



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

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REQUEST FOR INTEREST (RFI) Solicitation no. RFI-21-01-HBI NTIA Broadband Infrastructure Program - 21

SUMMARY

Pursuant to §3-122-16.31, Hawaii Administrative Rules, the State of Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) is seeking fixed broadband service providers (Providers) to participate in a "covered partnership" grant application for the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA), Broadband Infrastructure Program. Those Providers selected could be listed as a sub-grant recipient in the application and may result in subsequent award of grants (if grant is approved) to the selected Providers. The aggregate grant application will be submitted by DBEDT in an amount not to exceed \$20M.

The NTIA Broadband Infrastructure Program was authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Division N, Title IX, Section 905, Public Law 116-260, 134 Stat. 1182 (Dec. 27, 2020) (Act). Each state is limited to one covered partnership application. The recipient of the funds must be a State agency and the covered partnership may include more than one Provider of fixed broadband service as part of its application.

Applications for the Broadband Infrastructure Program must be complete and follow the format described in the Notice of Funding Opportunity: <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/broadband-infrastructure-program>. Complete applications must be received by www.grants.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on **August 17, 2021**. Accordingly, DBEDT has determined that the short turnaround time situation precludes the use of other source selection methods for this federal grant.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Experience, qualifications, and track record relevant to broadband infrastructure deployment projects being considered (5 points).
- Previous experience with broadband infrastructure deployment related federal and state grants in past 10 years (5 points).

- Evidence of collaboration with other fixed broadband providers in the State for the purpose of this solicitation (10 points).
- Proposed project meets the priorities set forth by the NTIA Broadband Infrastructure Program (30 points):
 - Provide broadband service to the greatest number of households in an eligible service area;
 - Provide broadband service to rural areas;
 - Be most cost-effective in providing broadband service; or
 - Provide broadband service with a download speed of at least 100 Mbps and an upload speed of at least 20 Mbps.
- Proposed project provides details to the following (30 points):
 - A description of the project area, including a shapefile identifying the proposed deployment;
 - A description of the broadband infrastructure that is proposed to be deployed, including facilities; equipment; and network capabilities, including minimum speed thresholds;
 - Evidence, including certification from the applicant, demonstrating the unserved or underserved nature of the project area;
 - The number of households in each unserved or underserved area that would gain access to broadband service as a result of the project;
 - The total cost and timeline for completion of the project by project area;
 - The amount of matching funds that the applicant proposes to contribute and a certification that no portion of the matching funds are derived from any state government grant, loan, or subsidy;
 - Evidence demonstrating the economic and commercial feasibility of the project;
 - A list of all expected government authorizations, permits, and other approvals required for the project and a timeline for the applicant's acquisition of the approvals;
 - A certification that no other federal or state program provides funding that is available to the applicant for the project; and
 - Any other information deemed necessary by the grant program.
- Project resource and capacity to accomplish the work in the required time (20 points).

RESPONSE AND SUBMISSION DEADLINE

INTENT TO PARTICIPATE: A registered response indicating interest in participating (Intent to Participate) in the NTIA Broadband Infrastructure Program covered partnership with the State of Hawai'i **must be received by Friday, June 25, 2021 by 2:00 pm (Hawai'i Standard Time) via email to DBEDT.broadband@hawaii.gov**

PROPOSAL: All project submissions must be received no later than Friday, July 16, 2021 by 2:00 pm (Hawaii Standard Time). Applications must be received in hard copy and electronic format. An e-signed electronic copy is to be sent to DBEDT.broadband@hawaii.gov and signed hard copies (3 total) must be delivered to the following address:

Mr. Burt Lum
Broadband Strategy Officer
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism
Hawaii Broadband Initiative
250 S. Hotel St., Room 515
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Any submissions received after this time will be automatically disqualified, unopened, and returned to sender. Hard copies must be postmarked by July 16, 2021.

Facsimiles of the proposal shall not be accepted.

QUESTIONS

All questions with regard to this solicitation must be submitted in writing via email: DBEDT.broadband@hawaii.gov. The State will respond to written questions via addenda to all fixed broadband Providers who have submitted an Intent to Participate.

The deadline for written questions for this solicitation is Friday, July 9, 2021, no later than 12:00 noon (Hawaii Standard Time).

