

May 27, 2026
Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Solicitation Number: **RFP-2611**
ADDENDUM NO. 2
Questions & Answers

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
TECHNICAL COMPLIANCE CONSULTANT FOR BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE
DEPLOYMENT PROJECTS

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation ("Corporation") seeks bids for a consultant to lead, coordinate, and implement the Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Technical Compliance consistent with the U.S. Department of Treasury's ("Treasury") Capital Projects Funds ("CPF") Program and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's ("NTIA") Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment ("BEAD") program.

Question #1: Is the \$230k an annual budget or total for the contract?

Answer #1: The Corporation anticipated \$30,000 for final CPF network certifications and \$200,000 total for BEAD network design and review. Proposers may respond with budgets that reflect level of anticipated work and cost. The Corporation reserves the right to amend the budget for this RFP at any time.

Question #2: The RFP requests a "total, maximum price" and hourly billing rates by title. Will RI Commerce accept a fixed-fee proposal, or must pricing be structured as time-and-materials against the provided rate schedule? Can subconsultants contract on a fixed-fee basis?

Answer #2: A deliverables-based fixed-fee structure is acceptable.

Question #3: The RFP instructs proposers to submit the ISBE Participation Rate "in a sealed envelope or via sealed electronic submission," but the proposal instructions say to submit a single PDF by email. The Response Certification Form also requires wet signature. Please confirm whether responses must be physical copies or if electronic submittal is acceptable.

Answer #3: Electronic submittable is acceptable.

Question #4: Can RI Commerce provide the current completion status of each of the 12 CPF Project Areas? Knowing which PAs are already in construction vs. design phase would allow proposers to accurately scope Task 1 effort and hours.

Answer #4: All CPF projects are in some stage of construction. More information can be found at <https://pandemicrecovery.ri.gov/Broadband>.

Question #5: The RFP requires on-site field visits for all 26 BEAD and CPF Project Areas. Will the Corporation consider proposals from firms that perform desktop compliance reviews, network design analysis, and speed test certification in-house, while utilizing a qualified subcontractor for physical site inspections? Or does the Corporation expect all scope items to be performed by a single firm's direct employees?

Answer #5: Qualified subcontractors are acceptable.

Question #6: For Task 1, the RFP references certification of 'optical power level of all PA network segments.' Can the Corporation clarify whether this certification is expected to be performed through physical OTDR testing on-site, or whether review and validation of subgrantee-submitted OTDR documentation constitutes sufficient compliance?

Answer #6: Either approach is acceptable. However, per Task 2B of the CPF subaward agreements, subawardees must perform speed tests demonstrating broadband services with 100 Mbps download, 100 Mbps upload (with ability to scale to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload), and latency less than 100 milliseconds. See the answer to Question #21 for more information.

Question #7: The RFP asks proposers to describe analytic tools and reporting capabilities. Will the evaluation committee consider proposals that include a purpose-built broadband compliance platform covering speed test validation, subgrantee documentation workflows, and audit-ready record keeping as part of the monitoring program delivery? Or is the Corporation expecting consultant services only, without a technology component?

Answer #7: Technology components are acceptable.

Question #8: Given that the BEAD program requires multi-year oversight and the CPF deadline is December 31, 2026, does the Corporation anticipate the need for continued compliance support beyond initial project certifications? And will the selected firm have the opportunity to support ongoing NTIA reporting obligations?

Answer #8: CPF oversight will conclude after the December 31, 2026 deadline, or after June 30, 2027, if a CPF program extension is submitted by the Corporation and approved by US Treasury. The Corporation anticipates continued compliance support for the BEAD program at the time of project certification and network certification. Proposers may propose additional support for the BEAD program related to technical network requirements.

Question #9: Will the Corporation provide a list of currently RI-certified MBE/WBE/DisBE firms with broadband infrastructure or telecommunications engineering credentials to facilitate ISBE participation planning?

Answer #9: A directory of all MBE/WBE/DisBE firms registered in Rhode Island is available here: <https://dedi.ri.gov/division-units/minority-business-enterprise-compliance-office/directory-search>.

Question #10: To confirm our pricing approach: We read the budget guidance as \$30,000 for Task 1 representing a one-time, fixed budget covering CPF compliance certification through CPF substantial completion (Dec 31, 2026), and \$200,000 for Tasks 2–4 representing an annual budget across the

approximately four-year BEAD build-out period. Please confirm this interpretation, or clarify the intended budget structure if different.

Answer #10: See answer to Question #1.

Question #11: The primary objective of the requested work involves verifying that the awarded entities have satisfactorily completed projects as agreed and on time. As a technical consultant the technical verification of satisfaction of the requirements is clear. However, several documents are referenced that do not appear to be technical (As an example, "The State of Rhode Island General Laws"). As a Technical Compliance Consultant, are we expected to verify compliance with state laws and other procedures? If so, which ones?

