



## REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

### *Broadband Project Coordinator Consultant*

#### INTRODUCTION

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The Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOC) and NWCONNECT are seeking a qualified consultant to coordinate and carry out work on the Rural Broadband & Mobile Enhancement initiative in Northwest Connecticut. This work is being carried out under a State grant, more fully described below.

#### BACKGROUND

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##### **NWCONNECT**

The NWCONNECT initiative is a regional collaboration including municipal leaders, businesses and residents. Goals of this initiative include: (1) **Enhancing mobile coverage** everywhere in the region, (2) **Bringing a fiber optic network to every home and business** in the northwest corner of Connecticut and, (3) **Promoting the benefits** of both for safety, education, community health care, economic development, age diversity, and the general well being of the region.

NWCONNECT is proposing a fiber network extending over some 25 municipalities in the northwest corner. Connected by this fiber network, small cell antennas mounted to utility poles will provide enhanced mobile coverage across the region.

##### **NHCOC**

The Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOC) is a coordinating body for chief elected officials maintained by twenty-one municipalities in northwest Connecticut. NHCOC's mission is to make Northwest Connecticut a better place to live, do business, and visit by providing a forum for local officials to discuss issues of intermunicipal concern, promote regional cooperation, and direct various regional initiatives to enhance government planning, efficiency and service delivery. NHCOC will administer the funding for this position.

##### **Funding and deliverables**

Funding for the Broadband Project Coordinator Consultant is being provided through a Regional Performance Incentive Program grant. Work under this grant includes the following deliverables:

- Inventory of existing broadband services and assets including current broadband services (cost/type), available bandwidth, and requirements of existing and planned applications (internet, phone and television services).

- Stakeholder engagement- implementing a comprehensive outreach strategy to make town leaders and residents aware of the rural broadband initiative and its potential impacts on their town.
- Proposed technologies to increase cell phone coverage areas utilizing the proposed fiber optic broadband infrastructure- including costs for deployment, operation, and maintenance of this technology.
- Proposed business model for broadband deployment and mobile (cell phone) enhancement in NWCT- this will detail which business model(s) could work for the 25 CT municipalities included in the study area.

## **TASKS AND COMPENSATION**

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The consultant will carry out the following tasks:

### ***1. Coordination of commissioned studies of NWCONNECT communities for extant telecommunications capabilities and services.***

1.1 One study will inventory existing broadband assets in the region relative to infrastructure and use of CATV services, telephone services, and DSL services.

1.2 A second study will assess the gaps in access to mobile telephone networks in the region with a view towards a program to enhance service through supplementary small cell antennas which will use the fiber optic network of the region.

1.3 A third study, conducted in-house, will seek prospective vendors for the fiber network and mobile enhancement.

### ***2. Coordination of various community outreach programs designed to inform and promote a fiber optic network with mobile network enhancements in the northwest corner of Connecticut.***

2.1 The coordinator will build a profile of each community relative to elected officials, appointed public officials, and key stakeholders.

2.2 The coordinator will establish contact with each of these individuals and arrange for various presentations and materials to reach them, the presentations to be made at first by members of the NWCONNECT board, the materials to be created by the Board, but presentations and conversations to be conducted by the coordinator as well over time.

2.3 The coordinator will organize and manage a region-wide conference for the list created in 2.1 above to be conducted in the fall of 2017.

It is anticipated that the consultant would work approximately 35 hours/week during a 16-month contract period. Funding budgeted for this work over the contract period totals \$134,400. The consultant will be an independent contractor and as such will not receive

employment benefits. The consultant will be expected to work from their own home or office and be available for in person meetings as required by the tasks listed above.

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

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- Excellent communication and public relations skills
- Experience in project management
- Fluency in Microsoft Word and Excel
- Bachelor's degree or higher
- Ability to work independently
- Knowledge of Northwest Connecticut and have an office/home within or in reasonable proximity to NWCT.

## **PROJECT TIMELINE AND OVERSIGHT**

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Work under the consultant agreement will be initiated and completed between May 2017 and July 2018. The consultant's work will be overseen by the President of the NWCONNECT Board and the NHCOG.

## **SELECTION OF CONSULTANT**

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A selection committee comprised of representatives from the NHCOG and NWCONNECT will review responses to this request for qualifications. The selection committee will request interviews with the top ranked consultants following review of the written responses. The recommendation of this selection committee will be forwarded to the NHCOG board to approve the selection of a consultant.

The following criteria will be used in evaluating consultants:

1. Previous experience carrying out the types of tasks required and overall qualifications of the consultant.
2. Educational qualifications
3. Consultant hourly rate
4. Reasonable proximity to the Northwest Hills Region and knowledge of the region
5. Results of interview and professional reference checks

A final contract and payment schedule will be negotiated with the top ranked consultant selected for this project. If negotiations are unsuccessful, then the next highest ranked consultant will be selected, etc. The NHCOG and NWCONNECT reserves the right to reject any and all responses, request additional information, or reissue this RFQ.

NHCOG is an Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer. M/F/V/H/EOE

## **SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS & INQUIRIES**

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1. Cover letter including a statement of understanding of the project tasks and goals
2. Resume of consultant
3. Hourly rate requirement for proposed work
4. Description of similar projects/work completed and contacts for professional reference.

To be considered, consultant proposals must be submitted in electronic form by email to [jayer@northwesthillscog.org](mailto:jayer@northwesthillscog.org) and be received by **noon on April 26, 2017**.

No oral interpretations will be made to any potential respondent as to the meaning of any requirements specified within this RFQ. In preparing the consultant's response, the respondent shall rely on what has been communicated in writing and no oral communication shall become the basis for any subsequent protest of the selection process.

Any questions or requests for clarifications regarding this RFQ should be directed in writing by email no later than April 19, 2017 to: Jocelyn Ayer at [jayer@northwesthillscog.org](mailto:jayer@northwesthillscog.org). All responses to questions received will be sent to all consultants that have been sent a copy of this RFQ.

All questions or inquiries about this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) must be in writing and addressed to Jocelyn Ayer, NHCOG Community & Economic Development Director at [jayer@northwesthillscog.org](mailto:jayer@northwesthillscog.org).