

February 23, 2026
Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Solicitation Number: **RFP-2603**
ADDENDUM NO. 1
Clarification and Questions & Answers

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONSULTANTS FOR BEAD
BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (“Corporation”) seeks proposals from qualified firms to lead and coordinate the Environmental and Historic Preservation (“EHP”) compliance work, ensuring consistency, accuracy and adherence to EHP regulations, consistent with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s (“NTIA”) requirements for the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (“BEAD”) Program.

A. Clarification

Prospective Proposers and all concerned are hereby notified of the following change in the Request for Proposals document for the above-listed RFP. This change shall be incorporated in and shall become an integral part of the RFP documents.

- 1. Updated Task 2:** The following line in Task 2 of the Scope of Work is deleted: “Review of each Subgrantee project (*12 Projects – Appendix B*), identifying environmental review and permitting activities, dependencies, and deadlines” and replaced with: “Review of each Subgrantee project (*14 Projects – Appendix B*), identifying environmental review and permitting activities, dependencies, and deadlines.”

All other terms and conditions of the RFP shall remain in full force and effect.

B. Questions and Answers

Question #1: Is there a required pricing form for the response?

Answer #1: No. Proposers should follow the instructions as outlined in the Budget Section of RFP-2603. Please note: the Corporation will be evaluating the reasonableness of each applicant’s proposed budget.

Question #2: Could you clarify the expectations for client references – specifically, how many are needed and what contact details should be included?

Answer #2: The Corporation does not have a specific number of required references. The reference details should provide adequate evidence to support the Proposer’s capabilities and performance.

Question #3: Do you have a project location (city/state)?

Answer #3: This RFP is for the State of Rhode Island; a full list of Project Areas (“PAs”) with number of broadband serviceable locations (“BSLs”) is included in RFP-2603 under Appendix B.

Question #4: Is there an established budget for this RFP and if so, what is the amount?

Answer #4: See answer to Q1.

Question #5: Is there an anticipated estimate on the hourly effort for these services in order to provide a fee proposal?

Answer #5: Proposers should determine anticipated level of effort.

Question #6: Can you clarify projects? Exhibit B shows 15; under Specific Tasks – Task 2 states 12 projects.

Answer #6: There are 14 Project Areas; Exhibit B is accurate. *Please note, there is no PA-4.* The Selected Proposer will advise the Corporation in determining the appropriate size of projects given NTIA’s Environmental Screening and Permitting Tracking tool for purposes of environmental review.

Question #7: Is it the intent that the Environmental Consultant will not only provide oversight services but will be expected to prepare EHP documentation that is typically provided by the subgrantees?

Answer #7: The selected Proposer is expected to complete certain EHP documentation for the Corporation. Subgrantees of the Corporation are responsible for the required EHP documentation. However, it is anticipated that the selected Proposer will provide direct support to the subgrantees, as needed.

Question #8: Are respondents allowed to identify items in their response that are confidential.

Answer #8: Yes, Proposers should clearly indicate which elements of their RFP responses are confidential.

Question #9: Is BEAD compliance work being performed internally or is the Corporation utilizing a vendor.

Answer #9: The Corporation is utilizing a combination of external and internal resources for its compliance work.

Question #10: Can it be clarified the expected division of responsibilities between the Consultant, the Corporation and BEAD subgrantees for preparation, review, and submission of NEPA/EHP documentation? Specifically, will subgrantees prepare initial documentation for Consultant review or is the Consultant expected to develop these materials directly?

Answer #10: Please see answer for Q7.

Question #11: Can the Corporation provide the existing PEIS applicability analysis and any supporting environmental or cultural resource datasets (e.g., GIS layers, prior screenings, protected species updates) that will be available to the Consultant at project start?

Answer #11: The Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) is a public resource that Selected Proposers are able to access at <https://www.rigis.org/>. Additional PEIS applicability analysis will be provided to the selected Proposer.

Question #12: What level of design maturity and project documentation will be available from subgrantees at the time of Subaward Agreement execution (e.g., route alignments, GIS shapefiles, construction methods, aerial vs. buried segments)?

Answer #12: The Corporation anticipates preliminary design information will be completed at the time of subaward agreement execution.

