

Request for Proposal

Broadband Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study

**County of El Dorado**

**RFP No.: XX-XXX-XXX**

Release Date:

Proposal Due Date:

Refer ALL Inquiries to:

County of El Dorado

Procurement and Contracts

360 Fair Lane

Placerville, CA 95667

530-621-5804

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<http://edcapps.edcgov.us/contracts/bidresults.asp>

1. **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The County of El Dorado is requesting proposals for qualified contractors to prepare a broadband needs assessment and feasibility study. The County recognizes that broadband is an essential, critical infrastructure for the economic growth of El Dorado County, and that the advancement of technology and infrastructure associated with broadband will play a key role in its economic future and quality of life. The development of an action plan to deploy broadband in identified areas will enhance public and private investments in technology infrastructure, and strengthen the County’s economic competitiveness. For the purposes of this proposal, the term “Broadband” applies to the capacity of networks to carry data traffic, both wireless and wire line.

El Dorado County is located in east-central California, has a total population of over 183,000 residents, and encompasses 1,805 square miles of rolling hills and mountainous terrain. The County’s western boundary borders the Sacramento region, and the eastern boundary contains Lake Tahoe and the California/Nevada state line. There are two municipalities within El Dorado County, City of South Lake Tahoe with a 2006 population estimate of 23,594, and the City of Placerville, with a 2006 estimated population of 10,171. The County is topographically divided into two zones. The northeast corner of the County is in the Lake Tahoe basin, while the reminder of the County is on the “western slope.” Between the two primary population centers, Placerville in the west, and the City of South Lake Tahoe in the east, there are a number of small unincorporated towns. The predominant industries in this area are: tourism, agriculture, three main traditional suburban industrial parks and retails stores, and home-based businesses such as consulting, software development, and artisan crafts. All of these businesses rely on the Internet to communicate with suppliers and existing and future customers.

While a diverse landscape invites residents and tourists alike to enjoy outdoor recreation activities year-round, the County faces some challenges in the expansion of broadband infrastructure to deliver high-speed Internet service to a low-density population that is dispersed over difficult terrain. The County recognizes that broadband service is a necessary utility in each home and business, and that infrastructure investment and expansion is required to support residents, business owners, education initiatives and economic growth.

Independent analysis of the current Broadband deployment in the County indicates that the best broadband capacity is slightly less than average grade in terms of speed (download and upload) and access to service providers, with a majority of the County being either substantially underserviced or unserved in Broadband service. The lack of Broadband hinders the County’s efforts to attract new businesses, create jobs, and educate and retain its residents.

1. **STRATEGIC PARTNERS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

El Dorado County has developed several partnerships to help facilitate the discussion on broadband: SEDCorp, Valley Vision, and Tahoe Prosperity Center.

SEDCorp is a 501c4 nonprofit which manages the US EDA approved Sierra Economic Development District (SEDD), which was made possible by the Sierra Planning Organization, a special district formed by a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between the counties of El Dorado, Placer and Nevada Counties. SEDCorp supports Broadband deployment throughout five counties in Northern California, including Sierra Planning Organization area, Sierra County and East Alpine County. SEDCorp is the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Community Advantage Services Fund (CASF) Gold County Broadband Consortium (GCBC) lead.

Valley Vision is a large Sacramento, California based non-profit which focuses on the enhancement of economic prosperity. Valley Vision operates strategically and champions initiatives which benefit counties and cities. Valley Vision and SEDCorp cross paths and have partnered in economic development projects in California, working together as CPUC approved Consortia to bring access to Broadband.

The Tahoe Prosperity Center is a non-profit based in South Lake Tahoe and focuses on the “basin” economics. Tahoe prosperity Center is a CPUC approved Broadband Consortia.

