



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP #: RFP-2603**

For: 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.

This document constitutes a Request for Proposal (“RFP”), in a competitive format, from qualified firms. This request is an offer by the Corporation to underwrite, in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP, the services proposed by the successful firm(s), by contract.

The respondents (“Proposers”) to this RFP shall provide a proposal, in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth herein, to provide the services to the Corporation that are described in the Scope of Work.

Important Links and Guides

The BEAD Program is governed by State and federal rules, statutes, and regulations. All work conducted under this agreement must be managed in accordance with all applicable rules, including but not limited to the U.S NTIA BEAD Program guidance and the subsequent BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice. The Corporation recommends reviewing these websites and documents before beginning a Proposal, as well as prior to submission as federal and/or state program guidance may be updated. The list below is provided for reference and is not exhaustive.

- [The State of Rhode Island General Laws](#)
- [Rhode Island Final Proposal](#)
 - [Rhode Island BEAD Environmental and Historic Preservation Documentation](#)
- [Infrastructure and Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, Division F, Title I, Section 60101, Public Law 117-58, 135 Stat. 429 \(November 15, 2021\) \(codified at 47 U.S.C. § 1701 et seq.\)](#)
- [NTIA Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program](#)
- [NTIA BEAD Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)
- [BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice](#)

- [NTIA BEAD Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)¹
- [BEAD Resource Index](#) (note: Permitting, EHP, and NEPA resources: Section 8.0)
- [Environmental & Historic Preservation Fact Sheet](#)
- [National Historic Preservation Act/Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#)
- [National Historic Preservation Act NTIA Section 106 Delegation Notice](#)
- [National Environmental Preservation Act](#)
- [Evaluating the First Responder Network Authority Programmatic Environment Impact Statement Section Relevant to Your State or Territory](#)
- [NEPA for BEAD Smart Start II: How to Approach and Implement BEAD Subgrant Permitting Conditions](#)
- [Dividing BEAD Subgrant Awards into Multiple ESAPTT NEPA Project Areas](#)
- [USFWS Section 7 “No Effect” List and Consultation Memo](#)
- [NEPA for BEAD FAQs](#)
- [Environmental Screening and Permitting Tracking Tool \(ESAPTT\) Overview and ESAPTT Demonstration](#)
- [ESAPTT Portal – User Guide](#)
- [Streamlined Environmental Review & Permitting for Broadband: A Roadmap](#)
- [First Responder Network Authority Regional Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements – East Region](#) (*Chapter 13: Rhode Island*)
- [Policy Memorandum from Bureau of Indian Affairs](#)
- [Bead Guidance on NEPA and NHPA for LEO Satellite Service](#)

Project Overview

Funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (H.R. 3684) and administered by the NTIA, the BEAD Program provides \$42.45 billion to expand high-speed internet access across the United States and its territories. The Corporation has been designated as Rhode Island’s administering agency of the BEAD Program and is responsible for the delivery, reporting, and compliance related to the \$108.7 million allocated through this Program. In addition, the Corporation will serve as joint lead agency with the NTIA in implementing NEPA requirements under 42 U.S.C § 4336a.

The Corporation has conducted a competitive bid process to award BEAD funds to qualified entities to deploy broadband infrastructure to unserved and underserved broadband serviceable locations (“BSLs”) in Rhode Island. *Appendix B provides a complete list of vendors and projects.* Before the start of broadband deployment work, the Corporation must ensure that the selected subgrantees and their project scopes meet all NEPA requirements. This RFP is to lead and coordinate the Corporation’s BEAD EHP compliance work, as detailed below, consistent with NTIA’s BEAD requirements.

Background

The Corporation works with public, private, and non-profit partners to create conditions for businesses in all sectors to thrive and to improve the quality of life for the State’s residents by promoting Rhode Island’s long-term economic health and prosperity. ConnectRI, the Corporation’s broadband effort, has the following goal, as written in the Broadband Strategic Plan approved by the State’s Broadband Advisory Council:

¹ NTIA updates the FAQs, as it deems appropriate and necessary.

Leverage a best-in-class, resilient, sustainable, and scalable broadband infrastructure to propel the state's 21st century economics, education, healthcare, civic and social engagement, and quality of life, by ensuring all Rhode Islanders have access to affordable, high-speed internet in their homes, at their places of employment, and at public facilities by 2027.

Rhode Island has the opportunity to capitalize on its small geographic size, population density, flat terrain, and middle-mile fiber infrastructure to expand broadband access to its residences and businesses. This contracted work will support this goal by ensuring all infrastructure deployments adhere to federal and state EHP requirements.

As the primary administering agency for BEAD, the Corporation will serve as joint lead agency alongside NTIA to meet National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) obligations. The Corporation is responsible for the following:

- Obtaining specialized environmental and historic preservation (“EHP”) expertise
- Developing a schedule for environmental review and permitting
- Supervising or preparing NEPA documents, reviewing all drafts, and verifying they meet the requirements of NEPA prior to transmittal to NTIA
- Ensuring that project implementation (site preparation, demolition, construction, ground disturbance, fixed installation, or any other project implementation activities) does not begin prior to NEPA completion
- Monitoring subgrantees to ensure they understand and comply with relevant environmental laws, including but not limited to NEPA.

