



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FROM
QUALIFIED FIRMS FOR:

**The Development of a Broadband Needs Assessment
and Business Plan for:**

The Greene County Broadband Cooperative

(Serving the villages and township of
Cedarville, Clifton, and surrounding areas)

Section 1 PROJECT PURPOSE & VISION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this RFP is to select a consultant to conduct a broadband feasibility study for Cedarville Township, Clifton Village and surrounding areas (Greene County Broadband Cooperative). Specifically we wish to make high-speed internet (1 gigabit) service available to all businesses and residents of the area at an affordable price.

VISION

Our vision is to provide a world-class telecommunications infrastructure for the identified area for the 21st century and beyond. We acknowledge that broadband is a critical service for the quality of life, as is the case with roads, water, sewer, and electricity. Every home, business, non-profit organization, government entity, and place of education should have the opportunity to connect affordably, easily, and securely. These broadband services will be shaped by the values of the communities served. Initially the area to be served is Cedarville Township to include the Villages of Cedarville and Clifton, the Cedarcliff School District and nearby adjacent townships. The longer term goal would be to include population areas in the eastern portion of Greene County.

Section 2 BACKGROUND & AREA INTERNET RESOURCES

The initial area to be served by this broadband initiative is primarily Cedarville Township, including the villages of Cedarville and Clifton and the Cedarcliff School District. This is composed of about 39 square miles with a population of 9700. The area telecommunication services are currently provided by Spectrum, AT&T, and several satellite providers. Service speeds provided in the villages and in limited rural areas are 12-50 mega-bits per-second. Much of the service area has either a single DSL provider or satellite internet service, both of which fail to meet the FCC's standard of broadband speed. Combined with the data usage caps of wireless and satellite internet providers, most rural residents have an internet access that is functionally useless.

The area is primarily rural, with the two population centers of Cedarville and Clifton. There is currently no residential fiber optic infrastructure and the commercial fiber optic infrastructure would be inadequate to support the additional use.

The service area has one large entity (Cedarville University), which has over 3700 students, not counted in the above population numbers. The University has dedicated fiber optic service so its students and faculty are not as heavily impacted by lack of internet service as is the rest of the subject area. Of particular concern are students of the Cedar Cliff school district who are dependent on internet access to accomplish homework. Approximately 64% of the district's students have only access to DSL speed internet. Since much of their homework depends upon internet access, this restriction severely hampers their ability to accomplish required school work. Remaining students have higher speed access due to living in the villages of Cedarville and Clifton or in a few rural areas that are serviced by Spectrum. Several businesses in the area are impacted by the lack of high speed internet access, one doing high tech research, another buying and selling large amounts of automotive parts, and another on-line auction company. The community has had businesses leave because of the lack of adequate internet

service and countless more decide not to expand into Cedarville.

Section 3 SCOPE OF WORK

- A. Mapping and Needs Assessment (Customer market research)
Identify estimated numbers of potential customers by type (business in-town, business rural, residential in-town, and residential-rural). Produce appropriate maps to reflect the density of these customers throughout the Villages of Cedarville and Clifton along with Cedarville Township, the Cedar Cliff School District, and adjacent townships such as Miami, Silvercreek, Ross, New Jasper, and Green in Clark County. Identify gaps in availability and performance for each customer type. Identify key anchor tenants whose participation would help ensure success of the project.
- B. Business and Financial Modeling
Develop a ten-year pro-forma financial plan for operating this community broadband network. The financial plan should include detailed projections (by year) of revenue, expense, debt load, subscription rates, subscription take-rates, and build-out timelines. The financial plan should reflect both capital and operating costs.
- C. Governance and Ownership Strategy
Make recommendations on various approaches for governance and ownership. These approaches might include government ownership, partnering with commercial providers, and/or ownership by the Greene County Broadband cooperative.
- D. Funding and Financial Analysis
Provide suggestions on funding sources for the infrastructure buildout. Based on estimated user fees, what would be a sustainable debt repayment method? As user rates and profit change should the community focus on debt reduction or further infrastructure buildout.
- E. Public/Private Partnership Development
What areas would benefit from local government cooperation. (e.g. Township/Village, Township/County, Township/Township) Suggest how best to develop business relationships with the identified villages, township and school district. Also, suggestions on how best to identify further expansion of the broadband infrastructure to adjacent areas would be helpful.
- F. Infrastructure Recommendations
Make recommendations regarding the infrastructure approaches to be utilized. These recommendations should include location and sizing of fiber pathways, location of wireless distribution points, distribution technology within the fiber network, connection to a source for Internet bandwidth, distribution equipment, and customer-premise equipment. Provide an estimated time line based upon current internet usage trends, of how the infrastructure should be developed, i.e. If fiber infrastructure was built out in population dense areas first with broadband wireless services to other rural customers when should fiber be expanded to rural homes?

