



RFP # 2024-02 - QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Broadband Network Operator – North Newton County Network

UPDATED 07-09-2024 – FINAL VERSION

Questions Received During Bidders Conference on June 21, 2024

Q1. Has DETCOG selected the CBRS technology/vendor for this deployment?

Q2. Will this network most likely use LTE?

A1&2. The vendor has not been selected. The design is vendor and technology agnostic.

Q3. Can the bidders get a copy of all the shapefiles to do their own analysis? The expectation is that these files will include all the Counties, towers, fiber routes, locations, etc.

A3. Entrust will provide a list of the design files that will be sent to bidders that have returned a completed NDA. Design files will include the elements listed above, as well as expected throughput.

Q4. Will the Network Terminate at a POP?

A4. The point of presence and/or point of interconnection will be identified in conjunction with the network operator. This may be a new location(s) to be built or existing location(s) from an operator. The Operator is responsible for providing the backhaul to the source provider.

Q5. Can the Operator co-lo on the same tower with same tower lease using a different frequency?

A5. It would be up to the Operator to negotiate a separate co-lo agreement with the tower owner for frequencies that are different than this project if additional equipment is required.

Q6. Can the Operator extend from DETCOG network to add to the network?

A6. This would be possible at a future date; however, the grant-funded core network must be completed first before it could be expanded. The Operator's build-out of this network beyond the grant-funded core network would be at the Operator's cost and owned by the Operator.

Q7. Is the FWA deployment on CBRS GAA or PAL?

A7. It is currently designed to be GAA in concurrence with our grant award. We will work with the FCC to pursue any options to secure a PAL, if additional auctions are made possible through the FCC. If a bidder currently has a PAL within the county, it will be eligible for use with this network.

Q8. Has DETCOG already procured (or is in the process of procuring) the FWA RAN and Core equipment?

A8. No equipment has been selected or procured. Equipment procurement will be done with input from the network operator.

Q9. The 3GPP standards were identified in the high-level network overview. Is or can 5G be used?

A9. Yes, 5G is a 3GPP specification.

Q10. Will the physical deployment of the FWA equipment be the responsibility of the chosen Operator or the chosen equipment supplier?

A10. The contractor that is selected to construct the network (not the Network Operator) will be responsible for the physical deployment of equipment up until such time as the grant is closed out. After grant closeout, this responsibility will shift to the Network Operator for the future.

Q11. Are there any set goals for Pricing and Speeds?

A11. The goal is to achieve a minimum of 100 Mbps download/20 Mbps upload speeds. While pricing will remain market-driven, pricing proposals that offer affordability packages for LMI households will be considered in RFP scoring. See Evaluation Criteria on pages 17-18 of the RFP and Attachment D on page 22.

Q12. After the RFP has been awarded, what is the general timeline for picking the technology and installation of the Fiber Network? What is the go-live goal?

A12. The objective is to go live as soon as possible with a clear understanding this date is dependent on the award of the Construction RFP and the buildout.

Q13. Does that grant have a required implementation date?

A13. Construction and go-live should be completed by October 31, 2026, to ensure a typical 3-month close-out processes. The grant funding requires implementation by January 31, 2027.

Questions received after 6/21/24 and before 7/3/2024:

Q14. Is DETCOG open to alternative RFP responses that may not build a fixed wireless access network, in order to account for the BEAD fiber overbuild?

A14. If the Operator would like to suggest expansions of the fiber backbone connecting the FWA, please see the answer to Question 6. The grant for which we have been approved, however, was specifically awarded to construct a fixed wireless network.

Q15. Newton County was identified on the BDO call on June 25 as selected for BOOT 2 funding. How does this affect your FRP/Network?

A15. Our network is not expected to be negatively affected by the BOOT II program, as DETCOG implementation strategies of CBRS are not likely to conflict with BOOT II strategies. We will not have definitive answers until the BOOT II NOFA is released.