NEPA requires that all projects funded under the BEAD program be analyzed for the potential environmental impacts before the start of infrastructure deployment.

The Corporation is seeking external expertise to fulfill its role and responsibilities at Joint Lead Agency with NTIA to ensure that BEAD subgrantees satisfy all NEPA and EHP obligations and requirements for BEAD-funded deployment projects and support related activities facilitate efficient and timely permitting of such projects.

Scope of Work

The Corporation is seeking a third-party environmental/historic preservation contractor firm or company (“Consultant”) to lead and coordinate the BEAD-required EHP compliance work, ensuring consistency, accuracy and adherence to EHP requirements, including, but not limited to, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. § 4321, et seq.) (“NEPA”), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. § 470, et seq.) (“NHPA”), Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. § 1521, et seq.) (“ESA”), Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1251, et seq.) (“CWA”), Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. § 7401, et seq.), Section 307 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. § 1451, et seq.), and all other applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations. The selected Consultant will guide the Corporation and subgrantees to ensure awareness of EHP requirements and ensure adherence of subgrantees’ project plans to these requirements.

Specific Tasks:

Task 1: Create a comprehensive EHP Compliance Plan, including project-based timeline of activities.

- Review BEAD requirements, including the template for the NEPA Project Milestone Schedule (*Smart Start Part II: How to Approach and Implement BEAD Subgrant Permitting Conditions*), in alignment with EHP regulations, practices, and policies and create a timeline of BEAD-required EHP deliverables that ensures compliance with NEPA/NHPA and the timely completion of environmental and historic preservation review for all BEAD-funded activities, utilizing NTIA tools and templates, as applicable.
- Apply expert knowledge to implement the State’s use of the NTIA Environmental Screening and Permitting Tracking Tool (“ESAPTT”), which serves as the central system for creating and managing NEPA project records.
- Conduct a review and assessment of the FirstNet Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network Regional Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Volume 11- Chapter 13 (“PEIS”), dated 2017, to assess the sufficiency and applicability of the PEIS to BEAD-funded activities. *Note: The Corporation has done an initial analysis of the PEIS, which will be shared with the successful proposer for review and integration.*
 - Identify any updated RI regulatory changes and/or protected species since PEIS publication and evaluate and make recommendations on their need for inclusion.
 - Provide recommendations for additional analysis and next steps to address identified gaps or deficiencies.
 - If, upon review, the PEIS is sufficient, the successful Proposer must prepare documentation related to this evaluation for NTIA submission. If insufficient, a supplemental Environmental Assessment (“EA”) or Environmental Impact Statement will need to be submitted. All documentation must be submitted through the ESAPTT, as outlined in the NTIA requirements.

Task 2: Supporting Sub-Grantee Planning and Milestones

- Review of each Subgrantee project (*12 Projects – Appendix B*), identifying environmental review and permitting activities, dependencies, and deadlines. *A draft schedule incorporating all of these requirements must be completed and submitted to NTIA within 30 days of Subaward Agreement execution (anticipated signing June 1, 2026).*
 - Review and support the development of BEAD subgrantees’ project plans and designs to identify potential environmental and cultural resource impacts and provide recommendations for minimizing or mitigating those impacts, including but not limited to timeline of EHP review and permitting processes.
 - Obtain a full knowledge and understanding of the NTIA-approved Categorical Exclusions (“CEs”) that support the streamlining of environmental permitting review.
 - Determine the applicability of CE’s, consistent with federal regulations and assess and document potential next steps.

- Ensure that all EHP requirements are addressed, support is provided to subgrantees, and all activities are appropriately documented in the Subaward Agreements, prior to execution.
- Supervise the preparation of required EHP compliance documents and, if needed, directly assist in the preparation of such documents. The successful Proposer must certify to the accuracy of compliance documents submitted to the NTIA.
- Assist the Corporation with monitoring activities to ensure that each Subgrantee does not commence project implementation activities (site preparation, demolition, construction, ground disturbance, or any other project implementation activities) prior to completion of the following, and notify the Corporation if potential noncompliance is identified:
 - The completion of any review required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq.) (NEPA), and issuance by NTIA and the Grantee, as required, of a Categorical Exclusion (Cat Ex) determination, Record of Environmental Consideration (REC), Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), or Record of Decision (ROD) (hereinafter “decision documents”) that meets the requirements of NEPA;
 - The completion of reviews required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (54 U.S.C. 300101, et seq.) (NHPA), including any consultations required by Federal law, to include consultations with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and Federally recognized Native American tribes;
 - The completion of consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), as applicable, under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531, et seq.), and/or consultations with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251, et seq.), as applicable; and
 - Demonstration of compliance with all other applicable Federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations.
- Monitor NEPA Project Milestone Schedules to ensure timely completion of environmental reviews and alignment with project implementation timelines.
- Ensure the Corporation has knowledge and understanding of each Project’s EHP requirements to effectively transmit all required documentation to NTIA.

