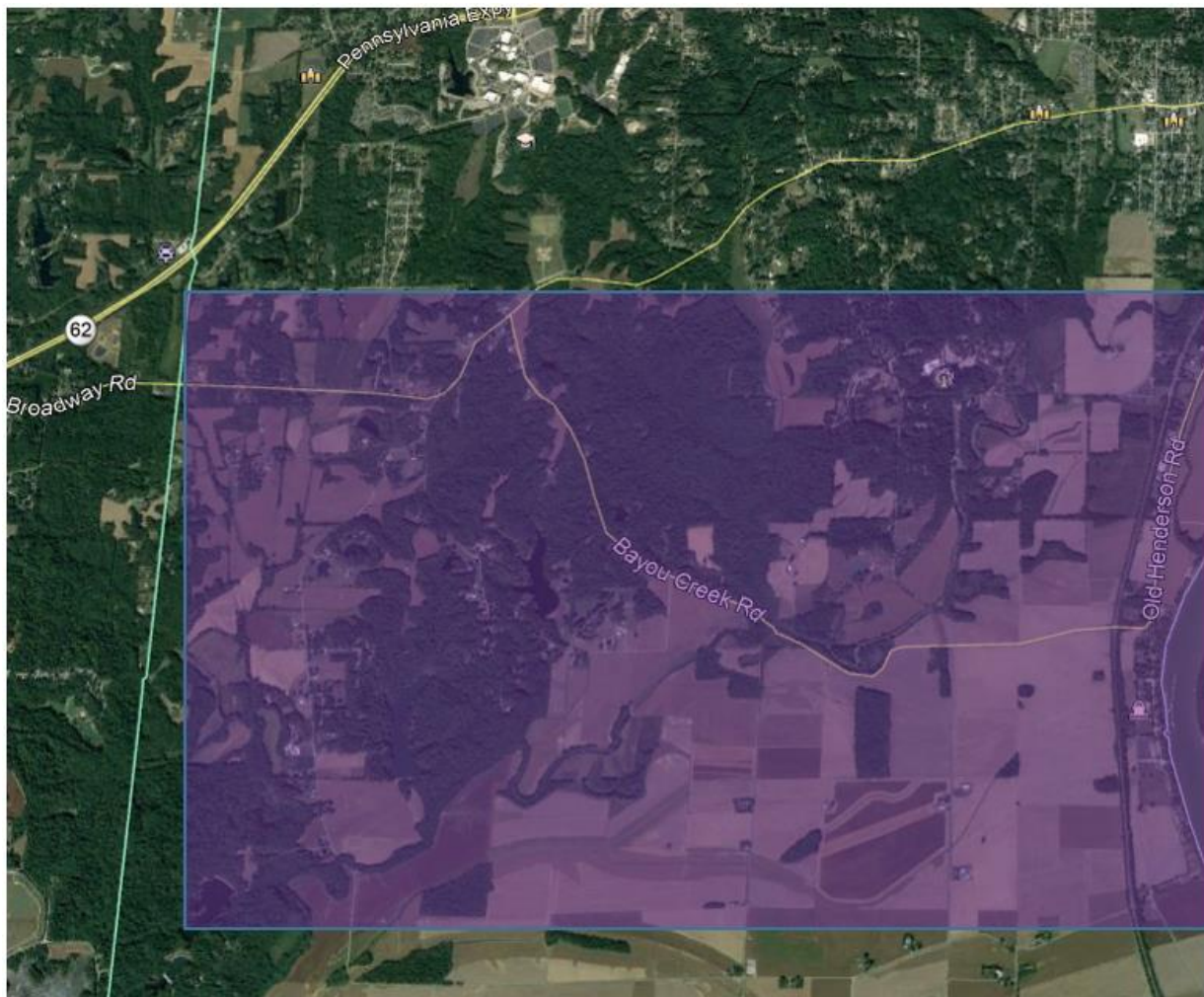


Figure 5: Priority Area C

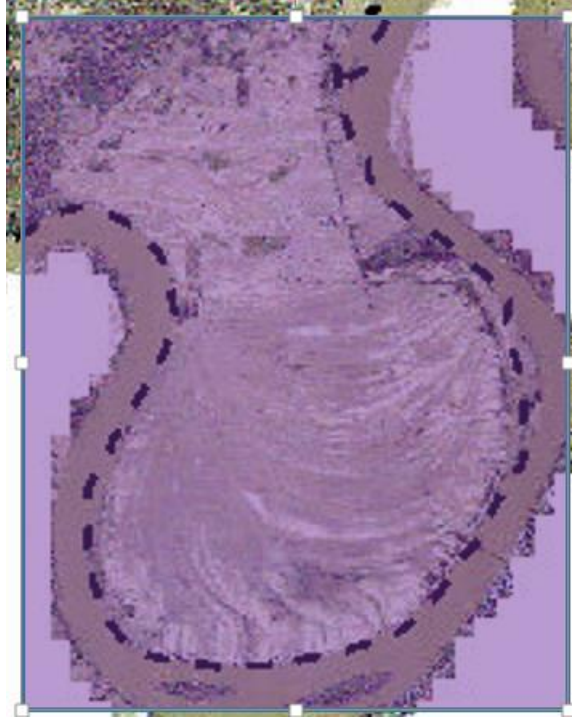


Figure 6: Union Township

4. Project Requirements

The following section is intended to describe the network and product requirements associated with the Rural Broadband Coverage project.

4.1 Technical Requirements

The desired bandwidth level for broadband service in the rural areas is 100 Mbps Downstream and 10 Mbps Upstream (100/10).

Applicants may propose any other levels of broadband speed they desire, provided the proposed Upstream speed is minimally 10% of the proposed Downstream speed.

The County will assess all product offerings and will award higher scores for proposals that include the 100/10 level of broadband speed.

This RFP does not dictate which technologies the Applicant should select or build, but rather leaves it to the Applicant to propose terrestrial (non-satellite) technologies that are suitable for deployment and able to reach the target areas. Applicants' proposed solutions should meet the following technical performance requirements:

- Offer at least 100 Megabits per second (Mbps) download and 10 Mbps upload speed.
- System designed to 99.9% uptime.
- Network backhaul capacity per base station site must be 1 Gigabit per second (Gbps) minimum, but capable of scaling to accommodate the maximum customer capacity as designed. Total Internet peering capacity must accommodate the aggregate backhaul bandwidth of all base stations be scalable if implementing a hub-and-spoke design.

All products proposed MAY NOT contain monthly data caps or bandwidth/speed reduction due to metered usage.

4.2 Open Access Requirements

There are no requirements for open access related to the Rural Broadband Coverage RFP.

4.3 Network Construction Standards

The Vanderburgh County Rural Broadband Coverage project that is the subject of this RFP is not fully engineered.

Applicants should expect that upon successful completion of a negotiated contract for deployment of a rural broadband network, and commencement of work by the selected Applicant, the County will provide inspection oversight to ensure compliance with design and deployment standards per the negotiated contract.

The selected Applicant will fully engineer the project prior to commencement of construction as a function of the negotiated contract.

Deployment of all fiber and fiber-related infrastructure must comply with all National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) codes and laws at the local, state, federal, and private land levels as they pertain to fiber optic installations.

Should wireless technology be selected for deployment, all towers, antennas, and other components utilized to deliver wireless broadband must comply with all FCC regulations regarding tower construction, spectrum registration, and applicable state/county authority over zoning and land use regulations.

The selected Applicant will be expected to have all routes and tower facilities surveyed by a certified engineering company as well as provide the County with GIS mapping showing all right of ways (as applicable) and engineered coverage design(s).

Other construction requirements that are the responsibility of the Applicant include:

- Provide the County with complete field work notes in accordance with County specifications and guidelines.
- Work with all appropriate agencies to obtain all required right of way approvals. The County is a Certified Broadband Ready Community.
- Coordinate project deployment with all utilities.
- Obtain all required permits and private easement approvals.
- Obtain any necessary contractor licensing issued by the Vanderburgh County Building Commission
- Provide on-site construction inspections to ensure design.

4.4 Network Equipment, Design and Technical Specifications

The Applicant must provide network architecture documentation. These should include:

- Fiber/circuit utilization
- Equipment to be used (include detailed specifications)
- Active equipment locations
- Logical equipment designs and specifications
- Any other documents necessary to define and describe the intended architecture.

Network architecture should consider a redundant topology that provides resiliency in the network. While not every component of the network can be redundant, where feasible the Applicant should take steps to make service offerings as resilient as possible.

It is expected that an Applicant may have some preexisting core Assets (fiber, towers, hut sites, etc.) they intend to utilize in providing services to the required service areas. Applicants utilizing preexisting infrastructure should provide documentation on how these Assets fit into their proposed network architecture.

The Applicant will be responsible for selecting equipment that can deliver the service as outlined in section 4.1.

The Applicant should follow manufacturers' best practices when designing and deploying equipment.

Confirmation should be provided which outlines how the Applicant proposes to adhere to the industry's best practices.

4.5 Network Test and Acceptance Standards

The Applicant will be required to demonstrate network performance to specified test standards. These standards will need to be met for services offered and infrastructure built or contracted. Speeds will be tested and proven per user.

Test standards are outlined in Attachment C.

4.6 Presence in County

While the successful Applicant will receive a capital dollar subsidy from the County, the Applicant will also be contributing significant capital and operational Assets of their own to the enterprise and must demonstrate they can successfully deliver broadband where the network is required to offer service.

The County will require that the selected Applicant maintain a physical presence in Vanderburgh County, maintaining a service relationship with customers of the network.

A significant component of Applicant analysis and selection will be the County's assessment of the Applicant's proposed presence within the County, demonstrating its ability to provide adequate service and support to its customers.

4.7 Network Deployment Timing

The County intends the project be deployed in a continuous fashion commencing immediately upon contract execution.

5. Applicant information

Each Applicant will be requested to provide background history, current capabilities, and financial statements. The County is particularly interested in understanding the Applicant's capabilities and track record regarding customer acquisition capabilities and customer service capabilities. Each Applicant should provide any additional company information that may be relevant for the County in assessing its overall qualifications.

The County may require the successful Applicant(s) to post a letter of credit to support its performance obligations. Provide information from your bank regarding the maximum amount of a letter of credit that your bank would issue on your behalf.

Startups or new Service Providers with limited performance history are not excluded from participation in the RFP response process; however, they should anticipate providing similar performance and financial due diligence information upon request.

The County reserves the right as a function of the RFP analysis process to require Applicants to identify the source(s) of Applicant's share of project funding.

The County reserves the right to contact references as deemed necessary to complete its analysis.

6. Rating Criteria

The County will use the following selection metrics to determine the Applicant(s) it selects to move forward with to the contract negotiation phase. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list, nor is the arrangement of the criteria meant to imply order of importance in the selection process.

Proposed project costs and the proposed Capital Cost to the County (30%)

Proposed solution (30%)

- Understanding of the requested work
- Coverage, topology and resiliency elements
- Equipment and design
- Required broadband products
- Reasonable prices inside the specified geography
- Overall deployment timing – priority given to project that can be done the quickest
- Adherence to specified network construction standards 4.3– priority given to project that can provide better than 100/10.
- Incorporation of the test and accept standards

Completeness of RFP response (10%)

Applicant background, qualifications and capabilities (30%)

- Customer service and acquisition capabilities
- Countywide presence
- Financial stability
- Similar projects completed
- Knowledge and technical competence

7. RFP Response Format

In an effort to expedite the evaluation of the RFP responses received, Applicants are asked to organize their proposals in the sequence given here. The RFP analysis team will compare and contrast RFP responses received to determine which best meets the specified requirements, and which is the most advantageous to the County, as overlaid to the proposed capital contribution required of the County. These instructions are designed to ensure the submission of information deemed by the County to be essential to the understanding and comprehensive evaluation of the RFP response.

