

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) PONCA BROADBAND FEASIBILITY STUDY AND BUSINESS PLAN

Section I: General RFP Information

Overview

The City of Ponca seeks qualified vendors to conduct a broadband feasibility study and develop a comprehensive economic development and community telecommunications strategy. The City reserves the option to include additional related services in the resulting vendor contract after reviewing vendor proposals. A more detailed description of the desired deliverables is provided in the following sections of this document.

The City will consider proposals from single vendors or from multiple vendors working as a team, though a prime contractor is highly desired in the case of the latter. The ideal vendor will have excellent technical and analytical depth in areas of interest to the City under this RFP, and must be highly-effective communicators, particularly in translating technical concepts to non-technical audiences. The City prefers firms with experience working with public sector organizations, and particularly municipalities and rural communities like Ponca.

The City is employing this procurement method to both explore the costs and logistics of procuring the described services, while also evaluating alternative mixes of additional service offerings from a diverse vendor community. As such, the City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or any part thereof, to waive any formalities or informalities, to award the contract to the most responsive and responsible respondent(s) as deemed in the best interest of the City, or to suspend the procurement if the desired outcomes are not achieved.

Background, Project Justification and Key Drivers

The following information is provided to assist respondents in understanding the direction and intentions of the City of Ponca in procuring the services included in this RFP.

1. **General:** The town of Ponca is the 4th oldest town in Nebraska. It is the governmental seat of Dixon County and has a population of approximately 1,000 people. Ponca is located in the northeast corner of Nebraska. The city is nestled in a valley two miles from the banks of the Missouri River, a national recreational river, and the site of Ponca State Park. The community is served by scenic State Highway 12, and U.S. Highway 20 is nine miles south of the community. Ponca is 24 miles northwest of Sioux City, Iowa, and 115 miles north of Omaha, Nebraska. The City has a strong and longstanding commitment to community service and quality of life. The City government organization (Ponca City Council) values customer service and is committed to transparency and communication with community members.
2. **Past and Present Broadband Efforts:** Today, high speed internet is more than just an amenity – it is critical for business, education and day-to-day activities of all community members. Ponca, like other appealing small towns, is attracting young professionals who work remotely either full time or a few days a week. Ponca is surrounded by fiber. For example, Ponca State Park, Dakota View Subdivision (between Ponca and the state

park), Ponca's school, and all the rural Nebraska communities around Ponca are equipped with fiber. Recognizing this, the City of Ponca, is seeking to install a fiber-optic backbone throughout the town of Ponca.

3. Broadband Vision Statement

The vision of the City of Ponca is to provide a world-class telecommunication infrastructure to our community for the 21st century and beyond, facilitated by new access to the public's local telecommunications assets. Broadband is a critical service for quality of life and economic development. Every home, business, nonprofit organization, government entity, and education institution should have the opportunity to connect affordably, easily and securely. Ponca's broadband services will be shaped by the values of the community. The City of Ponca intends to empower its citizens and local businesses to be network economy producers, not just consumers of network information and data services. This requires access to gigabit-class broadband infrastructure to support these needed services and capabilities:

1. **Broadband Infrastructure:** Provide the infrastructure to enable every Ponca home, business, public or private institution and visitor the opportunity to access affordable high speed broadband connections to the internet, and other networks.
2. **Open Access:** Demonstrate, support and build a non-discriminatory, open-access infrastructure that should, to the maximum extent possible, be open to all users, service providers, content providers, and application providers and be usable via all standard commercial devices.
3. **Competitive Marketplace:** Facilitate a local broadband marketplace that is as competitive as reasonably possible.
4. **Compete Globally:** Provide stakeholders with the broadband capacity, affordability and local, regional and national connectivity they need to compete successfully in the global marketplace.