Task 3: Manage the Implementation of the NTIA’s Environmental Screening and Permitting Tracking Tool (“ESAPTT”) for Rhode Island

- Utilize the ESAPTT to obtain and track environmental screening approvals and ensure sub-recipient permitting compliance.
- Engage in an Environmental Screening Process to evaluate and recommend the appropriate level of NEPA review, which includes compiling and transmitting EHP documentation and relevant project information to NTIA through the ESAPTT. Specifically:
 - Upload project maps and descriptions utilizing information provided by each subgrantee.
 - Facilitate the tribal notification process, if applicable.
 - Complete Categorical Exclusion (“CE”) questionnaires. This will involve answering questions on each project’s scope to identify potentially applicable CEs; selecting the CE(s) that apply; and confirming that the project qualifies.

- Completing Extraordinary Circumstances (“EC”) questionnaires. This will involve identifying if environmentally sensitive resources (e.g., endangered species or historic properties) are present for each project; uploading documentation directly through ESAPTT; and indicating mitigation commitments to avoid potentially significant impacts.
- Utilize the ESAPTT to track and report to the Corporation on the progress of the permitting process of each Project.

Task 4: Provide Expert EHP Consultation Support

- Provide on-going technical support, analyses and recommendations to the Corporation team to ensure compliance with current and new local, state, and federal regulations and BEAD requirements. Applicable federal statutes, include:
 - National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Section 106
 - Endangered Species Act (ESA), Section 7
 - Clean Water Act (CWA)
 - Clean Air Act (CAA)
 - Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)
- Provide subject matter expertise and technical assistance on environmental and cultural resources issues related to broadband infrastructure deployment and adoption to the Corporation and BEAD Subgrantees. Specific tasks include:
 - Conducting reviews of draft Environmental Assessment (EA), Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and Categorical Exclusion (CE) documentation submitted by subgrantees for technical and legal sufficiency and to identify potential environmental impacts.
 - Providing support for engagement and/or consultation with relevant federal and state agencies, Tribal Nations (if applicable) and municipal governmental bodies.
 - Supporting the Corporation in identifying and escalating permitting challenges to NTIA and coordinating with federal, state, and local regulatory agencies as necessary to resolve issues.
 - Reviewing project plans and designs submitted by subgrantees to identify potential resources of concern and environmental and cultural resources impacts and provide recommendations for minimizing or mitigating those impacts.
- Provide Archeological Resource Monitoring support to the Corporation. Archeological resources include burial sites, human remains, and funerary objects that are subject to the requirements of all applicable Federal, Tribal, State, and local laws and protocols, such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (“NAGPRA”), in addition to Section 106 of the NHPA, as applicable during the performance period. Specific responsibilities include:
 - Notifying NTIA of inadvertent discoveries and potential impacts to archeological resources and identifying and following all applicable laws or protocols.
 - Providing an archaeologist on the selected Consultant’s team who meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards. The archaeologist will monitor ground disturbance for BEAD-funded project activities proposed in the vicinity of the National Register of eligible archaeological sites and suspected or known burial sites.
 - If any potential archeological resources or buried human remains are discovered during construction, the Corporation is required to direct subgrantees to immediately stop work in that area, secure that area, and keep information about

the discovery confidential, except to notify NTIA and the interested State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, and potentially affected Tribes.

- Maintain an on-going review of BEAD EHP requirements, ensuring all new BEAD EHP guidance is evaluated and integrated into the Corporation's oversight activities.

Task 5: Supporting Permitting Streamlining Activities

- Advise the Corporation on procedures or best practices that would support broadband-related permit applications being promptly accepted, and requests are approved or denied in an expeditious manner. NTIA has established a goal of permitting requests being approved or denied within 90 days and has identified options that include:
 - Assisting state and local authorities in establishing a single, dedicated point of contact, which has knowledge of the application and review processes, for broadband-related permits.
 - Providing technical assistance to permitting agencies to ensure sufficient capacity (e.g., Master Agreement and Consultant Reimbursement Agreement templates, surge support for permit processing, etc.)
 - Providing deference to the construction techniques chosen by subgrantees (without seeking to influence those decisions), absent any identified safety concerns.
 - Maximizing streamlined processing through permitting by rule; batch processing of substantially similar permit requests; and waiving or expediting duplicative or burdensome broadband permitting requirements where possible.
- Advise the Corporation on state and local permitting-related costs for broadband deployments to ensure (1) permitting fees are a reasonable approximation of the state or local government's costs, (2) only objectively reasonable costs are factored into those fees, and (3) the fees are no higher than the fees charged to similarly situated competitors in similar situations.
- Assist the Corporation in establishing and conducting permitting working group meetings with relevant federal, state, local, and tribal authorities and representatives of impacted industries, including utility pole owners, railroads, communications providers and subgrantees. The selected Proposer will assist with the development of agendas, meeting materials and meeting summaries. The permitting working groups shall:
 - Meet as needed to identify and facilitate resolution of any delays or disputes related to deploying BEAD-funded facilities.
 - Collect complaints and supporting information from subgrantees that are not timely resolved through this process and escalate such complaints through the appropriate Permitting Roundtable or working group channels.
- Advise on and participate in necessary escalation procedures to resolve environmental review and/or permitting disputes and delays.

