

Request for Proposal
of Network Infrastructure Construction
for the
Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative

March 25, 2009

Franklin Community Health Network

111 Franklin Health Commons

Farmington, ME 04938

(207) 779-3155

Ralph Johnson, Chief Information Officer and Project Coordinator

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I. Background

The Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative is a collaborative project of Franklin Community Health Network, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit rural health care system, HealthReach Community Health Centers, and Central Maine Healthcare. The initiative calls for the construction of a broadband network that will connect the three partner sites as well as establish broadband access in rural western and central Maine communities. This infrastructure building project will result in a new network connecting **nine** health care organizations in **six** towns at **nine** separate addresses, and have significant implications for the quality of health care patients within the three organizations receive as well as the efficiency in which these services are delivered. The three organizations boast a history of collaboration in patient care and information technology related projects.

Franklin Community Health Network has agreed to be the lead organization responsible for executing this project and will coordinate all activity through the office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO). Ralph Johnson, CIO (referred to here as "Project Coordinator") will provide project coordination throughout the Request for Proposal process.

II. General Provisions

- 1) The Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative reserves the right to reject any and all Proposals received as a result of this Request for Proposals (RFP). Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) rules govern this Request for Proposal process. Please see <http://www.usac.org/rhc-pilot-program/> for more details.
- 2) Applicants must submit **5** complete copies of the proposal (including any referenced or supporting materials) by 5:00 p.m. ET on or before the twenty-eighth day following the

posting of this request on the USAC website. Acceptable forms of submission include: hand-delivery, Federal Express, United Parcel Services (UPS), United States Postal Service, or e-mail. Any responses received after the stated deadline will be considered non-responsive to the RFP and will not be reviewed. Proposals must be addressed to:

Ralph Johnson, CIO
Franklin Community Health Network
111 Franklin Health Commons
Farmington, Maine 04938
or
rjohnson@fchn.org

- 3) Contractors may submit clarifying questions regarding the RFP. Questions must be emailed before 5:00 p.m. ET on the twenty-first day following the posting of this request on the USAC website. To ensure open competitiveness, the Project Coordinator will provide answers to questions submitted by all contractors that submit a Notice of Interest as described in the next paragraph. Every effort will be made to respond within one business day.
- 4) All contractors intending to submit a response to the RFP must submit a Notice of Interest via email to the Project Coordinator no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on the twenty – first day following the posting of this request on the USAC website. In the Notice the contractor must provide the following information: 1) name of the primary contact person, 2) mailing address, 3) telephone number, and 4) email address. Only contractors that complete and return a Notice of Interest will receive answers to clarifying questions submitted and other inquiries related to this RFP process.
- 5) There will be no bidders' conference. All questions should be submitted by e-mail to rjohnson@fchn.org. All questions and responses will be shared publicly with any party that submits a Notice of Interest.

6) The selected contractor will be identified in a letter to all those who submit a full proposal in response to this RFP. This is procedural only, and creates no right in the named contractor to award of the contract. Competing contractors shall be given five business days from the date of said notification to review selection criteria and file a written protest of the award. Award protests must be in writing, and hand-delivered or mailed to Ralph Johnson, CIO.

All protests will be reviewed and:

A. Protests found to be invalid will be rejected, a letter stating the reasons for rejection will be sent out, and contract negotiations will proceed with the selected contractor;

Or

B. Meritorious protest(s) may be evaluated and sustained resulting in the selected contractor being rejected if they are unable to demonstrate all the merit in the original notice of award;

OR

C. All Proposals will be rejected for the element or elements of the RFP under protest.

7) The Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative reserves the right to investigate references and/or past performance of any contractor with respect to its successful performance of similar services, compliance with specifications and contractual obligations, and completion or delivery of a project on schedule.

8) The cost of preparing the Proposal, attendance at an interview (if requested), or any other cost associated with the submission of a Proposal is the sole responsibility of the contractor and will not be reimbursed.