1. **PROJECT GOALS**
* To educate staff and the community on the benefits of broadband, as well as the opportunities and challenges for broadband improvements and expansion of infrastructure in El Dorado County; and
* To analyze the state of existing Broadband infrastructure in the County, outlining needs and gaps in availability of broadband connectivity for the business, resident, and educational communities (excluding the Tahoe region, which has an existing analysis); and
* To identify options for deploying broadband in identified areas, including information on return on investment and funding options to guide decision making, strengthen and expand business development, retain current businesses, support job development, and support education initiatives.
* To identify the most cost effective delivery mechanism(s) for Broadband; and
* To provide an action plan for the short and long term improvement of Broadband in the County by identifying relevant projects that can be accomplished efficiently as a way to incentivize private Broadband development; and
* To identify and prioritize areas where short term investment can be made with the largest payoff and identify available funding sources that can be leveraged and/or partnerships that the County may consider pursuing; and
* To identify applicable funding sources that could be utilized for a plan lasting 5-10 years; and
* To identify the return on investment in 5, 10, and 15 year outlooks; and
* To recommend policy improvements to facilitate Broadband deployment, which would positively impact the actions and direction in the unincorporated areas of El Dorado County and other agencies and stakeholders.
1. **SCOPE OF SERVICES**

El Dorado County has convened a Technical Advisory Committee to provide oversight and advice on the Broadband project, and to work with the consultant on all key project tasks. The Committee includes representatives from government, private and non-profit entities interested in promoting economic development and technology. El Dorado County is also a member of SEDCorp, which may also serve as a resource for this effort with regard to community survey data.

**The tasks below outline the scope of the services requested.**

Task 1: Project Management: Document the work plan and timeline to accomplish the scope of work outlined in this RFP, incorporating stakeholder input. Refine Project Goals and Purpose, working with Technical Advisory Committee

Task 2: Refine Project Goals and Purpose – working with El Dorado County staff and the Technical Advisory Committee

Task 3: Community Region/Area Profiles (i.e., City of Placerville, unincorporated areas of El Dorado County) addressing project goals noted above, including targeted outreach to representatives from various business and other user sectors:

* 1. Inventory of Existing Broadband Assets
	2. Needs Assessment – identify Broadband Gaps
	3. Identify Broadband Demand – goals for economic development, education, etc.
	4. Short and long term action plan for improvement of Broadband infrastructure, including recommended funding sources and/or strategic partnerships.

Task 4: Validate/Correct CPUC Coverage Map

Task 5: Identify Key Issues for Broadband Expansion – for each Community Region/Area in El Dorado County identified above

Task 6: Outline and Prioritize Community Region/Area Strategies: – including “middle mile” and “last mile” access

Task 7: Organization and Network Operation Options – a comprehensive presentation of the possible organizational/ownership structures for proposed broadband infrastructure networks – including but not limited to owner/operator, public private partnerships, lease-hold agreements.

Task 8: Action Plan and Resources – Consultant will identify a “road map” for each Community Region/Area’s next steps for planning, funding, grants and other resources to implement identified strategies. Prioritize existing resources that can be leveraged. Provide information on the availability and relevance of potential funding sources for any future projects that arise from the recommendations in the Plan. This includes governmental sources, foundations, and private resources.

1. **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS**
2. Firm/team understanding of the broadband/telecommunications industry, state and federal initiatives related to broadband.
3. Demonstrated experience with municipal broadband planning activities and meeting facilitation.
4. Extensive familiarity and experience with telecommunication and broadband technology and application.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

1. Possess skills and experience in facilitating public meetings; experience working with the public and meeting attendants to create a successful conclusion to the meeting process.
2. Ability and the willingness to work with elected officials, business community, concerned citizens, telecommunications personnel, educators, healthcare providers, , invited speakers and other interested parties.
3. Skills to provide strategic direction, articulate key strategic concepts, and the ability to focus on strategic issues.
4. Possess good communication skills, encourage participation in meetings, encourage group process and help meetings stay on task.
5. Ability to analyze and synthesize data from the meetings and effectively and clearly communicate the information to Technical Advisory Committee, stakeholders and other interested parties.
6. Ability to remain flexible and respond to changes in schedules and timelines.

**SERVICES REQUIRED AFTER SELECTION**

The selected firm’s representatives will be required to meet with the Technical Advisory Committee on a regular basis to discuss and plan the project(s), and provide progress reports on a bi-monthly basis.