Q16. Would you consider a request for an extension to July 24th on the responses deadline due to the bidder being unable to attend the bidder's conference on June 21st?

A16. The schedule was extended by one (1) week on June 21, as indicated on the amended RFP. No further extension will be granted. Responses are due by July 18, 2024, at 4:00 pm CDT.

Questions received after 7/3/2024:

Q17. How was the \$2M performance bond determined? What profitability assumptions were for the operator?

A17. This will be projected on costs and risks.

Q18. What are the KPIs to measure Operator Performance?

A18. The KPIs used to measure Operator Performance will include network uptime, service availability, latency, customer satisfaction and response time to service requests.

Q19. Will the fiber backbone be used for other commercial, wholesale, or IRU dark fiber? If so, whose responsibility is it to maintain fiber backbone for those services?

A19. NBN may be used for other services at a future date; however, the grant-funded core network must be completed first. The Operator's build-out of this network beyond the grant-funded core network would be at the Operator's cost and owned by the Operator.

Q20. How is DETCOG planning to find and grow the opportunity across the 11-county region? Would the operator have any influence over phase 2; 3 selections?

A20. DETCOG plans to expand broadband access through strategic planning and additional GLO funding through Harvey Mitigation funds in 6 impacted counties. The operator for the NBN will have to respond to another RFP for future networks and development.

Q21. Who is financially responsible for network upgrades due to capacity constraints (owner or operator)? Or Next Generation technology developments?

A21. The operator is “generally” responsible for ongoing costs and maintenance, including upgrades. DETCOG may apply for future advancements depending on the availability of future grant opportunities.

Q22. How much funding per property was allocated for the installation of the 1416 LMI residents?

A22. The Network Operator is responsible for using market-driven pricing when calculating the cost of installation. The grant funds are designated to cover the cost of materials, equipment, and labor to connect a minimum of 51% LMI households of the total households connected when the grant requirements have been fulfilled and closure has been reached.

Q23. For non-LMI residents, can these installation fees be charged to the subscriber?

A23. Yes. The Network Operator is responsible for using market-driven pricing when calculating the cost of installation for subscribers. Proposals including competitive fees will be considered in the RFP scoring period.

Q24. What are the economic factors for determining LMI?

A24. “LMI Resident” is defined by Section 102(a)(20) of the HCDA as a person in a family or an individual with annual income equal to or less than HUD’s Section 8 Low Income Limit, which is generally 80 percent of an area’s median family income adjusted for household size. For the purposes of this agreement, an LMI resident is a resident that is in the NBN service area and meets the LMI income requirement.

Q25. Please explain the open-ended statement regarding payments intended for ongoing renewal and replacement costs. How is that calculated? What does it cover?

A25. The Network Operator will use payments received from subscribers, in keeping with its market-driven approach, to fund the ongoing network operations and maintenance.

Q26. What CBRS Spectrum will be licensed for this deployment? Who carries the license?

A26. The Newton wireless network will operate in the 3.55 3.7 GHz CBRS band. The network will utilize the General Authorized Access (GAA) channels. There is a total of 12 of the 10 MHz GAA channels available. For information regarding a potential PAL, please see Question 7.

Q27. Can you please share geography lat/long of tower locations? Also, need tower height for mounting of wireless gear.

A27. A file with the latitude and longitude for each tower listed in the design will be sent to each respondent that has submitted a signed NDA. The actual attachment height of the equipment to be mounted on each tower will be part of the tower lease agreement.

Q28. Could you please share a list of the 2700 serviceable addresses for this opportunity?

A28. A file of the service addresses downloaded in the 4th quarter 2023 will be sent to each respondent that has submitted a signed NDA.

Q29. Could this contract be impacted if another ISP is awarded BOOT II or BEAD money to overbuild the same area with FTTH?

A29. The exact impact of BOOT II is speculative until the NOFA is released in early July. For more information regarding the impact of BOOT II and BEAD, please see Questions 14 and 15.

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