Section II: Requested Services and Deliverables

The City of Ponca is interested in engaging a highly-qualified and experienced consulting, engineering and/or internet service firm to assist in providing detailed, actionable guidance for the planning and implementation of a successful community broadband initiative. As evidenced by the use of a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to solicit proposals, the City will rely on the experience and creativity of firms to design proposals and provide services that successfully complete the following general project tasks:

1. Assist Ponca's Internet Committee, Agency for Community Development and City Council to evaluate the current and future demand for broadband products and services in the City of Ponca through a range of efforts and methodologies, including but not limited to conversations with private stakeholders (e.g. local businesses, business organizations, health care providers, other interested consumers and interest groups).
2. Research and evaluate the current supply of broadband communications assets, products and services in the City and region through a range of efforts and methodologies identified by the successful firm.

3. Assist the City with the development of an RFP and selection of an internet and cable service provider for community and government services, to begin in 2018 at the end of the current cable franchise contract. Additionally, make recommendations for management of the government cable ensuring proper security protocols.
4. At a point in the analysis that proves most advantageous, prepare and aid in the administration of an exploratory Request for Information (RFI) that will be distributed to potential partners to gauge private interest in using public infrastructure to expand broadband services in Ponca. The City views this as an expeditious, “real-time” input to the overall analysis that will enhance its value and the overall likelihood of comprehensive fiber installation in Ponca.
6. Using the results of the entire analysis, develop a comprehensive written report that presents alternatives for deploying broadband services throughout the community, including a proposed pricing, marketing and management strategy and action plan for the City’s fiber network. The proposed model, strategy and action plan should be financially sustainable, providing for long term solvency and security.
7. Identify other funding options that may be available to the City of Ponca to support the development and maintenance of its broadband infrastructure, including grants, contracts, etc. The milestones and dates for this project is as follows:

<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Date</u>
Release RFP to Vendors	12/27/2016 (based on City Council Action 12/22/2016)
Vendor Questions (if any)	Due 02/15/2017
Answers to RFP Questions	Released 03/03/2017
Proposal Responses	Due 03/22/2017
Finalist interviews	04/06/2017 and 04/13/2017
Vendor Selection (target)	04/24/2017 (City Council Action)
Contract Negotiations Complete	05/18/2017
Contract Signed	05/29/2017 (City Council Action)
Work Begins	05/30/2017

Note: The City Council reserves the right to adjust this schedule as necessary.

Section III: Administrative Information and Requirements

Deadline: **Proposals will be received until 4:00 p.m. on March 22, 2017.**

Proposals may be mailed through the United States Postal Service or hand delivered to the City of Ponca City Administrator:

**Denise Peterson
City of Ponca
P.O. Box 465
123 W. Third Street
Ponca, NE 68770**

Upon release of this RFP, **all questions shall be directed in writing to the Ponca Internet Committee Chairperson** listed below by February 15, 2017. Written copies of all questions and answers will be provided to all vendors who have submitted letters of intent.

Heather Craig-Oldsen
Ponca Internet Committee, Chairperson
City of Ponca
123 W. Third Street
Ponca, NE 68770
hlco1966@gmail.com
404 493-3536 (mobile)

Vendor Qualifications

1. The City of Ponca may make such investigations as deemed necessary to determine the ability of the vendor or subcontractors or suppliers to perform the work, and the vendor shall furnish to the City all such information and data for this purpose as the City of Ponca may request.
2. The City of Ponca reserves the right to reject any proposal if the evidence submitted by or investigation of such vendor fails to satisfy the City that such vendor is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract and/or to complete the work contemplated therein within the time required.
3. The vendor is specifically advised that any person, firm or other party to whom it proposes to award a subcontract or purchase order under this contract must be acceptable to the City of Ponca.
4. The vendor must have the authority to do business in the State of Nebraska.
5. The vendor must accept complete responsibility for the installation, acceptance testing, and certification of the System.

Right to Reject

1. The City of Ponca reserves the right to accept or reject all proposals or sections thereof when the rejection is in the best interest of the City. The City of Ponca reserves the right to award without further discussion. Therefore, responses should be submitted initially with the most favorable terms the vendor proposes. City of Ponca reserves the right to reject the proposal of a vendor who has previously failed to perform properly or completed on time contracts and to reject the proposal of any vendor who in the opinion of the City of Ponca, is not in a position to adequately perform the contract. The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, any part or parts of a proposal, waive any requirements in the RFP for good cause.