1. **PROPOSAL SCHEDULE AND SUBMITTAL INFORMATION**

**PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE**

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| --- | --- |
| **Milestone** | **Scheduled Date** |
| RFP Issued | January 2, 2017 |
| Questions Due | January 13, 2017 |
| Answers to Questions Posted | January 23, 2017 |
| Proposal Submittal Deadline | February 10, 2017 |
| Notify Finalists | February 14, 2017 |
| Finalist Interviews | February 17, 2017 |
| Final Selection – Board of Supervisors Approval | February 28, 2017 |
| Scope and Budget Development/Contract Negotiations | March of 2017 |

1. **PROPOSAL FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS**

The proposal shall be specifically responsive to this request and shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the qualifications requested below. The proposal shall be limited to twenty (20) pages in length, not including appendices. Information should be complete and demonstrate that the Service Provider can perform professional work. Please provide any other information deemed appropriate for this project, including a sample of comparable study or report prepared by your team/firm.

INTRODUCTION

Prepare a brief introduction including a general demonstration of understanding of the scope and complexity of the required work. The title page of the proposal should contain your firm’s name, address, telephone number, principal contact, and email address. The proposal should contain a table of contents.

PERSONNEL

Identify individuals and list qualifications of key personnel who would be assigned to this project. Detail experience in work related to the proposed assignment. Specify the Project Manager who will serve as a contact person.

EXPERIENCE

Provide company contact information, how long you have been in business and what service you provide. Identify and briefly describe related work completed in the last three (3) years. Describe only work related to the proposed effort and include any examples of similar local government projects. Include evidence of satisfactory and timely completion of similar work performed for past projects.

PROJECT APPROACH

Provide a discussion regarding your recommended approach to the project. Describe your suggestions on how to best organize the project, its stakeholders, and lay out a process to meet project goals.

PROJECT PLAN AND TIMELINE

Provide a description of the project plan and timeline, in the most efficient and timely manner, from the initial planning stages to the completed design. The timeline should identify numerous check-in calls/meetings with Technical Advisory Committee on a regular basis as appropriate.

PRICING AND BUDGET

The RFP should contain a total cost of the project, as well as a detailed “line item” breakdown of costs for the project. In addition, please specify:

* “Not to Exceed” Fees for actual cost of time and materials needed to complete the project.
* “Not to Exceed” Fees for any reimbursable anticipated during the course of this project.
* Hourly rate schedule for services.
* Any additional costs/charges, such as traveling, must be clearly defined in the RFP.

Proposal should be all encompassing, with a single vendor identified as the “responsible lead vendor”. Please include any subcontractor(s) that will be required to meet the needs of the proposal or clearly indicate what portion of the services are not included as part of your proposal. Proposal should outline separate costs for any add-ons or optional requests specified in the RFP.

CLIENT REFERENCES

Provide a minimum of three (3) client references with contact names and phone numbers for whom you have completed similar work.

APPENDIX

An appendix with full resumes is allowed. The appendix material may or may not be considered as part of the selection process.

1. **EVALUATION PROCESS**

REVIEW PROCESS

The Technical Advisory Committee or a subcommittee thereof will rank the RFPs based upon the merits of the proposal, written qualifications and experience of the firm or consultant team. The review team will determine finalists for interviews by ranking and consensus and those finalists will be notified as outlined in Section V herein. Proposers are advised that consultant interviews are scheduled to be conducted on February 17, 2017, and to make preparations accordingly. Phone or Skype interviews will be considered upon request.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Following the interview, firms/teams will be ranked by each panel member as follows:

* Demonstrated understanding of the project goals and responsiveness of the proposal to meeting these goals.
* Appropriateness of project approach and perceived effectiveness of proposed concept for identified audiences(s).
* Degree to which the project design approaches goals with innovative and creative solutions or methods.
* Likelihood that the proposal will provide the best value compared to other submitted proposals.
* Qualifications of the project team and level of relevant experience.

The panel will compare their individual rankings, discuss and reach a consensus decision. The Technical Advisory Committee reaffirms its right to make any selection it deems prudent, and responding firms or individual participants acknowledge through their participation that such selection is not subject to protest or contest.

The successful firm or consultant team selected will perform a variety of duties as agreed upon in the final negotiated Scope of Work. The selected vendor and the County of El Dorado will finalize the contract terms and conditions. If The County and the selected vendor are unable to agree on terms and conditions at this point, The County may exercise its right to negotiate with other vendors.