Answer #11: All Corporation vendors are required to comply with the laws of the State of Rhode Island and all other applicable laws and regulations.

Question #12: Grantees have obviously been awarded contracts after satisfying the requirements for the design of proposed networks. This required review of a professional engineer and additional review by the professionals reviewing the proposals. Is there additional design review by us required? Would that design review need to be done by a professional engineer licensed in Rhode Island?

Answer #12: There is no additional design review that needs to be completed for CPF. Low-level designs have not been finalized for BEAD.

Question #13: Task 1, bullet 2 says sub grantee attestations need to be reviewed and certified. Do you have any sample data that you want us to review?

Answer #13: The Corporation does not have sample data at this time.

Question #14: Task 1, bullet 3 requires certification of network capacity and a physical site visit. It seems that loading the network to capacity is impractical and disruptive to customers. Is verification of equipment models and specified capacity (and calculation to verify that requirements are met based on that calculation) sufficient? If not, what are the expectations?

Answer #14: This approach is acceptable. However, per Task 2B of the CPF subaward agreements, subawardees must perform speed tests demonstrating broadband services with 100 Mbps download, 100 Mbps upload (with ability to scale to 1 Gbps download and 1 Gbps upload), and latency less than 100 milliseconds. See the answer to Question #21 for more information.

Question #15: Task 1, bullet 4 discusses "validity of invoice requests." Can you be specific of our role in validating the invoices and how many such are planned per project?

Answer #15: The Corporation expects a spot audit of invoices to ensure that costs incurred for network deployment are technically reasonable (e.g., that coaxial cable was not purchased for an FTTP deployment).

Question #16: Task 2, bullet 4 specifies two mandatory site visits for each project area. Which sites are you expecting us to visit (e.g., cell tower, Cabinet, facility or customer premises)?

Answer #16: Site visits should be to the cabinet, facility, and/or general line depending on the planned network maps.

Question #17: Task 2, bullet 6 discusses the case when approval is not recommended. A time limit of 24 hours is specified for providing notice, rationale and proposed remediation steps. What is the reason for the 24 hour time limit?

Answer #17: The 24-hour requested time frame is negotiable.

Question #18: Task 3, bullet 3 requires advisory support as required and requested. Could you tell us the estimated number of hours required for this advisory support.

Answer #18: This will be on an as-needed basis based on hourly rate of Proposers.

Question #19: Clarification: The second column under "Budget" specifies a maximum budget of \$30,000 for task 1 and \$200,000 for tasks 2-4. Is the total budget \$230K or \$630K?

Answer #19: See answer to Question #1.

Question #20: Bullet 2 under "Budget" states that travel costs "must be in line with the budget." Does that mean the costs are to be covered by the budget specified in the previous question or that the travel costs are in addition to that budget number? If T&E is separate what percentage of the budget is allocated for T&E?

Answer #20: Travel costs must be included within the budget specified.

Question #21: Were there testing requirements included in the CPF agreements? If so, what were they?

Answer #21: Yes; see answer to Question #14. Further, 1 Gbps service is defined as up to 940/880 Mbps, with average speeds between 750-940 Mbps download and 750-880 Mbps upload. Testing will be performed against a sampling of the lesser of (i) 5% or (ii) 50 random active customers and will test performance from customer premise (Optical Network Terminal) to the network edge. Subrecipient Entity shall perform all speed and latency testing in accordance with the technical and operational requirements established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for the Connect America Fund program.

Question #22: Does the BEAD sub-recipient agreement include testing requirements? If so, what were they?

Answer #22: Yes, per Appendix C: Performance Milestones and Cost Match Requirements and the Appendix G: Project Monitoring, Reporting, Data Submission, and Inspection Requirements of the BEAD subaward agreement, subawardees must perform speed tests demonstrating broadband service that

delivers at least 100 Mbps download speed, 20 Mbps upload speed, and latency equal to or less than 100 milliseconds at completion of a Project.

Question #23: Is Rhode Island planning to ask Treasury for an extension for their CPF projects?

Answer #23: The Corporation anticipates requesting no more than one Project Area extension for CPF projects.

Question #24: Will the consultant be required to have a RI Telecommunications System Contractor License if their field personnel are only observing sub-recipient testing?

Answer #24: Proposers are not required to have a RI Telecommunications System Contractor License. However, Proposers should demonstrate capacity to accurately verify network build for compliance.

Question #25: Will the consultant's field personnel be required to have a RI Telecommunications License if they are only observing sub-recipient line testing?

Answer #25: See answer to Question #24.

***End of Addendum ***