

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR RURAL BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT

**JUNIATA, MIFFLIN, & PERRY COUNTIES
PILOT PROJECT AREAS**



Proposals Solicited by:

SEDA-Council of Governments
201 Furnace Road
Lewisburg, PA 17837

Dates of Publication: March 6th, 2020
Contact: Scott Kramer, SEDA-COG

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG) is requesting proposals for a pilot project from Internet Service Providers (ISP) and Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISP), to expand broadband service in three selected areas within Juniata, Mifflin and Perry Counties. The purpose of this RFP is to provide a minimum of 25mb down and 3mb up service to the Reeds Gap area in Juniata County; the South River Road area, South of McVeytown, in Mifflin County; and the Horse Valley Road area in Perry County. The selected proposal will be eligible to apply for low interest loan (1%) up to the amount of \$95,000 per site. Loan eligibility, terms, and requirements can be found in Section III.

There is also a potential opportunity to make additional funding available from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in the form of a reimbursable grant up to \$47,000 that will be paired with the \$95,000 loan, for a maximum loan/grant amount of \$142,000 per County. The project ratio for the loan/grant option will be 67% (up to \$95,000) in loans, and 33% (up to \$47,000) in reimbursement grants.

Complete proposal details, including the required proposal format, may be obtained by contacting:

Scott Kramer
SEDA-COG
201 Furnace Road
Lewisburg, PA 17837

Proposal details are also available at www.seda-cog.org – News, Notices, Publications.

Proposals will be accepted until 2:00pm prevailing time, April 24th, 2020, at which time they will be publicly opened at the offices of SEDA-COG. Proposals shall be on the forms required, sealed and clearly marked on the outside, "RURAL BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT PROPOSAL," and submitted to:

Scott Kramer
SEDA-COG
201 Furnace Road
Lewisburg, PA 17837

Proposals that are faxed or e-mailed to SEDA-COG cannot be accepted.

SECTION I: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Under this pilot project, SEDA-COG will establish a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) for the purpose of incentivizing ISPs/WISPs to provide a minimum of 25mb down/3mb up service within the project areas. SEDA-COG will provide oversight and underwriting services for a \$95,000 RLF at 1% interest rate for a term of up to ten (10) years for financing, for each of the project areas within the three (3) participating Counties. To be eligible, ISPs/WISPs must meet the RLF Guidelines (see Section III).

As a further incentive, SEDA-COG and the Counties have completed a vertical asset inventory of County-owned/accessible assets. These assets may be made available to the ISPs/WISPs for their proposed buildout, provided they meet the load capacity and structural requirements (see Section IV).

We are also pursuing a potential opportunity to make additional funding available from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in the form of a reimbursable grant, up to \$47,000, that will be paired with the \$95,000 loan, for a maximum loan/grant amount of \$142,000 per County. The project ratio for the loan/grant option will be 67% (up to \$95,000) in loans, and 33% (up to \$47,000) in reimbursement grants.

The primary scope of this project involves:

1. Equipment, lease payments, land acquisition, and engineering costs are eligible for funding. Construction costs are not eligible for funding.
2. ISPs/WISPs will be responsible for structural analysis and engineering costs of selected asset(s) identified within the project area.
3. The minimum of 25/3 service must be made available to 100% of the users within the pilot areas. Extra points to be granted to providers who can:
 - a. Provide speeds greater than 25/3; and
 - b. Provide service outside the pilot area.
4. Individual County-owned assets may be made available at a reduced cost to the provider for the term of the loan. After the term of the loan, providers may negotiate a new lease agreement. The ISP will need to contact the County Emergency Management office to further evaluate assets and to finalize lease costs.
5. ISPs are expected to obtain all local review and permitting approvals for the project.

6. Upon preliminary approval, the ISP/WISP will be required to submit a brief loan application and must satisfy the conditions that are further outlined in the attached loan document (Section III).

This project will address the lack of rural broadband infrastructure in the three (3) participating Counties, which is also a predominate problem throughout the region. In addition, it will create interest from multiple providers, thereby creating a competitive environment for broadband access.

SECTION II: PROJECT PARTNERS

The Emergency Management and Planning Departments of Juniata, Mifflin, and Perry Counties have been involved with the planning of the target areas and will be involved in the RFP review process.