Right to Disqualify

1. The City of Ponca reserves the right to award to other than the lowest cost vendor when, in the judgment of the City, it is in the best interest of the City to do so. A vendor may be disqualified for any of the following reasons:
 - a. Vendor's failure to comply with requirements regarding Certificate of Responsibility

- b. Vendor's failure to attend and complete the mandatory site walkthrough
- c. Vendor having defaulted on a previous contract
- d. Vendor having preformed unsatisfactorily on a previous contract
- e. Vendor's failure to include documentation for required certifications and authorizations, including proof of bonding
- f. Vendor's failure to provide a minimum of three references for projects of similar size and complexity

Pricing Options Requested

1. The City of Ponca has the right to approve a quote or ask for refinement as needed prior to the start of any installation.

Proposal Response Format

Proposals should be submitted in letter-size (8-1/2" x 11") format. Proposals should follow the format and order of presentation described below. All forms are located in the Appendix at the end of the document.

Form 1: Cover Sheet and Cover Letter (Appendix A)

All proposals must include a cover letter signed by a duly constituted official legally authorized to bind the applicant to both its proposal and cost schedule. NOTE: The cover letter is not intended to be a summary of the proposal itself; this is accomplished in Form 2. The cover letter must include the company name, address, and telephone number of the vendor submitting the proposal, as well as the following statements and information: "Proposal may be released in total as public information in accordance with the requirements of the laws covering same." (Any proprietary information must be clearly marked.) "Proposal and cost schedule shall be valid and binding for ONE YEAR following the proposal due date and will become part of the contract that is negotiated with the City of Ponca."

The cover letter should include the name, title, address, e-mail address, and telephone number of the person or persons who are authorized to represent the vendor and to whom correspondence should be directed. Proposals must state the proposer's federal and state taxpayer identification numbers.

Form 2: Proposal Summary (Appendix B)

Use this form to summarize your proposal and your vendor's qualifications. Additionally, you may use this form at your discretion to articulate why your firm is pursuing this work and how it is uniquely qualified to perform it.

Your proposal summary is not to exceed two pages.

Form 3: General Vendor Information (Appendix C)

Summarize your proposal and your vendor's qualifications, including requirements such as bonding.

Form 4: Project Staff List (Appendix D)

Please complete to identify the proposed project staff members (including any proposed subcontractors) that will assist the City of Ponca with this project. Indicate the percent of time each staff member will be dedicated to the project and each member's years of experience in the areas covered by this RFP. Add additional lines as necessary for each instance of the list. Use your word processing application's copy and paste functions to create additional copies of the table as necessary

Form 5: Key Project Staff Background Information (Appendix E)

Please complete the table for each of the key project staff members. At a minimum, key staff must include your proposed project manager and key contributors to this project.

Form 6: Customer Reference Form (Appendix F)

Please list all public sector clients for whom you have completed broadband feasibility study projects relevant to this RFP over the past three (3) years.

Form 7: Task Area Descriptions (Appendix G)

Describe your overall approach to fulfilling the tasks and objectives include in Section II Requested Services and Deliverables.

Form 8: Project Schedule and Work (Appendix H)

Describe your overall approach to fulfilling the tasks and objectives included in Section II Requested Services and Deliverables. A project timeline must be submitted reflecting milestones and durations for each task to be completed to successfully implement the proposed solution. A final schedule of these tasks will be mutually agreed upon after a vendor is selected.

Form 9: Fee Schedule and Cost Proposal (Appendix I)

Provide a detailed fee schedule and project cost proposal as follows: The proposal must contain a fee schedule and detailed cost proposal that includes estimated hours, rates, and overall price (including all estimated travel and ancillary expenses). It is highly desired that the cost proposal tie closely to your response to Form 8 – Project Schedule and Work Plan. It is of critical importance that vendors use this cost proposal form to clearly delineate the relevant cost categories, associated unit pricing and overall estimated cost for the project so as to alleviate ambiguities over proposed project scope and associated costs.