SUBMISSION FORMAT

All applicants shall submit their response to this solicitation consistent with the NTIA Broadband Infrastructure Program NOFO, Chapter IV Application and Submission Information as well as the following:

- Coversheet containing company information to include: 1) principal name of business, 2) address, 3) contact name, 4) telephone number, 5) email address, and 6) website address;
- Names and resume of key executive employee(s);
- List of previous federal and state grant awards (including dollar value of each award);
- List of relevant broadband infrastructure projects implemented to show applicant has sufficient experience and track record to implement activities in the NTIA Broadband Infrastructure Program. Include a description of specific target population (geographic, community or both) of clients served;

- A description of the proposed project the applicant intends to carry out as described in the proposed project details.
- Estimated budget should be kept to less than \$10M, to carry out the project for a one year period, with a possible extension to 2 years pending NTIA approval.
- A statement that the applicant understands that DBEDT reserves the right to incorporate or not incorporate in the State's covered partner application for the NTIA Broadband Program any recommendations presented in response to the request.
- A statement that the applicant understands that neither DBEDT nor the interested Provider has any obligation under this request.

Applicant may amend or clarify statements of qualifications at any time by filing a new statement prior to the submission deadline. Applicant shall inform DBEDT of any change in their submission that would disqualify applicant from being considered for this solicitation. Applicant will make themselves available to answer questions and provide additional information before the August 17, 2021 submission date to strengthen the Grants.gov covered partnership application submittal.

AMENDMENTS/CLARIFICATIONS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All interested Providers must register in order to receive any applicable Addenda. If you do not register, any applicable Addenda will not be sent to you and you will not be considered to be a partner in the State's covered partnership application with the NTIA.

Send registration by email to: DBEDT.broadband@hawaii.gov

Provide the following information:

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|---|---|
| ☐ Name of Company | ☐ Mailing Address |
| ☐ Name of Contact Person | ☐ Telephone Number |
| ☐ Solicitation Number | ☐ Email Address |

Costs for developing submissions or assisting in writing and preparation of the NTIA Broadband Infrastructure Program applications are solely the responsibility of the applicant. Whether or not any award results from this RFI, DBEDT will not reimburse such costs.

DBEDT reserves the right to cancel this RFI and to reject any and all submissions in whole or in part when it is determined to be in the best interest of DBEDT.

DBEDT reserves the right to incorporate or not incorporate in the State's application for federal grants any recommendations presented in response to this request.

Neither DBEDT nor any interested Provider shall have any obligation under this request.

All proposals become the property of the State of Hawaii.

CONFIDENTIAL SUBMISSIONS

If a Provider believes that any portion of a proposal, offer, specification, protest, or correspondence contains information that should be withheld from public inspection or production because it is confidential, then the head of the purchasing agency or designee who is named at the end of this solicitation should be so advised in writing and provided with justification to support the confidentiality claim. Price is not considered confidential and will not be withheld from public inspection or production upon lawful requests from the public.

A Provider shall request in writing nondisclosure of designated trade secrets or other proprietary data considered confidential. Such data shall accompany the submittal, be clearly marked, and shall be readily separable from the submittal in order to facilitate eventual public inspection of the non-confidential portion of the submittal.

Pursuant to HAR Section 3-122-58, HAR, the head of the purchasing agency or designee shall consult with the Attorney General and make a written determination regarding confidentiality in accordance with HRS Chapter 92F, HRS. If the request for confidentiality is denied, such information shall be disclosed as public information, unless the Provider appeals the denial to the Office of Information Practices in accordance with Section 92F-15.5(a), HRS.

INCOMPLETE SUBMITTALS

Submittals received by the due date, but with missing information or minor deficiencies, will be considered "incomplete." Providers will be notified of the deficiencies and will have three (3) working days from the notification date to submit all the required items or their submittal will be considered late and disqualified for consideration.

TECHNICAL IRREGULARITIES

Technical irregularities are matters of form rather than substance evident from the proposal document, or insignificant mistakes that can be waived or corrected without prejudice to other Providers; that is, when there is no effect on price, quality, or quantity. If discussions have not been held, the Procurement Officer may waive such irregularities or allow a Provider to correct them if either is in the best interest of the State. Examples include the failure of a Provider to: return the number of signed

proposals required by the request for proposals; sign the proposal, but only if the unsigned proposal is accompanied by other material indicating the Provider's intent to be bound.

AWARD

All respondents shall be notified in writing and the selected Provider(s) shall be posted on the State of Hawaii Procurement Office website.

Mike McCartney
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism