

Pendleton County Economic & Community Development Authority (PCEDA), in conjunction with the Pendleton County Commission (PCC), is:

Requesting information from ISP Providers and/or Network Operators qualified to enter into a Public Private Partnership for deployment of high-speed broadband in Pendleton County.

Consideration will be given to firms that are qualified pursuant to law to perform the indicated type(s) of work. Responses to the Request for Information from qualified providers are to be mailed (faxed requests will not be accepted) to:

PCEDA Executive Director Laura Brown

Pendleton County Economic and Community Development Authority

PO Box 602 Franklin, West Virginia 26807

The RFI, in pdf format, and all accompanying information and files may be provided in downloadable electronic format sent by email to the sender making the request. The PCEDA and the PCC reserve the right to reject any and all proposals and select the proposal that is in their best interest.

PROJECT NUMBER: RFI#: 071421

PROJECT NAME: Pendleton County – Broadband RFI

PROJECT LOCATION: Pendleton County, WV

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Pendleton County Economic & Community Development Authority (PCEDA), in conjunction with Pendleton County Commission (PCC) is requesting information from qualified and experienced Internet Service Providers and/or Network Operators interested in partnering to offer fast, affordable broadband internet services to end-users across Pendleton County. The long-term mission would be to reach the common goal of bringing next generation fiber broadband to in Pendleton County while demonstrating the possibility of creative solutions and the maximize current network potential. The PCEDA has no plans to operate as a network ISP provider, choosing rather to partner with a qualified provider to deploy broadband services. The PCEDA views the primary goal of this network to be economic development.

CLIENT AGENCY CONTACT: Pendleton County Development Authority, Laura Brown:
304-668-3952 : edadirector@pendletoncounty.com

RELEASE DATE: July 14, 2021

RESPONSE DUE DATE: July 28 @ 4:00 p.m. EST

ERRORS AND OMISSIONS IN RFI: Proposers are responsible for reviewing all portions of this RFI. Proposers are to promptly notify the agency, in writing, if the Proposer discovers any discrepancy, omission or other error in the RFI.

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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)
ENHANCED BROADBAND SERVICES

RFI NO. PCEDA-07142021

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- RFI Issued July 14, 2021
- Deadline to Submit Additional Questions July 21, 2021 @ 11:59 P.M. Local Time
- Response to Written Questions July 23, 2021 @ 11:59 p.m. EST
- RFI Due Date July 28, 2021 @ 4:00 P.M. EST
- Responses are Due in Writing, in a Sealed Envelope to:

PCEDA Executive Director

Laura Brown

Pendleton County Economic and Community Development Authority

PO Box 602 Franklin, West Virginia 26807

Phone: (304) 358-2074

email: edadirector@pendletoncounty.com

A. INTRODUCTION

Pendleton County Economic & Community Development Authority (PCEDA) is seeking information from interested Vendors through a request for information (RFI) to establish enhanced broadband services for Pendleton County WV residential and commercial property owners.

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of this RFI is to explore the Vendor community's viability, available technology, and interest in establishing enhanced broadband services in Pendleton County, WV. The PCEDA will consider responses proposing all technologies and solutions including but not limited to the development of a fiber-to-home network as well as the possibility of high-speed hybrid network technologies for hard-to-reach areas through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

The goals of this RFI include:

1. To gauge the level of interest by the Vendor community on expanding the range and quality of existing broadband services and/or provision of new technology and services
2. Determine if there is interest in the Vendor community in the establishment of a PPP.
3. To have a better general understanding of what technology an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and the overall Vendor community may have available, including a Vendor's capabilities statement.
4. To understand general and approximate expectations that Vendors may have for PCEDA participation and the necessary level of commitment that would be required of the PCEDA when working with an ISP for enhanced broadband services.

C. BACKGROUND

Pendleton County is located in the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia, and its east, west and south borders are marked by the headwaters of the South Branch of the Potomac River. Three fertile river valleys separated by forested mountain ridges form the major geographical areas of the county and provide the traveler with grand vistas and cozy scenes of rural life.