G. Business Development Possibilities

Assess the impact of a Fiber initiative on opportunities within the serviced area for economic development, job growth, education, health care improvements, community development, enhanced tax revenue, and other potential benefits of this initiative.

Section 4 PROPOSAL CONTENTS

a) Statement of Qualifications

All respondents must submit a written Statement of Qualifications to include information about the respondent directly related to each of the Selection Criteria. The Statement should include a brief description of projects performed of similar type and size. The statement should also include names, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of at least 3 clients for whom the Consultant has performed projects of a similar type and size within the last 4 years.

b) Proposal

Proposals must include an explanation of how the respondents propose to accomplish tasks outlined in the Scope of Work. Proposals must include estimated costs broken down for each item listed with the Scope of Work.

Section 5 SCHEDULE

Electronic proposals shall be submitted by e-mail to mitchewh@sbcglobal.net in any combination of the following formats, Word, Excel and PDF.

Sept 29, 2017 RFP posted and printed in local newspapers

Oct. 13, 2017 Questions from prospective applicants are due no later than 4:00 PM. A written response will be provided for each question. If you are interested in receiving the response to submitted questions, please e-mail Walker Mitchell at mitchewh@sbcglobal.net to indicate your request.

Oct. 27, 2017 Proposal due no later than 4:00 PM.

Nov. 10, 2017 Proposal evaluation complete. Interviews conducted (if needed). Consultant selected.

Nov. 16, 2017 Greene County Broadband Cooperative Board of Directors approval of selection and contract (if needed).

Section 6 SELECTION PROCESS

The board of Directors of the Greene County Broadband Cooperative (the coop) have designated the

three coop members to act as an evaluation committee. The submitted proposals will be evaluated based on the selection criteria and ranked from top to bottom. The firm submitting the top ranked proposal will be contacted to negotiate a contract. If an agreement cannot be reached, the next ranked firm will be contacted until an agreement can be reached.

Section 7 SELECTION CRITERIA

The respondents will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Recent public-sector experience with community-based broadband initiatives
- Staff expertise and experience of the team member(s) to be utilized for this project
- Responses obtained from reference customers of the respondent
- Proposed timing for the feasibility study
- Pricing for the feasibility study
- Other relevant information submitted by the respondent

Section 9 SUBMITTAL

The Greene County Broadband Cooperative (GCBC) invites consultants to submit a proposal for providing a broadband feasibility and needs assessment study. Brevity and conciseness of the proposal will be welcomed.

The proposal should include the following:

1. An introductory cover letter with a short background of the firm, statement of interest and commitment to meeting the project schedule.
2. Project team organization chart and resumes of key personnel who will be working on this project.
3. A reference list (at least three) of similar projects.
4. An outline of your approach to accomplishing SECTION 4 SCOPE OF WORK, including the key individual(s) who will be performing your work. Provide a table indicating the hours of effort by major work task along with related fees. A detailed description of each major work task to be accomplished.
5. A note to exceed cost/fee proposal (including hourly rate and number of hours) for performing the work. Provide a table indicating the hours of effort by major work task along with any sub-consultant fees.

Section 10 CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions regarding this Request for Proposal shall be directed to mitchewh@sbcglobal.net. Questions must be received on or before the deadline identified in Section 5 SCHEDULE.