Task 6: Project Management

- Develop and submit weekly updates on contract activities and participate in weekly project meetings. Specifically, the selected Proposer shall:
 - Maintain, update, and track progress against the EHP Compliance Plan (*Task 1*)
 - Identify and recommend solutions to issues that require discussion and resolution
 - Proactively identify needs and next steps to ensure achievement of all compliance activities and timelines.

- Maintain accurate records of all environmental and historic preservation assessments, reviews, and approvals .

Task 7: Develop a Transition Document and Plan for Ongoing EHP Compliance

- Provide recommendations in written report form for on-going NTIA EHP Compliance
- Provide a file with all completed and approved EHP documents and a summary file for each Project Area.
- Ensure a seamless transition of documents, responsibilities, and knowledge that will enable the Corporation to continue EHP compliance, integrating the expertise that was gathered over the course of this contract.

Task 8: Construction Monitoring – Optional Ongoing Service

In addition to the one-year period of performance for Tasks 1-7, Proposers may propose an approach and estimated level of effort and budget to provide support to the Corporation to monitor BEAD-funded projects for compliance with requirements and obligations imposed on subgrantees through environmental and historic preservation permits issued for such projects after the initial period of performance. The approach should propose a cost-effective approach that minimizes, to the extent feasible, the need for field work by the Proposer’s personnel. The Proposer’s recommended approach should include support for the Corporation in fulfilling the requirement imposed by NTIA to monitor construction activities to identify any changes to the approved scope of BEAD-funded activities proposed after the completion of environmental and historic preservation review that has the potential for altering the nature or extent of environmental or historic preservation impacts. Any such changes must be brought to the attention of NTIA by the Corporation and will be reevaluated for compliance with applicable requirements.

Proposers may additionally propose an approach to provide archeological resource monitoring support to the Corporation on an ongoing basis.

Qualifications

Proposers responding to this RFP must meet the following requirements:

Required Qualifications

- Demonstrated knowledge, skills and experience with local, state, and federal EHP requirements.
- Ability to work with evolving federal funding requirements, with a focus on understanding and incorporating new guidance accurately and efficiently.
- Record of experience in providing similar services and EHP guarantees to other clients, particularly any broadband infrastructure or other linear facility projects.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Demonstrated familiarity with the NTIA BEAD program
- Experience working within the State of Rhode Island, with a demonstrated ability to partner with and support state agencies.

Project Timeline

February 13: RFP Posted
 February 18: Deadline for Submitting Questions

February 23:	Responses to Questions Posted
March 6:	Deadline for submissions
March 24:	Selected Proposer Notified
April 15:	Contracts signed with selected proposer
June 1:	Contracts signed with Subgrantees

All tasks must be completed in alignment with NTIA required timelines.

The successful Proposer(s) will enter into a contract for services with the Corporation. The duration of the initial contract between the Corporation and the successful Proposer is expected to begin upon the date of contract execution for a duration of 12 months. The Corporation reserves the right to extend the contract on an annual basis for up to four additional years from the date of execution, at its sole discretion.

Budget

Proposers to this RFP shall provide a proposed fee structure for providing services necessary to complete the proposed scope items. Proposers shall include a total, maximum price to accomplish the scope items incorporated in the proposal. Fee structure proposals shall include, but are not limited to costs for specific task items from the Scope of Work along with an estimate regarding the duration and number of hours to complete each task. Additionally, proposers shall provide a personnel schedule which includes job title and billing rate for any work which may be undertaken under this contract. Proposers shall also provide job titles and rates for any subcontractors that the respondent is including in this response. If the Proposer contemplates any purchases or pass-through charges during the engagement, any mark-up rate above actual cost shall be identified as a separate line item in the budget. The Corporation reserves the right to adjust both the budget and related services.

In addition to showing how you will meet the requirements outlined above, Proposers should also provide information regarding the following:

- **Research & Analytics:** Provide an overview of how you determine success. What are the analytic tools or services that you use, and what type of information will you be reporting back to the Corporation as it relates to meeting our objectives?
- **Travel and Administration:** The Proposer should estimate any travel costs expected to incur during contract period. Travel must be in line with budget submitted and approved by the Corporation and follow guidance from all relevant Federal and State statutes.

Criteria for Selection

The bidder with the highest score will be selected as per the Corporation's purchasing guidelines. The goal of this RFP is to select and enter into an Agreement with the Proposer that will provide the best value for the services to achieve the Corporation's goals.

