

Request for Proposals

Dakota Broadband Board



Systems Plan Update and Business Analysis

August 2021

Dakota Broadband Board
430 Third Street
Farmington, MN 55024

Overview and Purpose of the RFP

The Dakota Broadband Board (DBB) is interested in updating the existing Systems Plan for its broadband fiber network, and in conducting a business analysis of the current broadband environment in Dakota County. The outcome of the project is expected to inform future operational and policy decisions of the Dakota Broadband Board regarding the use of its broadband fiber network.

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to identify qualified vendors who are interested in assisting the DBB in achieving the anticipated outcome. The DBB expects this process will include follow-up interviews with select vendors to answer any questions raised by DBB members, and obtain additional insight regarding their proposed approach.

Dakota Broadband Board: Background

The Dakota Broadband Board (DBB) is a Joint Powers Organization created in December 2017 between Dakota County, the Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA) and the following 10 communities in Dakota County:

Apple Valley	Burnsville	Farmington	Hastings	Inver Grove Heights	Lakeville
Mendota Heights	Rosemount	South St Paul	West St Paul		

As stated in the existing Joint Powers Agreement, the purpose of the DBB is:

- To create a high-performance institutional network (I-Net) for the efficient management of physical network assets owned among members (conduit, fiber, etc.), and to enable more efficient and lower cost price agreements for members for a variety of IP-based services
- To utilize excess I-Net capacity to enhance business attraction, business retention, and economic development opportunities through the provision of whole access to private sector providers (C-Net)

The DBB currently manages over 220 miles of broadband fiber for its members (Exhibit A); this number does not include the additional route miles owned by members that are managed through external partnerships. It is important to note that the DBB will not be a retail provider of services to businesses and residents in Dakota County. Dakota County (MN) is a part of the seven county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, and its communities range from urban and suburban in the northern portion of the county to its rural towns and townships in the southern half.

Organizational Structure

The DBB is governed by a Board that consists of one elected official from each member entity. In addition to the Board, the DBB maintains two additional committees to provide guidance and oversight of its actions. The Technical Advisory Committee is comprised of one staff representative from each member who provides insight on technical/operational decisions and activities. An Executive Committee, whose membership includes the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Executive Director, provides a key connection between policy and technical decisions.

In addition to the existing board and committee structure, daily operations are managed by an Executive Director who also oversees a variety of vendors for network operations and maintenance, as well as fiscal and legal services.

Anticipated Scope and Outcomes

The DBB Board has identified a number of specific outcomes and deliverables that it would like to see as a result of this analysis. These include:

- A. Update of the December 2017 *C-Net/I-Net Systems and Business Plan* that was created by Design Nine (Copies available on the DBB website at: <http://www.dbbmn.gov>)
- B. Stakeholder and Community Input
 - a. Understanding of the existing availability and satisfaction level of broadband services for Dakota County stakeholders including:
 - i. Residents (Single family and multi-tenant properties)
 - ii. Employers (Large, Medium, and Small)
 - iii. Healthcare providers
 - iv. K-12 and Higher Education
 - v. Local government and non-profit organizations
 - vi. Private Sector ISPs (Existing service areas and challenges)
 - b. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, the DBB is particularly interested in specific feedback from residents/businesses working from home and distance learning
- C. Identification of Opportunities for I-Net Expansion
 - a. Evaluation of the existing DBB fiber network capacity and the identification of future routes/projects to benefit member communities and strengthen the network
- D. Economic Development Opportunities and Community Value
 - a. Identification of strategic steps DBB members can take to further expand economic development opportunities throughout Dakota County
 - b. Examples from other communities who have successfully utilized broadband infrastructure and public/private partnerships to attract and retain businesses
- E. Identification of Options and Approaches for Public/Private Partnerships to Meet Community Broadband Needs
 - a. Analysis of federal and state funding options that exist to support these partnerships as well as potential infrastructure projects for government purposes
- F. Outreach and Communications Strategy
 - a. Development of an ongoing communications/outreach strategy that promotes organizational transparency, efficiency, collaboration

General Information

The DBB welcomes responses from any qualified vendors who are interested in assisting the organization in achieving its desired outcome. Responses should include the following:

- A. Vendor history, qualifications, and contact information
 - a. Please include organizational experience with similar projects for public entities as well as individual team member experience in these areas
- B. A description of the proposed approach to achieve each of the project deliverables and outcomes identified in the RFP (A-F above), including details of how you would insure unserved/underserved residents will be able to participate in the stakeholder input segment. If surveys will be utilized, please clearly identify the survey instrument and process for collection of data.
- C. Expected project schedule and timeline
- D. Identification of any issues or challenges that may be encountered in order to meet the desired outcomes of the project
- E. Identification of expected resource requirements that would be necessary to fulfill the DBB's request for this project. Please provide a breakdown of expected resources and pricing necessary for each deliverable, as well as the project as a whole.

Responses should be submitted to the DBB at the email/address below. Please submit any questions in advance of the deadline via email. The DBB will accept responses until 5pm (CST) on September 13, 2021.

Please send responses to:

Carah Koch
DBB Executive Director
Via Email: ckoch@farmingtonmn.gov
Via Mail: 430 Third Street, Farmington MN 55024

