



Ottawa County

Fiscal Services Department – Purchasing
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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION 22-01 IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNTY-WIDE BROADBAND NETWORK

TO: ALL VENDORS

Ottawa County is working towards implementing a County-wide broadband system to serve the unserved and underserved residents and businesses of the County. The County intends to install a hybrid system comprised of middle mile fiber (dark) and fixed wireless with fiber backhaul. The system is intended to be an open access system whereby service providers, wired and wireless, may utilize/access to provide last-mile high speed internet services to Ottawa County residents and businesses. The County, through its Department of Strategic Impact and technical consultants, is in the process of pre-engineering the system design.

With this RFI, the County is seeking to gain information from two separate vantage points. First, what internet service providers will participate in such a system once its constructed to deliver last mile internet services. This is considered highly valuable information to ensure the County moves forward with a realistic strategy to address its gaps in broadband access countywide. Any interested service providers will be responsible for FTTH (fiber to the home) or last mile wireless. It is not expected that one provider will cover the entire County, nor will only one provider be selected to provide such services. The County will also consider all technologies.

Secondly, this RFI seeks to identify what prospective vendors are interested in providing material and construction services to the County to build the ultimate middle mile system. This could include but not be limited to fiber, construction services, engineering services and project management. This information is valuable since it is the County's expectation that once it secures the necessary funding to implement the system, qualified vendors on ready and available to commence with the middle mile system's construction. Vendors that construct and own tower structures are also encouraged to respond to this RFI indicating their interest in participating in this project and what they anticipate bringing to the project.

No awarded contract shall be issued from this initial RFI process. Submitted RFIs shall in no way bind Ottawa County to any purchase for any reason.

The County of Ottawa may select RFI finalists for subsequent RFPs. Ottawa County does not guarantee opportunity will be provided for others that fail to respond to the RFI to be included and have the opportunity to participate in the RFP process.

Vendors should submit the information no later than **2:00 PM on Tuesday, August 16, 2022**. All requests for additional information or questions should be directed to Steven Holden, Buyer, purchasing.rfp@miottawa.org.

The County of Ottawa officially distributes solicitation documents through the Michigan Intergovernmental Trade Network (MITN), [website http://www.bidnetdirect.com/mitn](http://www.bidnetdirect.com/mitn) and through the Ottawa County's Purchasing page of the County of Ottawa's website located at <http://www.miottawa.org/Departments/FiscalServices/bids.htm>. Solicitation documents obtained from any other sources are not considered official copies.

1. TIMELINE

Release date: Friday, July 15, 2022
RFI Deadline: 2:00 PM on Tuesday, August 16, 2022

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ottawa County is located on the west side of Michigan, bordered by Lake Michigan on the west and Kent County (Grand Rapids area) on the east. It has been the fastest growing County in Michigan over the last ten (10) years. Its primary population centers include Holland, Grand Haven, Zeeland, Georgetown Township and Allendale. The population of Ottawa County is approximately 290,000 people with approximately 100,000 households. Ottawa County is served by approximately 2,200 road miles (1,700 of County roads and 500 of State highways).

The economy of Ottawa County is very diverse. It relies upon education, industry, health care and tourism among other things. Approximately 50% of the economy in Ottawa County is considered agricultural. The farming community in Ottawa County is very active and very desirous of improving broadband access throughout the County.

Ottawa County is also home to two (2) institutions of higher learning, Grand Valley State University (approximately 25,000 students) and Hope College (approximately 3,000 students).

With its proximity to Grand Rapids (the second largest city in Michigan), Ottawa County is home to many people who work in Grand Rapids and conduct business in and around Grand Rapids.

Since before the start of COVID-19 pandemic, Ottawa County has been planning and strategizing to implement a County-wide broadband network that properly serves all segments of the County population and geography. The onset of the pandemic has sped up the timeline by which the County wishes to see this initiative through and has developed multi-stage digital inclusion strategy to all of Ottawa County connected

It is widely known that existing FCC maps illustrating broadband coverage greatly overstate how the County is currently served. To that end, the County has undertaken its own data collection to better determine the unserved areas of Ottawa County, as the under served areas. This data collection has also identified resident's desired service, their ability or willingness to pay for service and their intended uses for broadband service, as well as other demographic data. Learn more at www.miottawa.org/broadband

Given its make-up and desired goals, Ottawa County, through its consultants has determined that a hybrid system that includes fiber-based and fixed wireless services will best serve the County and its residents. It is also the goal of Ottawa County to own the infrastructure (middle mile fiber and tower structures) or at least enter into a revenue sharing arrangement. It is understood that this is a multi-year project and will require assistance from varied sources.