- **Juniata County** – As of the 2010 United States Census, there were 24,636 people and 9,476 households in the County. The population density was 63 people per square mile. There were 10,978 housing units at an average density of 28 per square mile.
- **Mifflin County** - As of the 2010 United States Census, there were 46,682 people and 18,743 households in the County. The population density was 113.6 people per square mile. There were 21,537 housing units at an average density of 52.4 per square mile.
- **Perry County** - As of the 2010 United States Census, there were 43,602 people and 16,695 households in the County. The population density was 79.1 people per square mile. There were 18,941 housing units at an average density of 34.4 per square mile.

SECTION III: LOAN APPLICATION GUIDELINES

See attached Revolving Loan Fund Guidelines.

SECTION IV: VERTICAL ASSETS

The County vertical assets and their points of contact listed below may be utilized for the project proposal. Some vertical assets have two points of contact, one County, and one tower owner/manager. Both will need to be contacted for tower attachment. ISPs/WISPs will coordinate with the applicable County entities and tower managers to ensure their proposals accurately describe the asset fees and availability. Providers will be responsible for their own access agreements.

Project vertical assets are in the following locations and are included in the attached maps:

Mifflin County Allensville Tower	Juniata County Black Log Tower	Perry County Blain Tower (PSP)
Phil Lucas, Emergency Communications Director 717-248-9645 plucas@co.mifflin.pa.us	Allen Weaver, Emergency Services Director 717-436-7730 aweaver@juniataco.org	Richard Fultz, Emergency Management Director 717-582-2131 rfultz@perryco.org
	Andy Baker DCNR – Tuscarora State Forest District Office 4455 Big Spring Rd Blain, PA 17006 717-536-3191 x207	Deserae Cunningham CrownCastle 2000 Corporate Drive Canonsburg, PA 15317 deserae.cunningham.contractor@crowncastle.com (see attached CrownCastle WISP program)

SECTION V: PROJECT SCHEDULE

1. All proposals are due by 2:00 pm EST on Friday, April 24th, 2020.
2. Project implementation schedule and phasing - please provide an estimated project timeline. Timeline should include:
 - a. Estimated project start and end dates.
 - b. Proposed date(s) for pre-project meeting with SEDA-COG and participating Counties.
 - c. Proposed date for project completion.
3. ISP/WISP will provide written monthly updates on progress and completed milestones during the work period.

SECTION VI: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Each proposer shall provide all information herein requested. Limit the proposal to ten (10) pages. Further, no proposal will be considered unless the attached Standard Form is completed in its entirety. Ten (10) copies of the proposal must be submitted to:

SEDA-Council of Governments
Attn: Scott Kramer
201 Furnace Road
Lewisburg, PA 17837

The following will be considered the minimal contents of the proposal:

1. Provide a restatement of the goals, objectives and project tasks to demonstrate the responder's understanding of the project and your approach to this project. Please reference the Project Description section in your responses.
2. Provide your background and experience in the following areas:
 - a. Coverage Area: summarize your company's current service area footprint and estimated customer size, both residential and business.
 - b. Services: describe any direct experience and knowledge your company has in providing residential and business broadband services.
 - c. Partnerships: share your company's experience in working with state and local governments and public-private sector collaborations.
3. Provide any information on prospective conflicts of interests, including existing or financial relations with equipment vendors, ISPs/WISPs or other firms.
4. Each proposer shall provide a minimum of three (3) references where similar projects have been completed. These projects should be similar in design and scope. Identify key personnel who will conduct the project and provide details of their training and work experience.
5. Include MBE/WBE certifications and list potential MBE/WBE subcontractors.

Note: Subcontractors working for the contractor must meet all the requirements of the Request for Proposal (RFP) and any contract between the contractor and the subcontractor must include all contract terms agreed to between the SEDA-COG and the successful contractor.

