

1. What is the “not to exceed” amount allocated for the budget for this project?
 - a. ATCOG does not have a “not to exceed” amount currently. The current budget line item for this project is \$140,000, but additional funding or budget adjustments may be possible with approval from the EDA.

2. Does ATCOG have a timeframe or completion date in mind for the report and mapping application?
 - a. An initial target completion date is the end of August with a possible extension if approved by EDA.

3. We note that the tasks of this project are focused on mapping, speed tests, consumer cost and IISP technology profiling, leading to authoring a report of broadband in the region and developing an easy to understand representation of broadband on a map application. However, the most important evaluation criteria (30 points) is focused on rural broadband implementation experience, and the second most important evaluation criteria (20 points) is focused on expertise in government funding. We see a disconnect between the project scope and the description of and weighting of evaluation points. Can you revise the evaluation criteria to align with the project scope elements, e.g., reassign those 50 points to emphasize experience gathering and reporting on broadband analysis, speed tests, cost survey, technology, broadband mapping applications, etc.?
 - a. The evaluation criteria and point values have been revised to provide clarification of needed qualifications. The new evaluation criteria table will be included in an addendum to this RFQ and will be posted on ATCOG’s website. Please note that ATCOG is looking for candidates that have experience in this type of project and knowledge of broadband development in rural areas, but not necessarily implementation of a broadband network. ATCOG would like to see candidates with experience working with government funding and public-private partnerships as this will be required to meet deliverables.

Evaluation Criteria	Possible Points
Advanced understanding and experience in this type of project as described in the scope of work as well as experience in adhering to a strict schedule	40
Relevant qualifications and experience in the Texas market	10
Experience working with United States Department of Agriculture, Texas Department of Agriculture, Economic Development Administration, and/or other government entities and with local providers	10
Demonstrated knowledge of broadband development in rural areas	20
Demonstrated expertise in government funding and in public-private partnerships.	20
Total Points	100

4. Can you confirm that all you are requiring for a compliant response are the six (6) elements listed on page 6 of the RFQ (also identified on page 12)? Specifically, you are

not requiring a work plan, methodology, or budget at this stage of the procurement, correct?

- a. Correct. The RFQ process is for selecting a candidate based solely on qualifications. All other project aspects will be discussed and included in a contract after the candidate is selected.
5. Can you confirm that Miller County, Arkansas is not part of the scope of this project? Miller County is not mentioned in the Target Area list on page 4.
 - a. Correct. Miller County is not part of the scope of this project.
 6. Have any of the parameters or schedule related to the RFP changed?
 - a. Evaluation Criteria has been modified and included in an addendum to this RFQ. Any changes as well as questions & answers are posted on the ATCOG website.
 7. Has ATCOG or any of its constituents already performed any research, assessments, or feasibility studies for broadband?
 - a. Not in the seven counties referenced in the RFQ. Research, assessments, and studies for broadband have been completed for Morris County with the Morris County Coalition and Bowie County with the Texarkana Regional Economic Development (AR-TX REDI).
 8. Does ATCOG or any of its constituents already created a formal advisory board to oversee any research or programs to support broadband?
 - a. Not in the seven counties referenced in the RFQ.
 9. Does ATCOG or any of its constituents already own or manage a GIS database? If so what data is available to respondents in that database?
 - a. ATCOG manages a GIS database, but the database does not include broadband data or any data related to this project.
 10. Would ATCOG or any of its constituents have interest in alternate proposals for a greater scope of work, which we reference as a Broadband Master Plan (by including the additional scope the project could be funded under ARPA grants)?
 - a. Yes, based on data outcome from this project and available grant funds.
 11. *Design a systematic and innovative survey methodology that will identify broadband deficits to the smallest detail within each census tract per county in the target area.*

Is ATCOG's expectation that the candidate will perform a community outreach going door to door to collect the data for the survey methodology or is ATCOG open to a digital outreach to achieve this objective?

- a. Digital outreach is acceptable.

12. *Collect and measure actual broadband speeds received at the household and business levels and compare it to advertised speeds.*

How will the actual broadband speeds be collected? If speed testing data is required, does ATCOG plan to purchase it or have the procured contractor procure it?

- a. ATCOG expects the procured contractor to collect the actual broadband speeds.

13. *Compile data on the cost paid by households and businesses for their internet packages.*

Will ATCOG assist with collecting the internet cost paid by households/businesses or will it be the sole responsibility of the candidate to compile this data?

- a. This would be the responsibility of the procured contractor to collect a viable sample of costs.

14. The RFP appears to envision that survey data collection should take place. Survey research can be done relatively cheaply by convenience sampling, or far more expensively by scientific sampling aimed at achieving statistical representativeness. Scientific sampling makes a survey qualified to serve as a basis for statistical claims about population behaviors and characteristics. Convenience sampling results in survey results that must be interpreted carefully to avoid overclaiming. Are we right in assuming that the budget and ambition of the project is more compatible with convenience sampling?

- a. ATCOG is not familiar with the details of either sampling process described. Rather than specifying a specific type of sampling, ATCOG states that the objective is to collect the actual broadband speeds available to be received at households and businesses. The method for collecting accurate data will be discussed before executing the contract for services.

15. The RFP draws a contrast between "actual speeds" and "advertised speeds" in a way that suggests speed test survey results would be truer indications of the inherent performance specifications of a network. However, there are many consumer side factors that can cause speed tests to misrepresent the capabilities of broadband infrastructure, including multi-device traffic, distance and barriers slowing a Wi-Fi signal, and consumer decisions to subscribe to slower packages to save money. What are ATCOG's thoughts about the accuracy and proper use of speed test data?

- a. The objective is to collect the actual broadband speeds available to be received at households and businesses as accurately as possible. The factors affecting broadband speeds should be taken into consideration when the candidate is choosing a data collection method as well as when compiling the comprehensive report.

16. For the scoring criterion 'Demonstrated knowledge of broadband development in rural areas with examples of successful rural networks that have been implemented,' do you have in mind that the Respondent should have physically constructed, owned and operated rural broadband networks, or rather that the Respondent should have participated in community planning efforts similar to this one which resulted in the construction of rural broadband networks?

- a. ATCOG is looking for candidates that have participated in community planning efforts similar to this one which resulted in the construction of rural broadband networks. ATCOG is looking for candidates that have experience in this type of project and knowledge of broadband development in rural areas, but not necessarily implementation of a broadband network.