Form 10: Non-collusion Affidavit (Appendix J)

Complete and notarize the non-collusion affidavit located as the last form in the appendices.

FORM 1: Appendix A

Proposal Cover Sheet

Name of Company	
Address of Home Office	
City of Home Office	
State of Home Office	
County of Home Office	
Zip Code of Home Office	
Phone Number of Home Office	
Federal EIN	
State EIN	

Contact Name: _____

Contact Office Phone Number: _____

Contact Cell Phone Number: _____

Contact E-Mail Address: _____

Use this space to compose a cover letter for your proposal. All proposals must include a cover letter signed by a duly constituted official legally authorized to bind the applicant to both its proposal and cost schedule. NOTE: The cover letter is not intended to be a summary of the proposal itself; this is accomplished in Form 2. The cover letter must contain the following statements and information: "Proposal may be released in total as public information in accordance with the requirements of the laws covering same." (Any proprietary information must be clearly marked.)

"Proposal and cost schedule shall be valid and binding for ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY (180) days following the proposal due date and will become part of the contract that is negotiated with the City of Ponca." Please complete and attach the Non-Collusion Certificate included as Attachment A.

FORM 2: Appendix B

Proposal Summary

In no more than two pages, summarize your proposal, vendor qualifications, and any information that explains how your firm is uniquely qualified.

FORM 3: Appendix C General Vendor Information

Name of parent company	
Length of time in business	
Length of time in business of providing proposed service	
Gross revenue for the prior fiscal year	
Percentage of gross revenue generated by proposed services	
Total number of clients	
Total number of clients in the proposed service area	
Number of public sector clients	
Number of full-time personnel in:	
Consulting	
Sales, marketing, and administrative support	
Internet fiber-optic technical staff	
Other (please note relevant staff)	
Where is your headquarters located? Field offices?	
Which office would service this account?	
Typical internet service uptime (percentage of 100 percent) during the past year	
Highest and lowest throughputs (speed) by percentages of customers in the past year	
Other significant statistics related to reliable fiber-optic internet service provision during the past year	

If the vendor has had a contract terminated for default during the past five years, all such incidents must be described. Termination for default is defined as notice to stop performance due to the vendor's nonperformance or poor performance; and the issue was either (a) not litigated or (b) litigated, and such litigation determined the vendor to be in default. In the space provided below, submit full details of all terminations for default experienced by the vendor during the past **five years**, including the other party's name, address, and telephone number. Present the vendor's position on the matter. The City of Ponca will evaluate the facts and may, at its sole discretion, reject the vendor's proposal if the facts discovered indicate that completion of a contract resulting from this RFP may be jeopardized by selection of the vendor. If no such terminations for default have been experienced by the vendor in the past five years, declare so in the space provided.

FORM 4: Appendix D Project Staff List

Staff Member Name	
(Please note sub-contracting firm's name if applicable)	
Title	
Percent of Staff member's time dedicated to project	
Number of years in broadband consulting	

Staff Member Name	
(Please note sub-contracting firm's name if applicable)	
Title	
Percent of Staff member's time dedicated to project	
Number of years in broadband consulting	

Staff Member Name	
(Please note sub-contracting firm's name if applicable)	
Title	
Percent of Staff member's time dedicated to project	
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Title	
Percent of Staff member's time dedicated to project	
Number of years in broadband consulting	

Staff Member Name	
(Please note sub-contracting firm's name if applicable)	
Title	
Percent of Staff member's time dedicated to project	
Number of years in broadband consulting	

FORM 5: Appendix E

Key Project Staff Background Information

Staff member name	
Position in the company	
Length of time in position	
Length of time at the company	
Project position and responsibilities	
Previous work experience	
Technical skills and qualifications for the project position	
Include specific skills and experience associated with the work to be completed under this RFP	