SECTION VII: PROPOSAL EVALUATION

The local project partner team and SEDA-COG will evaluate all proposals using the following criteria to conduct a best value evaluation:

1. Experience and qualifications of the provider. (20 points)
2. Clear understanding of this project. (15 points)
3. Number of customers to be served. (15 points)
4. Speed of service to be provided. (15 points)
5. Consumer pricing of service. (15 points)
6. Amount of the ISP/WISP own investment i.e.: Land & Cash Equity, Existing Assets, etc. (10 points)
7. MBE/WBE (5 points)
 - Extra points will be awarded to those who are MBE/WBE subcontractors.
8. Providing service outside the pilot area. (5 points)
9. Timeline to buildout from notice to proceed. (5 points)

After evaluating all proposals, the local project partner team, comprised of SEDA-COG and County representatives, may choose to interview the top candidates.

SEDA-COG reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals or to waive any irregularities and reserves the right to award one ISP/WISP per County or any combination thereof.

SECTION VIII: SELECTION PROCESS

Selection of the ISP/WISP for this project will be based on the criteria noted above. Upon approval, SEDA-COG will enter into negotiations with the selected provider and finalize the loan application. Should SEDA-COG and the selected consultant fail to satisfactorily reach agreement, SEDA-COG may enter into negotiations with the respondent judged second in the evaluation process or SEDA-COG may re-advertise for proposals.

SECTION IX: PRIMARY CONTACT & KEY DATES

Inquiries concerning any aspect of this RFP and potential contract award should be directed to:

Scott Kramer
SEDA-COG
201 Furnace Road
Lewisburg, PA 17837

Questions and responses will be made publicly available.

Key Dates

RFP Release Date	March 6 th , 2020
RFP Opening Date	April 24 th , 2020
Review Proposals	April 27 th – May 11 th , 2020
Interview Qualified High Scoring Proposals	May 11 th – May 29 th , 2020
Select Desired Contractor	May 29 th , 2020

STANDARD ESTIMATE
Mifflin County Project Area
(River Road, South of McVeytown)

FIRM NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

REPRESENTATIVE: _____

Please answer the questions below for both the Loan and Loan/Grant options.

I. Loan:

- Number of customers to be served _____
- Speed of service to be provided _____
- Amount of ISP/WISP investment _____
- Consumer pricing of service _____
- Service outside pilot area Yes__ No__ Est #: _____

II. Loan/Grant:

- Number of customers to be served _____
- Speed of service to be provided _____
- Amount of ISP/WISP investment _____
- Consumer pricing of service _____
- Service outside pilot area Yes__ No__ Est #: _____

I, _____, an authorized representative of the above indicated firm, have reviewed and understand the Rural Broadband Deployment in Juniata, Mifflin, & Perry Counties Request for Proposal, and I/we am/are prepared to provide the required services for the above costs.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

STANDARD ESTIMATE
Juniata County Project Area
(Reeds Gap Area)

FIRM NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

REPRESENTATIVE: _____

Please answer the questions below for both the Loan and Loan/Grant options.

I. Loan:

- Number of customers to be served _____
- Speed of service to be provided _____
- Amount of ISP/WISP investment _____
- Consumer pricing of service _____
- Service outside pilot area Yes__ No__ Est #: _____

II. Loan/Grant:

- Number of customers to be served _____
- Speed of service to be provided _____
- Amount of ISP/WISP investment _____
- Consumer pricing of service _____
- Service outside pilot area Yes__ No__ Est #: _____

I, _____, an authorized representative of the above indicated firm, have reviewed and understand the Rural Broadband Deployment in Juniata, Mifflin, & Perry Counties Request for Proposal, and I/we am/are prepared to provide the required services for the above costs.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

STANDARD ESTIMATE
Perry County Project Area
(Horse Valley Road)

FIRM NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

REPRESENTATIVE: _____

Please answer the questions below for both the Loan and Loan/Grant options.

I. Loan:

- Number of customers to be served _____
- Speed of service to be provided _____
- Amount of ISP/WISP investment _____
- Consumer pricing of service _____
- Service outside pilot area Yes__ No__ Est #: _____

II. Loan/Grant:

- Number of customers to be served _____
- Speed of service to be provided _____
- Amount of ISP/WISP investment _____
- Consumer pricing of service _____
- Service outside pilot area Yes__ No__ Est #: _____

I, _____, an authorized representative of the above indicated firm, have reviewed and understand the Rural Broadband Deployment in Juniata, Mifflin, & Perry Counties Request for Proposal, and I/we am/are prepared to provide the required services for the above costs.

Signature: _____

Date: _____