All proposals must follow the same format. No exceptions to this format will be accepted, and all sections of the format must be addressed in order for a proposal to be accepted for evaluation. There is no restriction on the number of pages submitted in the proposal. Applicants should be sure to also incorporate any information contained in the RFP clarifications.

The aim of the required format is to simplify the proposal evaluation processes and to ensure that all proposals receive the same orderly review. All proposals shall include the following:

Cover Sheet

Executive Summary of Scope of Work

Technical Approach and Work Plan

Company Background

Statement of Qualifications

Cost Proposal and Company Financial Statement

Appendices

7.1 Cover Sheet

Complete the RFP 'Attachment A: Cover Sheet' worksheet provided. The County is looking to this form for the primary point of contact to solicit any clarifications as part of the RFP review by the RFP selection committee.

Provide the full legal name of the Applicant who will execute the contract, including any previous names or doing-business-as names. Provide additional specific information as listed on the Cover Sheet about the Applicant

The cover sheet must be signed by an owner, corporate officer, or agent authorized by the Applicant.

7.2 Executive Summary of Scope of Work

Applicant must provide an overview of the major features of the RFP submission. Include any suggestions, conclusions, recommendations or assumptions the Applicant believes are significant to the understanding of the RFP. Applicant should take this opportunity to comment on the sequencing and description of the tasks and/or the time frame for completion of the tasks.

7.3 Technical Approach and Work Plan

This section is intended to be the heart of the proposal and should reflect the Applicant's knowledge, experience, and technical expertise with the services and support necessary to complete the work effort outlined in the RFP. A detailed scope of work, to include the specific information listed below, is expected.

7.3.1 Technical and Procedural Concerns

Applicants should address any technical and/or procedural concerns that may influence the proposed project. Applicants should also include any assumptions made within their response.

Based on your organization's approach to similar work efforts and previous experience, explain when and where you will require support from County personnel. Please be sure to describe the form that such support would take and any special qualifications you will expect the County staff to have to effectively provide the support.

7.3.2 Technical Alternatives

In this section of your proposal, you are to describe any technical alternatives or exceptions to these specifications that you wish to present for the County's consideration. You should cite the applicability of alternative approaches/procedures to address County objectives and the advantages to be gained through their use.

Applicant must clearly acknowledge the project technical requirements as outlined in Section 4 of this RFP. Any exceptions the Applicant may have to the technical requirements as outlined in in Section 4 of this RFP must be clearly called out with the Applicant's recommendation for improvement/correction of specific requirements.

7.3.3 Implementation Schedule

In this section of your proposal, you are to describe the anticipated schedule for initial completion to deploy, operate, and maintain a Broadband Internet Network, including anticipated resources required. Applicant should provide a proposed schedule for design, construction, and initiation of broadband services to the specified areas of the County. The timeline schedule should include key milestones and phasing plans. Identification of Applicant and County resources, with a brief description of tasks that will be required for each, will be most helpful. Should you include any technical alternatives for the County's consideration, a separate schedule with resources should be included for each alternative.

7.3.4 Staff Capabilities and Experience

Applicant should clearly describe the capabilities, qualifications, and certifications of the staff to be assigned to support the County. Applicant should provide an outline of training programs and organizational efforts to broaden the skills of its staff.

The County realizes that this work effort may require the services of multiple entities organized into a project team. Applicants have the option of engaging the services of subcontractors for completion of this project. If your proposal involves any subcontractors, you must provide full details on the nature of work to be performed by them and the location in which the work is to be performed. The Applicant understands that, if selected, the use of subcontractors must be approved in writing by the County prior to initiating any subcontracted work.

