



PIEDMONT TRIAD REGIONAL COUNCIL

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

To Provide:

Broadband Mapping Fabric

Requested By:

Piedmont Triad Regional Council
1398 Carrollton Crossing Drive
Kernersville, NC 27284

February 20th, 2023



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1. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

The Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC) is currently accepting proposals of qualified consultants to conduct an inclusive and extensive Community Broadband Assessment for the 12-county Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina. This project is grant funded in part by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and will be administered by the PTRC. The Piedmont Triad region is a blend of rural and urban communities within the north-central portion of North Carolina, and the PTRC proudly serves the area. The PTRC provides technical assistance and facilitates collaboration among partners to implement successful strategies and achieve regional goals.

This project covers and directly engages Alamance, Caswell, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Montgomery, Randolph, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, and Yadkin counties. According to the North Carolina Division of Broadband and Digital Equity's Broadband Availability Index, our rural counties range as high as 33.08% of the population without high-speed internet, while our urban counties range as low as 0.02% of the population without high-speed internet. This is a significant gap, creating a digital divide among communities across the region. Luckily, funding to address this divide in broadband access is being made available through the BEAD (Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment) program. This funding stream becomes later in 2023 and eligible areas are based on the Federal Communications Commission's new broadband mapping referred to as the FCC Mapping Fabric. The FCC has established a new Broadband Data Collection system (BDC) publishing broadband availability across the nation. This new system has also developed a geocoded database of all Broadband Serviceable Locations across the nation, referred to as BSL Fabric data. The Fabric data is used as a foundation for all reported broadband availability and is used to correlate broadband services to individual locations.

The PTRC wants to ensure that the 12 counties encompassing the Piedmont Triad region are correctly represented in the new FCC data, as well as, supporting the notion that the state of North Carolina is allocated the appropriate grant funding levels from this program. However, not all counties within the Piedmont Triad possess the GIS resources or capacity to participate in this vital process. This proposal seeks to contract with GIS and Equity professionals to assist local governments with this mapping data challenge process by assisting with obtaining relevant county data, comparing the county's own data to FCC data, and prepare and execute protest documentation for local governments.

2. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

This Request for Proposal (RFP) represents the requirements for an open and competitive process. Proposals will be accepted until 5pm EST March 20th, 2023. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be considered. All proposals must be signed by an official agent or representative of the company submitting the proposal.

If the organization submitting a proposal must outsource or contract any work to meet the requirements contained herein, this must be clearly stated in the proposal. Additionally, all



costs included in proposals must be all-inclusive to include any outsourced or contracted work. Any proposals which call for outsourcing or contracting work must include a name and description of the organizations being contracted.

All costs must be itemized to include an explanation of all fees and costs.

Contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon selection of the winning bidder for this RFP. All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to review by the Piedmont Triad Regional Council and will include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary items pertaining to the project.

The point of contact for this project is Michelle Slaton, Economic Development and Business Services Supervisor at the Piedmont Triad Regional Council. Prospective firms may make inquiries to obtain clarification of the requirements contained in this RFP. All inquiries must be submitted to mshaton@ptrc.org and a response will typically be issued within three business days.

Final proposals should be emailed to mshaton@ptrc.org or delivered to:

Piedmont Triad Regional Council
ATTN: Michelle Slaton
1398 Carrollton Crossing Drive
Kernersville, NC 27284

3. PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of this project is centered on the resource creation to assist the 12-county Piedmont Triad region with the FCC Fabric Challenge process.

The selected bidder will be responsible for planning and conducting an in-depth regional research portfolio that facilitates mapping of current infrastructure utilizing consulting services and PTRC staff to highlight the following:

- Existing internet service provider (ISP) cover areas, services options, and performance reports.
- Current fiber and data center/co-location infrastructure mapping.
- Communication tower and pole mapping infrastructure and ownership.
- Mapping of water towers and other structures over 70ft in height (grain bins, silos, etc).
- Locations of pre-approved tower sites approved by local jurisdictions.

The following knowledge requirements must be met to achieve a successful project:

- GIS Analysis
- Familiarity with the FCC Broadband Data Collection processes, including Fabric Challenge



- Understanding of the GIS structure datasets within the 12-county Piedmont Triad Region
- Experience with the North Carolina AddressNC database

The following tasks define foundational actions required to achieve a successful project:

- Assess GIS capabilities and available resources profile for each individual county.
- Identify county datasets that can be used for an analysis and compared against the FCC Fabric Data.
- Assist with establishing a county structure dataset where one is not available.
- Develop and facilitate training for county staff to learn the GIS resources and processes needed for challenge reporting.
- Outline a processing flow for performing fabric analysis with county GIS resources and preparing strong submissions of individual Fabric challenge reports to the FCC.
- Create methods and best practices for assisting local government staff with ongoing FCC Fabric Challenge Processes.