Responsive proposals for this RFP will be evaluated according to the Evaluation Criteria outlined below. The bidder with the highest score will be selected as per the Corporation's purchasing guidelines.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

	Points
OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF COMPANY & DEMONSTRATED RESULTS Our evaluation will include an assessment of the history of your company, your experience as it relates to the requirements within this RFP, evidence of past performance, quality and relevance of past work, references, and related items.	30
QUALIFICATIONS OF PERSONNEL Our evaluation will include an assessment of the qualifications and experience of your managerial team, staff, subcontractors, and related items, as well as a review of the qualifications and commitments of staff that will be working on this project.	20
FAMILIARITY WITH RHODE ISLAND Our evaluation will include our assessment of your understanding of our organization and Rhode Island’s historic and environmental regulations and requirements and how you integrated this knowledge into your proposal.	20
STRATEGIC THINKING/PLANNING APPROACH Overall approach and strategy described/outlined in the proposal and firm capacity to perform the engagement within the specified timeframe (prior experience of the firm in meeting timelines will be factored in here)	10
BUDGET APPROACH/COST EFFECTIVENESS Effective and efficient delivery of quality services is demonstrated in relation to the budget allocation.	20
Total	100
MBE/WBE/DisBE Participation (additional potential points)	6 pts

***NOTE:** Designated Corporation staff or selected advisors will evaluate the written proposals. The Corporation may at any time during the evaluation process seek clarification from Proposers regarding any information contained within their proposal. Final scores for each respondent will reflect a consensus of the evaluations. Any attempt by a Proposer to contact a member of Corporation staff or selected advisors outside the RFP process, in an attempt to gain knowledge or an advantage, may result in disqualification of Proposer.*

1. ISBE Participation Evaluation (see below for scoring)

a. The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation encourages MBE/WBE/DisBE participation in this Request. In accordance with Title 37, Chapter 14.1, and Title 37, Chapter 2.2 of the Rhode Island General laws, the Corporation reserves the right to apply additional consideration to MBE/WBE/DisBE up to six (6) additional points in the scoring evaluation as provided below:

b. Calculation of ISBE Participation Rate

i. ISBE Participation Rate for Non-ISBE Vendors. The ISBE participation rate for non ISBE vendors shall be expressed as a percentage and shall be calculated by dividing the amount of non-ISBE vendor's total contract price that will be subcontracted to ISBEs by the non-ISBE vendor's total contract price. For example, if the non-ISBE's total contract price is \$100,000.00 and it subcontracts a total of \$12,000.00 to ISBEs, the non-ISBE's ISBE participation rate would be 12%.

ii. ISBE Participation Rate for ISBE Vendors. The ISBE participation rate for ISBE vendors shall be expressed as a percentage and shall be calculated by dividing the amount of the ISBE vendor's total contract price that will be subcontracted to ISBEs and the amount that will be self-performed by the ISBE vendor by the ISBE vendor's total contract price. For example, if the ISBE vendor's total contract price is \$100,000.00 and it subcontracts a total of \$12,000.00 to ISBEs and will perform a total of \$8,000.00 of the work itself, the ISBE vendor's ISBE participation rate would be 20%.

c. Points for ISBE Participation Rate:

i. The vendor with the highest ISBE participation rate shall receive the maximum ISBE participation points. All other vendors shall receive ISBE participation points by applying the following formula:

$$(\text{Vendor's ISBE participation rate} \div \text{Highest ISBE participation rate} \times \text{Maximum ISBE participation points})$$

For example, assuming the weight given by the RFP to ISBE participation is 6 points, if Vendor A has the highest ISBE participation rate at 20% and Vendor B's ISBE participation rate is 12%, Vendor A will receive the maximum 6 points and Vendor B will receive $(12\% \div 20\%) \times 6$ which equals 3.6 points.

See Appendix A for information and the MBE, WBE, and/or Disability Business Enterprise Participation Plan form(s). Bidders are required to complete, sign and submit these forms with their overall proposal. Please complete separate forms for each MBE, WBE and/or Disability Business Enterprise subcontractor/supplier to be utilized on the solicitation.

Instructions and Notifications to Proposers

1. Potential proposers are advised to review all sections of this RFP carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.
2. Alternative approaches and/or methodologies to accomplish the desired or intended results of this procurement are solicited. However, proposals that depart from or materially alter the terms, requirements, or scope of work defined by this RFP will be rejected as being non-responsive.
3. All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this RFP, or to provide oral or written clarification of its content, shall be borne by the proposer. The Corporation assumes no responsibility for such costs.
4. Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than 120 days following the date set for submission of proposals.
5. All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein.
6. Proposals that are submitted late, misdirected or sent to the wrong email address will not be accepted.
7. All proposals should identify the proposed team of professionals, including those employed by subcontractors, if any, along with respective areas of expertise and relevant credentials. Proposer should also provide a delineation of the portion of the scope of work for which each of these professionals will be responsible.
8. All proposals should include the proposer's FEIN or Social Security number as evidenced by a W9, downloadable from <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>.
9. All proposals should include a completed RFP Response Certification Cover Form, included in this document and available here:
https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/rhodeisland/RFP_RESPONSE_CERTIFICATION_COVER_FORM_88d2b6a2-2798-4d0f-81b8-cedbe5692088.pdf
10. The purchase of services under an award made pursuant to this RFP will be contingent on the availability of funds and made at the discretion of the Corporation.
11. Awarding this RFP is based on the Evaluation Criteria set forth in this RFP. Vendors are advised, however, that all materials and ideas submitted as part of this proposal and during the performance of any award shall be the property of and owned by the Corporation, which may use any such materials and ideas.