The division of work assigned to subcontractors must be clearly specified in the Technical Approach and Work Plan section of your Proposal. The subcontractors' qualifications must be detailed in the Company Background section of your proposal. Subcontractor financial statements must also be provided with the Cost Proposal.

7.3.5 Project Location

Describe proposed project location(s) with any deviations from the project areas of interest as outlined in this RFP clearly identified.

Provide coverage area Asset narratives as applicable to support the proposed design that demonstrates coverage of the project location within the priority area(s).

Provide map(s) outlining Asset placement as applicable to support the proposed design that demonstrates coverage of the project location within the priority area(s).

7.3.6 Service Delivery and Design

Provide detailed service delivery and design information, as outlined in the Applicant's submission, to fully describe the service delivery platform being proposed. Provide a detailed narrative and related diagrams outlining your proposed network design, the specific equipment to be used and verification that it meets the standards specified to deliver the products as outlined in Section 4. Include all proposed equipment specification sheets.

For each product being proposed within the scope of this RFP please provide the following information as applicable:

- Downstream speed.
- Upstream speed (must minimally be 10% of downstream speed).
- Monthly recurring cost (MRC) – inclusive of estimated taxes and fees.
- One-time non-recurring installation costs (NRC) – inclusive of estimated taxes and fees.
- Narrative of installation requirements/process.
- Service level agreement and performance metrics for each.

7.3.6.1 Wireless Solutions

Wireless solutions are networks that use wireless to reach rural areas for last mile connectivity.

Proposed wireless solutions should provide the following information:

- Map of planned tower locations and expected coverage.
- Documented tower characteristics such as type and height.
- Document describing Licensed or Unlicensed wireless spectrum to be utilized.
- Detailed description of last mile line of sight requirements.

7.3.6.2 Wireline Solutions

Wireline solutions are networks that utilize fiber or copper (including coaxial cable) for last mile access.

Proposed wireline solutions should provide the following information:

- Provide detailed maps describing planned cable installation and preexisting cable routes that support meeting coverage requirements specified in the RFP.
- Document last mile access technology.

7.3.6.3 Point-to-Point Solutions

Applicants may also propose any point-to-point data products or business class Internet products.

7.3.6.4 Services Required

All proposals are required to include a description of the services required as the Applicant's organization would address support of the deployment, operation, and maintenance for the delivery of broadband Internet network products and services throughout the County. Provide a narrative of your current and/or intended presence in the County (i.e., sales, administrative, customer service personnel) in support of the Internet infrastructure established as a result of this RFP.

7.3.6.5 Service Level Agreements

The County has identified the following minimum service level requirements (SLR) which must be followed by the Applicant. Detailed requirements will be mutually defined by the County and selected Service Provider during contract negotiations, and may be amended, added to, and subtracted from by mutual agreement during the contract term.

- ISP Internet access will be available ninety-nine (99) percent of each month.
- ISP Internet access will be expected to deliver 100 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload.
- ISP will monitor and administer the Internet assets twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) days a week, three hundred sixty five (365) days per year.
- ISP will provide preventative maintenance whenever possible through proactive installation of patches, upgrades, hot fixes, service packs, and updates.
- ISP will provide constant security monitoring of the Internet assets.
- ISP will provide ongoing capacity management and planning to assure internet traffic throughput meets 100 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload.
- OTHER SLR AS DETERMINED.

General Network and Testing Standard requirements are stated in Section 8 for each type of service.

