

**Request For Proposals
For Telecommunication and Broadband Planning Services
Town of Clifton Forge**

Project Description

The Town of Clifton Forge is soliciting proposals from qualified firms to assist with a regional planning project for community-based broadband telecommunications. The successful consultant will undertake a comprehensive approach that includes identification of need within the community and the potential economic and social impacts that existing and new broadband telecommunications infrastructure could produce.

This project will result in the update of an existing Community Telecommunications Plan which should contain a documentation of current conditions, a focused needs assessment, broadband education and application development strategies, “Last Mile” connectivity solutions, marketing of infrastructure, and public and private partnerships. The desired outcome of this planning effort is to provide a tool for communities to assist in future implementation projects that will lead to enhanced educational opportunities, improved medical services, additional economic development opportunities, and improved quality of life.

This project is funded through a grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and local resources. The project will be implemented by a project management team, consisting of local officials, local businesses, medical and educational entities, regional economic development partners, and local telecommunications providers. The team will provide oversight and direction to the consulting entity selected.

Timeframe

All project activities must be completed no later than **September 30, 2016**.

Scope of Services

A Community Telecommunications Plan will be produced through this project and will include the following details specific to the Town of Clifton Forge, but also including the City of Covington, Alleghany County, northern Botetourt County and Craig County.

1. Gap Analysis and Market Study

Perform a gap analysis of existing telecommunications services in relation to demand and broadband availability. Conduct a market analysis, including comparative communities, to determine if broadband rates are affordable based on the region's demographics. Through stakeholder interviews or surveys, identify specific ways current rates and availability are influencing the business climate in the region. To the extent possible, identify current coverage areas based on technology and affordability.

2. Broadband Education, Training and Applications

The region should have good community education and training programs relating to telecommunications. This element will investigate current programs available in the community, denote training gaps, and research and identify potential training partners to provide additional broadband education programs. Arrange to have a relevant workshop conducted for the benefit of the business community. In addition, the consultant will identify common and customer specific broadband uses and applications and assist the community in developing a strategy for expanding availability. The consultant will also work with the school systems to determine current and future needs at both school facilities and home based learning.

3. Last Mile Connectivity Solutions

“Last Mile” connectivity refers to the connection between the end user and the internet. The consultant should provide a variety of options for achieving this objective based on the region’s geography, while targeting high value locations business and industrial parks, educational and health care facilities, and outlying communities. Recommendations to improve existing policies and strategies to reach outlying areas and remote sites should also be included. Last mile solutions should also include education/training, home based businesses, business retention, and recruitment and incentives.

4. Community Integration

This element should provide a comprehensive presentation of short-term and long-term strategies for the integration of telecommunications into community specific plans to improve economic, educational and social conditions in the region. Identify how telecommunication strategies can improve worker training, business retention and business recruitment. Identify low-cost strategies that local governments could utilize to encourage private sector investment to enhance economic development

efforts. The consultant should identify target industries that can utilize existing infrastructure while benefiting from the other amenities of the region. Examine the use of public/private partnerships to provide incentives for expanding existing service areas as well as how existing infrastructure could be marketed outside the region.

5. Recommendations and Funding Strategies

Provide information on the availability and relevance of potential funding sources for any future projects and strategies that arise from the recommendations in the Plan. This includes governmental sources, foundations, and private resources. Recommendations should range from no cost to high cost and include responsible parties.

Consultant will be expected to meet and interact with stakeholders and prepare recommendations **specific** to the region and stakeholders. Consultant will be expected to organize and attend monthly meetings over a 9 month period.

Proposal Contents

1. Statement of Qualifications

All respondents must submit a written Statement of Qualifications to include information about the respondent directly related to each of the Selection Criteria and the five items listed above. All information should be submitted succinctly.

2. Proposal

Respondents must provide an explanation of how they propose to accomplish the project scope, and how the outcomes will be beneficial to the region.

Selection Process

The Town of Clifton Forge will establish a Selection Committee to review and evaluate all proposals submitted by firms responding to the RFP. The proposals will be evaluated and ranked based on the Selection Criteria. The top ranked firms may be asked to attend a presentation interview on **February 11, 2016 at 2pm** as part of the evaluation process. Firms invited to interview should be prepared to have general discussions on non-binding estimates of cost to provide requested services.

At the conclusion of the evaluation process the firms will be ranked in priority order with the highest ranking firm being selected to negotiate a contract with the Town of Clifton Forge. If a contract satisfactory to both parties cannot be negotiated, the Town of Clifton Forge will then enter into negotiations with the next highest ranking firm and so on until an agreement is reached.

Selection Criteria

The respondents will be evaluated on the following criteria (Total of 100 points):

1. The Consultant's understanding of the intended project outcome, i.e., what the intended end product is to be and what the project is intended to accomplish. (15 points)
2. The Consultant's proposed approach to each of the five items listed in the RFP. (20 points)
3. The scope of specific services the Consultant intends to provide including how the Consultant proposes to involve the Grantee in the planning and design process and the Consultant's overall approach to the project. (10 points)
4. The ability of the consultant to interact with stakeholders and make site visits. (10 points)
5. Any potential problems the Consultant perceives with the project as proposed. (5 points)
6. Professional qualifications and experience of the individuals the Consultant will assign to provide the planning and engineering services. Clearly indicate the role of each individual in the project. (10 points)
7. Knowledge of Federal and Virginia telecommunications laws. (5 points)
8. Knowledge and familiarity with the Management Team process. (5 points)
9. Capacity of the Consultant to perform the work within the given time limitations, taking into consideration the current and planned workload of the firm. (15 points)
10. Names, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of clients for whom the Consultant has performed projects of a similar type and size within the last 5 years. (5 points)

Submittal

Respondents are required to submit an electronic copy by 2:00pm ET on January 29, 2016 to dlburcham@cliftonforgeva.gov and mmiller@rvarc.org.

Respondents are also required to submit five (5) hardcopies to the address below no later than 2:00 p.m. ET, January 29, 2016 to:

Town of Clifton Forge
547 Main Street
Clifton Forge, VA 24422

Minority and/or female-owned businesses are encouraged to apply.

The Town of Clifton Forge is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin or against faith-based organizations.

RFP ADVERTISEMENT

Request for Proposals Telecommunication Planning Services

The Town of Clifton Forge is soliciting proposals to assist with the planning of a community-based broadband telecommunication project which includes Craig County, Botetourt County, Alleghany County and the City of Covington. The project will result in the production of a targeted community telecommunications plan, containing multiple elements. The full RFP is online at cliftonforgeva.gov. Copies are also available by contacting the Town of Clifton Forge. Deadline for submittal of proposals is 2:00 pm ET, January 29, 2016. *The Town of Clifton Forge is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin or against faith-based organizations. Minority and/or female-owned businesses are encouraged to apply.*