12. Interested parties are instructed to peruse the Corporation's website (www.commerceri.com) on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP. Addenda will also be posted to the Rhode Island State Division of Purchases' website at www.ridop.ri.gov.
13. Equal Employment Opportunity (R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-5.1-1, et seq.) – § 28-5.1-1 Declaration of policy – (a) Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island state government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards and authorities, and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employment. This policy applies to all areas where State dollars are spent, in employment, public services, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation.
14. In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.2 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no corporation organized under the laws of another state or country shall have the right to transact business in Rhode Island until it shall have procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040). This is a requirement only of the successful bidder.
15. The proposer should be aware of the State's Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) requirements, which address the State's goal of fifteen percent (15%) participation by MBE's in all procurements, including a minimum of 7.5% participation by minority business enterprises owned and controlled by a minority owner, as defined in § 37-14.1-3, and a minimum of 7.5% participation by minority business enterprises owned and controlled by a woman. For further information, visit the website www.mbe.ri.gov.
16. The Corporation reserves the right to award to one or more Proposers.

Proposal Requirements

In order to be considered responsive, proposals must at a minimum contain the following:

Technical Proposal Elements

1. Description of the proposed approach and work plan. Activities and timelines should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-oriented. Include a timeline of major tasks and milestones.
2. Person who will be the primary point of contact with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation.
3. Qualifications of the Proposer to provide the requested services including capability, capacity, similarly complex projects and related experience and client references. Certification of availability of individuals in proposal.
4. A listing of the staff to be assigned to this engagement and their respective qualifications, past experience on engagements of this scope including resumes, and their role in those past engagements.

5. A description of the outcome monitoring and evaluation plan including a list of tools to track process, output and outcome measures for each component of the application.

Proposal Submission

Responses to this RFP must be received as follows: one (1) electronic (PDF) version must be provided by email to RFP@commerceri.com by **11:59 pm on March 6, 2026**. Submissions that are late, misdirected or sent to the wrong email address will not be accepted. **Note: To ensure transparency, no phone calls pertaining to this RFP will be accepted.**

Questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFP should be directed by e-mail to RFP@commerceri.com no later than 11:59 pm on **February 18, 2026**. Responses to questions, interpretations, or clarifications concerning this RFP will be posted online via addendum at www.commerceri.com and www.ridop.ri.gov on **February 23, 2026**, to ensure equal awareness of important facts and details.

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation reserves the right to terminate this solicitation prior to entering into any agreement with any qualified firm pursuant to this Request for Proposal, and by responding hereto, no firms are vested with any rights in any way whatsoever.

Rhode Island Commerce Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for not complying with the terms of this RFP.

APPENDIX A
**PROPOSER ISBE RESPONSIBILITIES AND MBE, WBE, AND/OR DISABILITY
BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PARTICIPATION FORM**

A. Proposer's ISBE Responsibilities (from 150-RICR-90-10-1.7.E)

1. Proposal of ISBE Participation Rate. Unless otherwise indicated in the RFP, a Proposer must submit its proposed ISBE Participation Rate in a sealed envelope or via sealed electronic submission at the time it submits its proposed total contract price. The Proposer shall be responsible for completing and submitting all standard forms adopted pursuant to 105-RICR-90-10-1.9 and submitting all substantiating documentation as reasonably requested by either the Using Agency's MBE/WBE Coordinator, Division, ODEO, or Governor's Commission on Disabilities including but not limited to the names and contact information of all proposed subcontractors and the dollar amounts that correspond with each proposed subcontract.
2. Failure to Submit ISBE Participation Rate. Any Proposer that fails to submit a proposed ISBE Participation Rate or any requested substantiating documentation in a timely manner shall receive zero (0) ISBE participation points.
3. Execution of Proposed ISBE Participation Rate. Proposers shall be evaluated and scored based on the amounts and rates submitted in their proposals. If awarded the contract, Proposers shall be required to achieve their proposed ISBE Participation Rates. During the life of the contract, the Proposer shall be responsible for submitting all substantiating documentation as reasonably requested by the Using Agency's MBE/WBE Coordinator, Division, ODEO, or Governor's Commission on Disabilities including but not limited to copies of purchase orders, subcontracts, and cancelled checks.
4. Change Orders. If during the life of the contract, a change order is issued by the Division, the Proposer shall notify the ODEO of the change as soon as reasonably possible. Proposers are required to achieve their proposed ISBE Participation Rates on any change order amounts.
5. Notice of Change to Proposed ISBE Participation Rate. If during the life of the contract, the Proposer becomes aware that it will be unable to achieve its proposed ISBE Participation Rate, it must notify the Division and ODEO as soon as reasonably possible. The Division, in consultation with ODEO and Governor's Commission on Disabilities, and the Proposer may agree to a modified ISBE Participation Rate provided that the change in circumstances was beyond the control of the Proposer or the direct result of an unanticipated reduction in the overall total project cost.