Staff member name	
Position in the company	
Length of time in position	
Length of time at the company	
Project position and responsibilities	
Previous work experience	
Technical skills and qualifications for the project position	
Include specific skills and experience associated with the work to be completed under this RFP	

Staff member name	
Position in the company	
Length of time in position	
Length of time at the company	
Project position and responsibilities	
Previous work experience	
Technical skills and qualifications for the project position	
Include specific skills and experience associated with the work to be completed under this RFP	

Staff member name	
Position in the company	
Length of time in position	
Length of time at the company	
Project position and responsibilities	
Previous work experience	
Technical skills and qualifications for the project position	
Include specific skills and experience associated with the work to be completed under this RFP	

FORM 6: Appendix F
Customer Reference Form
(Include information for three references)

Customer – client name	
Reference name	
Title	
Office Phone Number	
Cell Phone Number	
E-Mail Address	
Mailing Address	
Customer size service description	
Start Date	
End Date	
Contract amount	

Customer – client name	
Reference name	
Title	
Office Phone Number	
Cell Phone Number	
E-Mail Address	
Mailing Address	
Customer size service description	
Start Date	
End Date	
Contract amount	

Customer – client name	
Reference name	
Title	
Office Phone Number	
Cell Phone Number	
E-Mail Address	
Mailing Address	
Customer size service description	
Start Date	
End Date	
Contract amount	

FORM 7: Appendix G Task Area Descriptions

Describe your overall approach to fulfilling the tasks and objectives include in Section II – Requested Services and Deliverables. Please type Appendix G at the top of each of the pages it takes to describe your overall approach.

FORM 8: Appendix H

Project Schedule and Work Plan

The project schedule and work plan must present the vendor’s approach for completing the tasks and objectives included in its response to Form 7 (Appendix G). Include a Gantt Chart showing proposed beginning and end dates of all tasks (the actual project start date will be determined during contract negotiations). The Gantt chart should minimally include the following:

- A table listing vendor staff assignments and proposed labor hours for all tasks
- A brief description of each task and its work projects
- A description of each proposed deliverable

Insert pages as needed to allow space for your Gantt chart and work plan.

FORM 9: Appendix I

Fee Schedule and Cost Proposal

Provide a detailed fee schedule and project cost proposal as follows: The proposal must contain a fee schedule and detailed cost proposal that includes estimated hours, rates, and overall price (including all estimated travel and ancillary expenses). Elements of the cost proposal should match closely with your response to Form 8 – Project Schedule and Work Plan. Clearly delineate all relevant cost categories, associated unit pricing and overall estimated cost for the project, including anticipated customer costs for proposed fiber-optic services.

**FORM 10: Appendix J
Non-collusion Affidavit**

The undersigned agent, being duly sworn on oath, says that he/she has not, nor has any other member, representative, or agent of the firm, company, corporation or partnership represented by him, entered into any combination, collusion or agreement with any person relative to the price to be proposed by anyone at such letting nor to prevent any person from bidding nor to include anyone to refrain from bidding, and that this proposal is made without reference to any other proposal and without any agreement, understanding or combination with any other person in reference to such proposal. S/he further says that no person or persons, firms, or corporation has, have or will receive directly or indirectly, any rebate, fee gift, commission or thing of value on account of such sale.

OATH AND AFFIRMATION

I HEREBY AFFIRM UNDER THE PENALTIES FOR PERJURY THAT THE FACTS AND INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE FOREGOING PROPOSAL ARE TRUE AND CORRECT.

Dated this ___ day of _____, _____

(Name of Organization)
(Title of Person Signing)
(Signature)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

STATE OF _____)
COUNTY OF _____)

Before me, a Notary Public, personally appeared the above named and swore that the statements contained in the foregoing document are true and correct.

Subscribed and sworn to me this _____ day of _____, _____.

Notary Public Signature
My Commission Expires: _____