Question #13: Does the Corporation anticipate that most BEAD deployment projects will qualify for NTIA Categorical Exclusions, and has the State established any presumptive CE categories or precedents for broadband deployments in Rhode Island?

Answer #13: The Corporation has not established presumptive Categorical Exclusion categories; the Corporation anticipates some BEAD deployment projects will qualify for Categorical Exclusions.

Question #14: Can the Corporation clarify whether the Consultant is expected to enter all project information into ESAPTT directly, or oversee subgrantee entries? Additionally, will ESAPTT project structures and user access be established prior to contract start?

Answer #14: The selected Proposer is expected to enter all information directly into the ESAPTT. The Corporation requires signed subaward agreements prior to work commencing.

Question #15: Can the Corporation provide an estimate of the anticipated number or proportion of project areas expected to require archaeological monitoring, and whether Rhode Island maintains mapped archaeological sensitivity zones or burial site buffers applicable to BEAD projects?

Answer #15: No. However, the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) is a public resource that Selected Proposers are able to access at <https://www.rigis.org/>.

Question #16: What authority does the Corporation have to implement statewide permitting streamlining measures or coordinate with local permitting authorities, and are any broadband-specific permitting initiatives or working groups already established in Rhode Island?

Answer #16: The Corporation's Director of Broadband Strategy is appointed by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation as its broadband utility coordinator, within the context of the Federal Highway Administration's Broadband Infrastructure Deployment rule 23 CFR 645.307(a). This allows the Corporation to convene local and state organizations to increase coordination and communication of broadband infrastructure projects. There are not currently any broadband-specific permitting initiatives or working groups established in Rhode Island.

Question #17: Can the Corporation clarify the anticipated level of effort and duration for construction monitoring support (e.g., desktop compliance review vs. field monitoring), and whether this optional task is expected to be exercised via contract extension or task order?

Answer #17: At this time, the Corporation anticipates that this component of the project would be exercised via a contract extension, if determined to be needed and appropriate.

Question #18: Task 8 indicates that it is optional. Are responses required to address Task 8?

Answer #18: No.

Question #19: Will complete subgrantee project documentation be available at Subaward execution to support development of the required EHP schedule within 30 days, and does this schedule requirement apply to all 12 projects simultaneously?

Answer #19: The Corporation anticipates that the Selected Proposer will be contracted prior to subaward agreement execution and will support the subgrantees in completing the required project documentation in alignment with the NTIA schedule. This schedule requirement will apply to all NEPA Project Areas simultaneously. In addition, please see answers to Q6 and Q7.

Question #20: Can the Corporation clarify the Consultant's authority and communication protocol for subgrantee EHP compliance monitoring (e.g., direct interaction vs. Corporation-mediated), including who has authority to issue stop-work directives or require corrective actions?

Answer #20: The selected Proposer will work directly for the Corporation. Communication protocols will be designed and approved at the start of the project. The selected Proposer will be responsible for providing information with appropriate back-up documentation to determine if stop-work directives and corrective actions are required.

Question #21: There are several instances where the consultant is to assist the Corporation with monitoring subgrantees. Is this monitoring expected to be in-person or can it be accomplished remotely?

Answer #21: It is anticipated that the monitoring will be completed both in-person and remotely, as needed. In addition, certain in-person meetings may also be required.

Question #22: Can the Corporation clarify required formats and ownership expectations for ESAPTT data exports, GIS files, and EHP documentation deliverables, and whether the Corporation intends to maintain ESAPTT and EHP tracking processes after contract transition?

Answer #22: The Corporation will require all downloads and documents to be transmitted in a format that is accessible to and approved by the Corporation. All documents will be owned by the Corporation. The Corporation will follow NTIA ESAPTT and EHP tracking requirements upon contract completion.

Question #23: Does the Corporation anticipate a single prime Consultant with technical subcontractors or multiple awards by discipline or project area, and will Rhode Island-specific EHP experience be evaluated at the prime firm level or team level?

Answer #23: The Corporation will evaluate proposals based on the criteria in the RFP-2603 Evaluation Criteria.

***End of Addendum ***