7.4 Company Background

Please provide the following information as part of your company background and current capabilities:

- Overview of your company history, number of years in operation, and management team. Also, indicate if your company is currently registered to do business in the State of Indiana.
- Overview of your organization's services products, and capabilities. Include any brochures or marketing material you feel would help give the County a better appreciation for your capabilities.
- Outline your company's capacity to handle a project of this size and complexity. If your capacity entails hiring additional staff should your organization be awarded the County contract for this work effort, identify the quantity and type of staff you envision adding, and the time frame you anticipate the acquisition to take. The County would prefer the staff were in place by the time the initial assessment is completed.

7.5 Statement of Qualifications

Provide a description of (up to) three (3) projects similar to the one described in this RFP that your company has deployed within the last five (5) years. Outline services offered, geography covered,

network design utilized, and customer types served. For each project provide the contact information for the primary reference for each of the projects including: the company/organization name, a primary point of contact, their title, and their phone number. The preference of the County would be to receive a list with both older established sites as well as new installations if possible.

7.6 Cost Proposal and Company Financial Statement

All Applicants must provide a cost proposal for each technical alternative you wish to propose within the RFP response. Applicants must include their proposed Capital Cost to the County for the project as well. Total overall costs to complete the work tasks will be considered by the County. Although the County reserves the right to negotiate best and final pricing, the price included in your response will be used when evaluating your proposal submission.

All Applicants must provide audited financial statements of the entity that would enter a contract with the County (unaudited financial statements are acceptable if Applicant does not have audited financials) from the past three years, and Applicants may also include credit ratings/reports, reference letters from your bank and reference letters from suppliers.

7.7 Appendices

Applicants can attach such documentation as desired to support the RFP response to assist the County to better assess the Applicant's RFP submission. If used, Appendices must be clearly labeled with a purpose for submission.

8. Network and Testing Standards

Applicants will be required to demonstrate network performance to specified test standards. These standards will need to be met for services offered and infrastructure built or contracted.

Test standards will be per user and include the following as outlined:

8.1 Fiber and Cabling Infrastructure:

Applicants shall provide the County with the following testing documentation:

8.1.1 Insertion Loss Test

All optical fiber cables and cable plants shall be tested for insertion loss using Electronic Industries Alliance/Telecommunication Industries Association (EIA/TIA) Standards EIA/TIA 526-14 or EIA/TIA 526-7.

Insertion loss refers to the optical loss of the installed fibers when measured with a test source and power meter (OLTS).

8.1.2 OTDR Testing

The Applicant will be required to test all fiber segments with an optical time domain reflect-o-meter (OTDR). The tests performed are to verify the quality of the installation and for establishing baseline data for future troubleshooting. However, it shall not be used as a measurement of the light loss of the cable.

OTDR measurements should follow procedures outlined in EIA/TIA 455-59, -60, and -61.

The County reserves the right to verify through separate testing the Applicant's test data submitted.

8.2 Wireless Elements:

8.2.1 Coverage Mapping

For all point-to-multipoint wireless technologies, coverage must be tested and documented in a GIS format with documentation provided to the County.

8.2.2 Simulated End User Testing

If a wireless solution is proposed, the County will test Last Mile Elements at one active customer site per tower deployed. The Applicant will be required to secure and provision a minimum of one active customer per tower deployed for this test.

To ensure the required coverage specified in Appendix I, the County will also test at the maximum product service delivery levels proposed by the Applicant, at three (3) sites selected by the County. These County selected sites will be located within each required Coverage Segment Zone (One, Two and Three). The maximum bandwidth size proposed by the Applicant will be tested at each of these County-selected test sites.

If the selected Applicant's proposed point-to-point data and/or business class Internet bandwidth level products, these are also subject to verification testing by the County at the proposed service delivery level speeds in each Coverage Segment Zone proposed.

Simulated User Testing will consist of:

- Downstream throughput at the speeds proposed by Applicant
- Upstream throughput at the speeds proposed by the Applicant
- Latency of 100 ms or less
- Packet Loss: 99.9% or more packets must be passed

8.3 Leased Capacity or Wireless Point-to-point:

RFC 2544 benchmark testing or equivalent. Test should benchmark throughput, latency, and frame loss at multiple frame sizes to ensure performance is within specifications.