3. PROJECT GOAL

Ottawa County's overall objective is to provide its residents and businesses the opportunity to have affordable and reliable broadband services across the County. The County desires to develop a number of partnerships with the members of the private sector that can work with it to achieve this goal. The County wants to engage with partners that are not afraid of competition and that are customer focused. The MINIMUM standard to achieve should be consistent with the current broadband definition being discussed, which is download speeds of 100 mbps or greater and upload speeds of 20 mbps or greater. The County expects to deploy a system that will be state of the art for a number of years, i.e., "futureproof." It IS NOT the desire of the County to serve in the role of an internet service provider, but rather serve as the facilitator for providers to bring their service to Ottawa County.

The County wishes to begin construction of this system in 2023 and has identified the area of immediate need.

4. INFORMATION FORM SUBMISSION

Information form is to be submitted and received by **2:00 PM ET on Tuesday, August 16, 2022**. Please complete form in its entirety.

RFI Response:

- ATTACHMENT A – INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

E-mail Bid Submission: Respondents are to submit an electronic response (preferably single-file PDF format) by e-mail to: purchasing.rfp@miottawa.org with the subject line of: **"RFI 22-01 Implementation of County-Wide Broadband Network."** The County can receive email attachments up to 25 MB. Bid documents larger than 20 MB should be sent in multiple emails with the subject line of: **"RFI 22-01 Implementation of County-Wide Broadband**

Network – 1 of 2.” It shall be the Vendor’s responsibility to confirm delivery and receipt by the bid deadline.

Rejection or Withdrawal: The Owner reserves the right to reject any responses, waive any defects in responses, and accept any response deemed to be in its best interest. Responses may be withdrawn at any time prior to the scheduled time. Responses may not be withdrawn within sixty (60) days after deadline.

6. INCURRED EXPENSES / CONFIDENTIALITY

The County is not responsible for any cost or expense incurred by the contractor by preparing and submitting a request for information or any costs associated with meetings and evaluations of information prior to execution of an agreement. All information, (including attachments, supporting documentation, supplementary materials, addenda, and other) shall become the property of the County and will not be returned to the contractor.

7. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

The County reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or request for information, to award the agreement to other than the low proposal, to award separate agreements for separate parts of the services required, to negotiate the terms and conditions of all and any part of the proposals, to waive irregularities and/or formalities, and in general to make an award in the manner as determined to be in the County’s best interest. The County may, at its discretion, cancel any proposal or other solicitation and/or reject all proposals or requests for information in whole or in part.

ATTACHMENT A - INFORMATION REQUEST FORM
RFI 22-01 Implementation of County-Wide Broadband Network

This information could be carried over into any resulting Request for Proposal process. Vendors who respond to these questions within the RFI may not be required to duplicate work in the resulting RFP. Vendor may submit their own form/document as long as all requested information and questions are included from this form.

1. PRINCIPAL OFFICE INFORMATION / ADDRESS:

Individual / Company Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Taxpayer Identification Number: _____

2. QUESTIONNAIRE:

A. **COMPANY HISTORY AND BACKGROUND** – Describe the organization, date founded, and ownership of your firm.

B. **SERVICES** – What services does your company provide in reference to the County's desired goal? How many years has the company been providing the requested services?

C. **REQUIREMENTS** – Are there any requirements or information needed to complete the part of the project in which you are interested? Please list. Example: maps, results of data collection, field visits.

D. **PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP** – Ottawa County intends for this project to be a model for future projects and for other communities to follow in their broadband development efforts. Please explain how you see yourself facilitating that objective, including policies and procedures, pricing and funding models, etc. It is expected that significant detail and thought will be given to this item and not simply answered with a marketing brochure.

E. OTHER - Please note any other considerations concerning the overall project that the County may want to consider such as risks, labor, supply chain issues, closures, environmental matters, etc.

The undersigned affirms that he/she is duly authorized to execute this information for services and having carefully read and considered the request in the manner described and subject to the terms and conditions set forth.

Authorized Representative's Signature

Date

Authorized Representative's Printed Name, Title, Company Name (Legal Name) for Business