4. PROPOSAL FORMAT

Proposals should be limited to 15 numbered pages or less, including a cover letter that identifies a main point of contact and all their contact information. The following format is not required but is encouraged to provide consistency between proposals, ensuring equitable evaluation and comparison. If the format is modified, please include the following information at a minimum.

Project Approach

Describe your team's mission, goals, and mindset for approaching this project and how that ensures a successful implementation. Deliver details on how each task will be executed, along with recommendations to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

Relevant Project Experience

Provide a summary of your experience with similar projects, including location and client contact information. Specify the services provided and the overall support and benefits your staff members coordinated. Web or document links to recent plans and past work, if available, may be included within this section.

Project Team

Supply an organizational chart identifying all staff projected to be assigned to the Project, including any sub-consultants, defining roles, responsibilities, and task assignments of each member for the project duration.

Professional Qualifications

Provide relevant experience, qualifications, and credentials of all personnel assigned to the Project.



Plan for Completion

Prepare an outline of the Project schedule to remain within the timeframe and proposed budget. Include project workloads, staff availability, and milestone projections for a draft and final plan.

References

List contact information for at least three references for clients or industry professionals familiar with your work.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals should address all aspects of the RFP and express a clear understanding of the requirements and qualifications to conduct these services all through out the Piedmont Triad region. Evaluation of proposals will be performed by PTRC staff. Proposals will be scored on the firm's ability to meet all requirements of this RFP.

Evaluation criteria may include, but not limited to:

- Project approach and demonstration of understanding the goals and need for this project.
- Familiarity with the nature of and challenges specific to the Piedmont Triad region and community stakeholders.
- Creative methods and quality of deliverables that can easily be accessed and utilized across different mediums such as: hard and digital copies, outreach material for the PTRC website and social media, and formal reports encompasses current and ongoing processes.
- Credentials and availability of staff assigned to the Project.

Candidate firms may be asked to present their proposal to PTRC staff before the final selection is made. Final selection and contracting will be subject to approval by PTRC.

6. PROPOSAL TIMELINE

To ensure adequate selection, apt time for proposal review and revisions will be scheduled and included in the contractual agreement. All meeting materials (agenda, presentations, handouts, maps, etc.) will be submitted for review prior to scheduled meetings.

All proposals in response to this RFP are due no later than 5pm EST March 20th, 2023.

Evaluation of proposals will be conducted from March 21st, 2023 until March 24th, 2023. If additional information or discussions are needed with any bidders during this two-week window, the bidder(s) will be notified.

The selection decision for the winning bidder will be made no later than March 31st, 2023.

Upon notification, the contract negotiation with the winning bidder will begin immediately. Contract negotiations will be completed by April 1st, 2023.



Notifications to bidders who were not selected will be completed by April 5th, 2023.

7. PROJECT TIMELINE

Upon firm selection and signing of contractual agreement(s), a notice to proceed with the initiation phase and begin the Broadband Mapping Fabric project will commence.

8. BUDGET

All proposals must include costs forecasted to complete the tasks described in the scope of work. Costs should be stated as one-time or non-recurring costs (NRC) or monthly recurring costs (MRC). Pricing should be listed for each of the following items in accordance with the format below:

Project Implementation Costs Projection	NRC	MRC
Project Staffing and Planning	\$	\$
Market Research	\$	\$
Database Development and Testing	\$	\$
Training Materials and Course Development	\$	\$
Outreach/Marketing Materials Creation	\$	\$

NOTE: All costs and fees must be clearly described in each proposal. Attaching additional budget items or a reformatted budget that still includes all items above is welcomed.

9. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

PTRC will be evaluating consultants responding to this RFP on the following basis:

- 50% Process and work approach, including proposed solution and project sustainability
- 30% Record of performance, including references, past projects, and staff qualifications demonstrating FCC Reporting experience and collaboration with local governments
- 10% Budget
- 10% Timeline

10. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The following administrative information should be considered and referenced upon proposal submission:

- All proposals become property of PTRC upon submission and will only be returned at PTRC's option. Any restrictions on the use of the data contained within, must be clearly stated in the proposal.



- The costs of preparing, submitting, and presenting a proposal is at the sole expense of the consulting firm. PTRC is not liable for any costs prior to issuance of a signed contract.
- PTRC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, to consider alternatives, to wave irregularities, and to re-solicit the RFP.
- PTRC reserves the right to cancel the RFP in part or in its entirety. This solicitation of proposals in no way obligates PTRC to award a contract.
- PTRC makes no guarantee to any proposing firms until such time PTRC approves the negotiated contract.
- All proposals must be valid for a period of 90 days after the due date.
- The contents from the selected firm will become contractual obligations if a subsequent agreement is reached. Failure of the selected firm to accept these obligations may result in cancellation of the award.
- PTRC will provide information and assistance with this project where available. PTRC will be the primary point of contact with all county and municipal governments. PTRC staff will present the final plan to its Board for endorsement and approval.

