

# **Request for Proposals (RFP): Technical Assistance for High-Speed Internet Development in Powell County KY.**

## **1. Introduction:**

The Powell County Broadband Commission is dedicated to serving the community of Powell County, KY. We are committed to the development and well-being of our region. In line with our commitment, we are seeking a qualified internet service provider (ISP) to plan, deploy, and maintain a fiber-backed infrastructure. The ISP will also be responsible for connecting and supporting fiber-to-the-premises for residences, businesses, and industrial areas in Powell County, KY.

## **2. Background:**

Powell County, KY is a predominantly rural area with limited access to reliable high-speed internet services. This lack of connectivity has had a significant impact on our community's economic growth, educational opportunities, tourism, and access to essential services such as telehealth. Recognizing the urgent need to bridge this digital divide, we are looking for expertise to develop and implement an actionable plan for improving internet infrastructure and availability in our county.

## **3. Objective:**

The primary objective of this project is to engage a qualified company, or consortium of companies, to provide technical assistance in developing and implementing a comprehensive plan to bring high-speed internet to Powell County, KY. The plan should address the following key aspects:

- a. Assessment of current internet infrastructure and connectivity gaps.
- b. Identification of viable high-speed internet technologies suitable for rural areas.
- c. Mapping and prioritization of unserved and underserved areas within the county.
- d. Recommendations for infrastructure development, including fiber optics, wireless networks, or other suitable solutions, with fiber optics to the home being the most desired delivery method.
- e. Cost estimation and financial modeling for the proposed infrastructure development.
- f. Strategies for public-private partnerships and potential funding sources.
- g. Implementation timeline and phased rollout plan.
- h. Policy and regulatory considerations for deploying high-speed internet in a rural environment.
- i. Any solution proposed shall meet or exceed the minimum symmetrical speed of 100 Mbps/100 Mbps, or if such speeds are not feasible, reliable download speed of at least 100 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 20 Mbps, but scalable to a minimum of 100 Mbps symmetrical download and upload speeds. Ensure that a competitive rate structure is in place to provide high speed internet to the unserved and underserved citizens of Powell County, offering service plans for all income levels.
- j. The final solution shall be able to be deployed and operational in the most expedient manner to bring high speed internet to the residents of Powell County, Kentucky. The deployment shall be delivered in an expeditiously and economically feasible manner. A projected timeline of deployment should be included in the submittal.

## **4. Scope of Work:**

**Requirements** - The Powell County Judge Executive's Office desires to find a qualified partner, private or public, through this Request for Proposals that will be responsible for:

- a. Conducting a comprehensive assessment of the existing internet infrastructure and connectivity challenges in Powell County, KY.
- b. Evaluating various high-speed internet technologies and recommending the most suitable options for the county's unique requirements, with fiber optics to the residence or business being the most desired delivery method.
- c. Identifying unserved and underserved areas and prioritizing them based on population density, economic significance, and other relevant factors.
- d. Describe the geographic coverage area of the proposed project. Include a map of the proposed area and/or a complete list of addresses that will be served by the project. A map of a last mile project should include the service area boundaries and also include place names, boundaries, buildings, road/street names or other features that clearly identify the project coverage area. For middle mile projects, the map should include the location of the middle mile facilities that will be placed.
- e. Developing a detailed plan for the deployment of high-speed internet infrastructure, including the necessary network architecture, equipment, and connectivity solutions.
- f. Collaborating with local stakeholders, including government agencies, service providers, and community organizations, to gather insights and incorporate their feedback into the plan.
- g. Conducting a thorough cost analysis for infrastructure development, including both upfront investment, long-term operational costs, and recurring costs, as well as a defined list of ownership of infrastructure equipment.
- h. Assessing potential public-private partnership opportunities and identifying funding sources, including grants, subsidies, and private investments.
- i. Drafting a comprehensive implementation timeline and a phased rollout plan for the proposed high-speed internet development.
- j. Considering policy and regulatory frameworks and making recommendations to overcome any legal or administrative barriers to implementation.
- k. Proving the long-term viability of the solution and of their company.
- l. Demonstrating the ability to make use of all available technology to deliver robust and flexible service options.
- m. Obtaining all federal state and local permits and licenses to provide services in Powell County, Kentucky, and the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

## **5. Information for Respondents:**

**Firm Qualifications** -- Respondents shall have been actively engaged in the sale of, and/or installation of High Speed Internet for a period of at least five (5) years, or partner with a provider that meets the stated requirements.

**RFP Questions** -- All questions regarding this RFP shall be directed via e-mail to the Powell County Judge Executive at [powellcojudge@gmail.com](mailto:powellcojudge@gmail.com) no later than September 8. If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFP, an amendment will be posted to the same media outlets originally used when posting this RFP.

## 6. Submittal Requirements:

Interested parties providing a submission to this RFP shall complete the following sections for the submission to be considered complete. Responses to these sections will provide the needed information for the committee to evaluate the submissions to determine the most qualified bidder. A total of four (4) hard copies shall include the following sections:

- a. Provide a background of the Respondent's current services, resources, and capabilities. This section should include the Respondent's knowledge, experience and operations in the broadband and telecommunications industry as well as any current partnerships or deployments with municipalities, electric utilities, or other public-private partnerships.
- b. Three (3) references of service similar in size and scope. References submitted should be no more than five (5) years old. References shall include the name and location of the network, contact person, telephone number, and a brief description of the work performed. Not required if a public utility.
- c. A letter from the Respondent stating its interest in developing a partnership with Powell County Judge Executive's Office and providing information if any of the requirements listed in the RFP could not be met and providing a reasoning why they could not be met.
- d. The response shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope clearly labeled as "RFP Broadband Expansion Project." An original and three (3) copies for a total of four (4) hard copies of the proposal must be clearly labeled "RFP- Broadband Expansion Project". **All responses shall be submitted by mail or hand-delivered to:**