B. MBE, WBE, AND/OR Disability Business Enterprise Participation Plan Form:

Attached is the MBE, WBE, and/or Disability Business Enterprise Participation Plan form. Bidders are required to complete, sign and submit with their overall proposal. Please complete separate forms for each MBE, WBE and/or Disability Business Enterprise subcontractor/supplier to be utilized on the solicitation.

MBE, WBE, and/or DISABILITY BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PARTICIPATION PLAN

Bidder's Name:

Bidder's Address:

Point of Contact:

Telephone:

Email:

Solicitation No.:

Project Name:

This form is intended to capture commitments between the prime contractor/vendor and MBE/WBE and/or Disability Business Enterprise subcontractors and suppliers, including a description of the work to be performed and the percentage of the work as submitted to the prime contractor/vendor. Please note that all MBE/WBE subcontractors/suppliers must be certified by the Office of Diversity, Equity and Opportunity MBE Compliance Office and all Disability Business Enterprises must be certified by the Governor's Commission on Disabilities at time of bid, and that MBE/WBE and Disability Business Enterprise subcontractors must self-perform 100% of the work or subcontract to another RI certified MBE in order to receive participation credit. Vendors may count 60% of expenditures for materials and supplies obtained from an MBE certified as a regular dealer/supplier, and 100% of such expenditures obtained from an MBE certified as a manufacturer. This form must be completed in its entirety and submitted at time of bid. **Please complete separate forms for each MBE/WBE or Disability Business Enterprise subcontractor/supplier to be utilized on the solicitation.**

Name of Subcontractor/Supplier:					
Type of RI Certification:	<input type="checkbox"/> MBE <input type="checkbox"/> WBE <input type="checkbox"/> Disability Business Enterprise				
Address:					
Point of Contact:					
Telephone:					
Email:					
Detailed Description of Work To Be Performed by Subcontractor or Materials to be Supplied by Supplier:					
Total Contract Value (\$):		Subcontract Value (\$):		ISBE Participation Rate (%):	
Anticipated Date of Performance:					

I certify under penalty of perjury that the forgoing statements are true and correct.

Prime Contractor/Vendor Signature	Title	Date

Subcontractor/Supplier Signature	Title	Date

APPENDIX B
Project Areas

Project Area	Vendor	Communities	#of BSIs	Technology
1	TruAccess	Glocester	59	CBRS
2	Verizon	Little Compton	552	fiber
3	Verizon	Middletown	143	fiber
5	TruAccess	Prudence Island	391	fiber/CBRS
6	SpaceX	Hog Island	112	satellite
7	Verizon	Warren	276	fiber
8	TruAccess	Foster	98	fiber/CBRS
9	TruAccess	North Providence & Smithfield	36	fiber
10	TruAccess	Warwick	32	fiber
11	TruAccess	East Greenwich & West Greenwich	98	fiber/CBRS
12	TruAccess	Charlestown	237	fiber
13	TruAccess	Narragansett	563	fiber/CBRS
14	TruAccess	Rockville & Hopkinton	23	fiber/CBRS
15	SpaceX	Narragansett (Island)	2	satellite

RFP/RFQ RESPONSE CERTIFICATION COVER FORM

Instruction: To fulfill your RFP/RFQ response, this form must be completed, printed, signed and included with your submission.

SECTION 1 - RESPONDENT INFORMATION

RFP/RFQ Number:

RFP/RFQ Title:

RFP/RFQ Respondent Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

Contact Name:

Contact Title:

Contact Email:

SECTION 2 —DISCLOSURES

RFP/RFQ Respondents must respond to every statement. RFP/RFQ Responses submitted without a complete response may be deemed nonresponsive.

Indicate "Y" (Yes) or "N" (No) for Disclosures 1-4, and if "Yes," provide details below

____ 1. State whether the Respondent, or any officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principal of the Respondent or any parent, subsidiary, or affiliate has been subject to suspension or debarment by any federal, state, or municipal governmental authority, or the subject of criminal prosecution, or convicted of a criminal offense within the previous 5 years. If "Yes," provide details below.

____ 2. State whether the Respondent, or any officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principal of the Respondent or any parent, subsidiary, or affiliate has had any contracts with a federal, state, or municipal governmental authority terminated for any reason within the previous 5 years. If "Yes," provide details below.