West Virginia ranks 49th among the 50 states for broadband connectivity. Fully half a million people, 30% of our state's residents, have no access to high-speed, reliable internet. This lack, felt most severely in our rural places (where nearly half of people have no access), limits education, economic development, tourism, business creation and expansion— even where we and our kids choose to live.

We realize that our communities are fighting the same digital divide issue that many rural communities as suffering from across the U.S. In Pendleton County, approximately 3,000 people do not have access to 25 Mbps wired broadband and Approximately 500 people in Pendleton County don't have access to any wired internet.

Lack of advanced technology is leading to hardships and unsafe conditions with calls dropped, 911 service outages that are too frequent, businesses unable to communicate with customers, young adults leaving after college and families parked late outside fast-food restaurants along the street so kids can access the internet for school.

It is no coincidence that West Virginia is one of the few states that has experienced significant population loss over the past decade. Between 2017 and 2018 the population of Pendleton County, WV declined from 7,138 to 7,056, a -1.15%.

The PCEDA recognizes that Internet is as necessary for the sustainability of our community just as electricity was in the 1930s and telephone service in the 1940s. It is our hope that focusing on reliable, affordable broadband will ultimately lead to the following objectives:

- *Helps small businesses run more efficiently and increases area job growth*
- *Enhances education and provide more local opportunities*
- *Increases economic options and outcome for area youth*
- *Increases area job growth*
- *Allows users to stay in touch with friends and family*

D. HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR RESPONSE

Questions shall be submitted to the PCEDA listed on this RFI only. Please do not contact other members of Pendleton County directly for additional information. If you do have questions for PCEDA regarding this RFI, please submit them via a direct email by the time and date listed in the Schedule of Events above. All questions submitted to the PCEDA shall be answered via a written addendum provided to respondents and will be made available on request to the PCEDA and posted publicly at the PCEDA Office.

All responses to this RFI must be received by the PCEDA prior to the time and date shown above. All responses are to be returned in a sealed envelope by July 28, 2021 at 4:00 PM EST to the PCEDA offices in the Pendleton Business Center, which is located 3 miles south of Franklin off of US Rt. 220 and Thorn Spring Road, Suite 400 or received in the mail by July 28, 2021 at 4:00PM EST to Laura Brown, Pendleton County ECDA, PO Box 602, Franklin, WV 26807.

RFI responses will be opened at the Pendleton County Courthouse Commission meeting room on Friday, July 29 at 9am. Evaluation criteria will be made public on this day.

The following items are requested to be included within your response to this RFI:

1. Contact Information
 - a. Include a primary contact person with name, title, phone number, and email.
2. A Completed Questionnaire (see below, section I. Questionnaire.)
3. Vendor Comments

May include any suggestions regarding design, implementation, management, technology, etc. that PCEDA should consider when completing the Broadband Master Plan and potential future RFP that may follow for enhanced broadband services.

E. AWARD

No award shall be made from this RFI. Information submitted by any Vendor will be done so voluntarily and with the understanding that a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) solicitation may or may not be issued as a result from this RFI.

F. RESPONSE COSTS

All costs related to the preparation of a response and any related activities are the sole responsibility of the responding Vendor. The PCEDA shall assume no liability for any costs incurred by responding vendors throughout the RFI process.

G. QUESTIONNAIRE

PCEDA appreciates your assistance with the completion of the following questions:

1. General Company Information.

- a. Name:
- b. Headquarters location:
- c. Years in existence:
- d. Number of employees:
- f. Website:

2. What is your network technology (i.e. copper, fiber, wireless)?

3. Do you place data caps on your residential or commercial service?

4. Is gigabit internet connectivity a possible offering?

5. Are you involved in any other municipal PPPs?

- a. If yes, where? (Limit of 3) Please provide a paragraph of description of service for each.

6. From what your experience and market knowledge tell you, would PCEDA likely need to aid in funding Vendor solutions?

- a. If yes, if available, are there particular phases or percentage levels of the project? (Please do not list any dollar amounts).

b. Are the items other than funding that you would need from PCEDA? (e.g. personnel, office space, fiber lines, etc.)