All test results will be documented and delivered to the County.

The County reserves the right to test any and all network components delivered to verify quality standards are met.

ATTACHMENT A: COVER SHEET

Name of Person, Business or Organization:	
Type of Entity:	
Federal Tax ID Number:	
DUNS Number:	
Contact Person – Name	
Contact Person – Address	
Contact Person – Phone Number(s)	
Contact Person – E-mail address(es)	

By signing this **Cover Sheet** I hereby attest: that I have read and understood all the terms listed in the RFP; have read and understood all terms listed in this proposal; that I am authorized to bind the listed entity into this agreement; and that should this proposal be accepted, I am authorized and able to secure the resources required to deliver against all terms listed within the RFP as published by Vanderburgh County, Indiana, including any amendments or addenda thereto except as explicitly noted or revised in my submitted proposal.

<hr/>	<hr/>
Signature of Authorized Representative	Printed Name of Authorized Representative
<hr/>	<hr/>
Date	Printed Title of Authorized Representative

ATTACHMENT B: NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATE

By submission of this proposal, each vendor and each person signing on behalf of any vendor certifies, and in the case of a joint quotation each party thereto certifies, as to its own organization, under penalty of perjury, that to the best of his knowledge and belief:

1. The prices in this quotation have been arrived at independently without collusion, consultation, communications, or agreement for the purpose of restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such prices with any other vendor or with any competitor;
2. Unless otherwise required by law, the prices which have been quoted in this proposal have not been knowingly disclosed by the vendor and will not knowingly be disclosed by the vendor, directly or indirectly, to any other vendor or to any competitor;
3. No attempt has been made or will be made by the vendor to include any other person, partnership, or corporation to submit or not to submit a proposal for the purpose of restricting competition; and
4. No employee of Vanderburgh County, Indiana, or the Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana has received or will receive any payment or any other form of financial compensation from the Vendor as the result of award of this contract or promise of award to vendor.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Company: _____

Date: _____

Before me, a notary public in and for said county and state, personally appeared _____, who acknowledged the truth of the statements in the foregoing affidavit on this _____ day of _____, 2020.

Notary Public: _____

Name: _____

County of Residence: _____

My Commission Expires: _____

ATTACHMENT C: COST PROPOSAL

Complete this form in its entirety. Identify the costs for the services outlined in the RFP. If you wish to propose any technical alternatives, please submit those costs on the optional sections of the Cost Proposal form marked Technical Alternatives.

Vendor Name: _____

CATEGORY*	COST ESTIMATE	% of Vanderburgh Cost
Buildings and Land		
Construction Labor - Last Mile		
Construction Labor - Middle Mile		
Materials		
Customer Premise Equipment		
Customer Premise Installation		
Electronics		
Professional Services (Design & Engineering)		
Permits		
Total Project Cost		
Total Vanderburgh Cost		

NOTES:

*Category - please use the suggested categories above; if a category is not listed here please add a row into the table as needed.

ATTACHMENT D: TECHNICAL ALTERNATIVES (OPTIONAL)

Use this form to identify costs only if you have outlined technical alternatives as part of your response to this RFP

Vendor Name: _____

CATEGORY*	COST ESTIMATE	% of Vanderburgh Cost
Technical Alternative 1 (SPECIFY)**		
A.		
B.		
C.		
D.		
E.		
Technical Alternative 1 Project Total		
Technical Alternative 2 (SPECIFY)		
A.		
B.		
C.		
D.		
E.		
Technical Alternative 2 Project Total		
Vanderburgh Cost Project Total		

NOTES:

*Category - please insert the needed categories for the technical alternative. Insert rows as needed to provide the full cost estimate of the technical alternative.

**Technical Alternative - please be sure to include a cost proposal for each of the technical alternatives provided in the RFP response.