____ 3. State whether the Respondent, or any officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principal of the Respondent or any parent, subsidiary, or affiliate has been fined more than \$5000 for violation(s) of any Rhode Island environmental law(s) by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management within the previous 5 years. If "Yes," provide details below.

____ 4. State whether any officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principal of the Respondent is serving or has served within the past two calendar years as either an appointed or elected official of any state governmental authority or quasi-public corporation, including without limitation, any entity created as a legislative body or public or state agency by the general assembly or constitution of this state.

Disclosure details (continue on additional sheets if necessary):

SECTION 3 —OWNERSHIP DISCLOSURE

Respondents must provide all relevant information. Respondent proposals submitted without a complete response may be deemed nonresponsive.

If the Respondent is publicly held, the Respondent may provide owner information about only those stockholders, members, partners, or other owners that hold at least 10% of the record or beneficial equity interests of the Respondent; otherwise, complete ownership disclosure is required.

List each officer, director, manager, stockholder, member, partner, or other owner or principle of the Respondent, and each intermediate parent company and the ultimate parent company of the Respondent. For each individual, provide his or her name, business address, principal occupation, position with the Respondent, and the percentage of ownership, if any, he or she holds in the Respondent, and each intermediate parent company and the ultimate parent company of the Respondent.

SECTION 4 —CERTIFICATIONS

Respondents must respond to every statement. Responses submitted without a complete response may be deemed nonresponsive.

Indicate "Y" (Yes) or "N" (No), and if "No," provide details below.

THE RESPONDENT CERTIFIES THAT:

___ 1. The Respondent will immediately disclose, in writing, to the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation any potential conflict of interest which may occur during the term of any contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation.

___ 2. The Respondent possesses all licenses and anyone who will perform any work will possess all licenses required by applicable federal, state, and local law necessary to perform the requirements of any contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation and will maintain all required licenses during the term of any contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation. In the event that any required license shall lapse or be restricted or suspended, the Respondent shall immediately notify the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation in writing.

___ 3. The Respondent will maintain all required insurance during the term of any contract pursuant to this solicitation. In the event that any required insurance shall lapse or be canceled, the Respondent will immediately notify the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation in writing.

___ 4. The Respondent understands that falsification of any information in its RFP/RFQ response or failure to notify the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation of any changes in any disclosures or certifications in this Respondent Certification may be grounds for suspension, debarment, and/or prosecution for fraud.

___ 5. The Respondent has not paid and will not pay any bonus, commission, fee, gratuity, or other remuneration to any employee or official of the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation or the State of Rhode Island or any subdivision of the State of Rhode Island or other governmental authority for the purpose of obtaining an award of a contract pursuant to this solicitation. The Respondent further certifies that no bonus, commission, fee, gratuity, or other remuneration has been or will be received from any third party or paid to any third party contingent on the award of a contract pursuant to this solicitation.

___ 6. This RFP/RFQ response is not a collusive RFP/RFQ response. Neither the Respondent, nor any of its owners, stockholders, members, partners, principals, directors, managers, officers, employees, or agents has in any way colluded, conspired, or agreed, directly or indirectly, with any other Respondent or person to submit a collusive response to the solicitation or to refrain from submitting response to the solicitation, or has in any manner, directly or indirectly, sought by agreement or collusion or other communication with any other Respondent or person to fix the price or prices in the response or the response of any other Respondent, or to fix any overhead, profit, or cost component of the price in the response or the response of any other Respondent, or to secure through any collusion, conspiracy, or unlawful agreement any advantage against the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation or the State of Rhode Island or any person with an interest in the contract awarded pursuant to this solicitation. The price in the response is fair and proper and is not tainted by any collusion, conspiracy, or unlawful agreement on the part of the Respondent, its owners, stockholders, members, partners, principals, directors, managers, officers, employees, or agents.

___ 7. The Respondent: (i) is not identified on the General Treasurer's list created pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 37-2.5-3 as a person or entity engaging in investment activities in Iran described in § 37-2.5-2(b); and (ii) is not engaging in any such investment activities in Iran.

___ 8. The Respondent will comply with all of the laws that are incorporated into and/or applicable to any contract with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation.

Certification details (continue on additional sheet if necessary):

Submission by the Respondent of a response pursuant to this solicitation constitutes an offer to contract with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation on the terms and conditions contained in this solicitation and the response. The Respondent certifies that: (1) the Respondent has reviewed this solicitation and agrees to comply with its terms and conditions; (2) the response is based on this solicitation; and (3) the information submitted in the response (including this Respondent Certification Cover Form) is accurate and complete. The Respondent acknowledges that the terms and conditions of this solicitation and the response will be incorporated into any contract awarded to the Respondent pursuant to this solicitation and the response. The person signing below represents, under penalty of perjury, that he or she is fully informed regarding the preparation and contents of this response and has been duly authorized to execute and submit this response on behalf of the Respondent.

RESPONDENT

Date: _____

Name of Respondent

Signature in ink

Printed name and title of person signing on behalf of Respondent