- 9) The Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative reserves the right to seek clarification of each Proposal or to make an award without further discussion of the Proposals received. Therefore, it is important that each Proposal be organized and submitted in a clear and complete manner.
- 10) The Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, if such rejection would be in the public interest, as determined by The Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative.
- 11) The Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative reserves the right to cancel or postpone this RFP at any time or to award no contract.
- 12) All proposals, including any price quotations, will be valid and firm through the period of contract execution.
- 13) This RFP will become part of the final contract. The contractor will be bound to perform according to the terms of this RFP and their Proposal.
- 14) Contractors may not communicate with members of The Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative until the selected contractor is awarded, except as noted above in terms of submitting clarifying questions to the Project Coordinator.
- 15) Proposals may be rejected in whole or in part if they limit or modify any terms and conditions and/or specifications of this RFP.
- 16) By responding, the contractor states that the Proposal is not made in connection with any competing contractor submitting a separate response to the RFP, and is in all aspects fair and without collusion or fraud.

III. Project Specifications

The Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative is seeking requests to connect all sites as identified in the accompanying 465 Attachment document via TCP/IP protocols. The minimum dedicated bandwidth need for each site is 45MB. Contractors may propose varying network speeds along the network as long as no segment of the network is slower than 45MB. The Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative is not specifying the delivery mode of such bandwidth for the express purpose of allowing many creative options to be developed and presented. In addition, a high speed connection to the Internet at Franklin Memorial Hospital is also needed, and must be accessible by all sites as warranted by the Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative. The speed of that connection should exceed the current 10MB connection currently in place. The sites will be responsible for all on-site equipment necessary to connect to the network delivered by the selected contractor. The contractor is responsible for the transport layer up to and including a demarcation point managed by the selected contractor. Construction must be completed no later than October 2009.

The proposed network to be built in **year one** will link 9 healthcare facilities in 6 towns at 9 separate addresses. This network will run approximately 74.55 miles, through four rural counties (Franklin, Oxford, and Androscoggin Counties, as well as a portion of Cumberland County) and the towns of:

- Farmington
- West Farmington
- East Wilton
- Wilton
- East Dixfield
- Dixfield
- Mexico
- Rumford
- Hanover
- Bryant Pond

- Bethel
- Greenwood
- West Paris
- Paris
- South Paris
- North Bridgton
- Oxford
- Mechanic Falls
- West Minot
- Auburn
- Turner Center
- North Turner
- Livermore
- Livermore Falls
- Jay
- North Jay

As part of the requirements from a private, matching funding source for this project, the selected contractor will, at their own expense, construct additional capacity through the communities included in this network and offer broadband Internet access to consumers in some if not all of the communities affected. The additional capacity will be given to The Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative, leased or sold back to the selected contractor who can then resell the service to consumer, and the revenues from consumer sales should be factored into the ongoing operating expense for the project.

The contractor must show that the excess capacity did not increase the eligible costs being paid by the FCC award for the dedicated healthcare network and the contractor must provide sufficient cost information to be able to determine the cost for the excess capacity. The project costs for the dedicated Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband network must be clearly articulated separate from the cost of the excess capacity as specified in the previous paragraph.

IV. Proposal

Please answer questions in the order that they appear.

1. Brief description of contractor, including: location of headquarters, year incorporated, and examples of successful network construction that demonstrate technical expertise, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness.
2. Description of bandwidth (45MB is the minimum need, faster networks will be scored higher).
3. Plan for ensuring the project team is based in Maine for the duration of the project.
4. Description of guaranteed response time in the event of a break or malfunction in the network after construction.
5. Detailed implementation plan including month by month milestones.
6. Detailed budget that includes all anticipated construction costs (i.e. equipment, electronics, type and cost of fiber, maintenance and support costs, on-going operating costs, and other costs)
7. Description and timeline for making excess capacity available to residents in some or all of the towns listed above (see section III Project Specifications).
8. At least three professional references from similar or larger-scale projects including: contact person, mailing address, phone number, and email address.

Please remember, all referenced or supporting material should be clearly titled and included as appendices. Supporting materials that are not clearly referenced in the proposal or labeled as appendices will not be reviewed.

V. Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be utilized for evaluation responses and each item will be weighted equally:

- 1) Cost of construction.
- 2) Operating expense to maintain the network as delivered after construction.
- 3) Bandwidth (45MB is the minimum need, faster networks will be scored higher).
- 4) The project team must be based in Maine for the duration of the project at their own expense.
- 5) Guaranteed response time in the event of a break or malfunction in the network after construction (How quickly will a break in service be repaired?)
- 6) Demonstrated experience in network construction.
- 7) Demonstrated success in delivering large-scale networks on time and on budget.

Thank you for submitting a proposal based on the needs of The Rural Western and Central Maine Broadband Initiative. We look forward to your response.