**Powell County Judge Executive  
525 Washington Street  
Stanton, KY 40380**

The Powell County Judge Executive Office and/or the Powell County Broadband Commission reserves the right to contact all references supplied for an evaluation of past performance to establish the responsibility of the Respondent before the actual award. In executing their response, the Respondent agrees that the Powell County Judge Executive Office and/or the Powell County Broadband Commission may contact said references and be guided by their information in awarding the contract. The Powell County Judge Executive Office and/or the Powell County Broadband Commission may also request proof of financial stability from any Respondent, which would be evaluated prior to award.

## 7. Respondent Responsibilities:

- a. RFP Familiarity - At the time of the opening of the responses, it will be presumed that the Respondent has read and is thoroughly familiar with the scope of this RFP.
- b. Erroneous Claim - The Respondent agrees that, if a contract is executed with the Powell County Judge Executive Office, the Respondent shall make no claim against

the Powell County Judge Executive Office because of any estimate or statement made by any employees, agents, or consultants of the Powell County Judge Executive Office that may prove to be erroneous in any respect.

- c. Terms and Conditions - Respondents shall be held to have accepted the terms and conditions as expressed in the specifications that are a part hereof.
- d. Compliance with Applicable Laws - The Respondent shall be able to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.

## **8. General Terms and Conditions:**

The Powell County Judge Executive Office reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals and to negotiate the final contract with the successful Respondent. If contract negotiations do not lead to a successful resolution as determined by Powell County Judge Executive Office, the Powell County Judge Executive Office reserves the right to discontinue negotiations and begin, based on proposals received, negotiations with another Respondent.

## **9. Request for Proposals Material and Confidentiality:**

- a. All material submitted by the Respondent to the Powell County Judge Executive Office shall become property of the Powell County Judge Executive Office upon receipt.
- b. All documents or information which are part of or related to this RFP, in any form, whether provided by the Powell County Judge Executive Office and/or the Powell County Broadband Commission or authored by the Respondent, specifically including, but not limited to, handwritten or typed notes (including electronic mail), photographs, digital files, audio or video recordings, maps, and diagrams, shall be kept strictly confidential. At all times, beginning from the date of issuance of this RFP and continuing forever, persons not directly involved in the preparation of the Respondent's response shall not be permitted access to any information regarding the RFP.
- c. All information and data provided in the proposals will be treated as confidential and used solely for the purpose of evaluating the proposals.
- d. Facsimile and EMail Responses -- Proposals will not be accepted by facsimile or e-mail.
- e. Public Inspection -- Proposals will not be open for public inspection

## **10. Evaluation Criteria:**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- a. Company experience and expertise in high-speed internet infrastructure development in rural areas.
- b. Understanding of the specific challenges and requirements of Powell County, KY.
- c. Methodology and approach for conducting the assessment and developing the plan.
- d. Demonstrated ability to collaborate with stakeholders and incorporate their input.
- e. Cost-effectiveness and financial feasibility of the proposed plan.
- f. Implementation timeline and phased rollout strategy.
- g. Past performance and client references.

## **11. Schedule:**

### **Date Milestone**

August 22, 2023	RFP Issued
August 31, 2023	Last day for questions or clarification
September 6, 2023	Final answers issued and addendums posted
September 12, 2023	Response to RFP due by 10:00AM EDT
September 15, 2023	Review of responses completed by committee
September 19, 2023	Final selection awarded (Subject to Change)

Please note that this timeline is subject to change at the discretion of the Powell County Judge Executive's Office and/or the Powell County Broadband Commission.

### **12. Review and Selection:**

A review committee will evaluate all the responses. The committee may request, at its discretion, a Respondent to clarify any information submitted in a response. Finalist(s) will be determined based upon the recommendation of the committee to the Powell County Judge Executive's Office who will give final approval, at which time negotiations are expected to start taking place immediately. The selected partner will move forward with negotiations and enter into an agreement with the Powell County Judge Executive's Office to develop the scope of work and timelines for deployment. Powell County Judge Executive's Office reserves the right to select one partner, multiple partners or to reject any submission and to waive formalities from this Request for Proposals.

### **13. Non-Binding Request for Proposals:**

The issuance of the RFP and any responses does not create a binding obligation on the part of Powell County Judge Executive's Office to enter any form of agreement or contract or to pay any cost associated with the preparations of the submittal.

The procurement of the contract will be through a competitive negotiation process. Due to the specialized services required to be rendered under the contract, the award of the contract will not necessarily be awarded based upon the lowest price. Rather, the contract will be awarded to the entity that the Fiscal Court determines, in writing, and in its sole discretion, has demonstrated the capability to deliver fast, reliable, and affordable broadband internet services to the County's unserved and underserved households and businesses and whose proposal is the most advantageous to the County base upon those factors and the reciprocal preference for resident bidders required by KRS 45A.494.

The Fiscal Court reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any formalities. The award will be made without discussion except as provided in KRS 45A.370.

We look forward to receiving your proposal and working together to bring high-speed internet to Powell County, KY. If you have any questions or require further clarification, please contact the office of the **Powell County Judge Executive at [powellcojudge@gmail.com](mailto:powellcojudge@gmail.com), or [rcrabtree33@hotmail.com](mailto:rcrabtree33@hotmail.com).**