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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# Request for Qualifications

Response to Questions for Broadband  
Deployment – Grant Management,  
Subgrantee Compliance and Monitoring

July 31, 2024 *(revised August 5, 2024)*

Statements of Qualifications are due **Wednesday, August 7, 2024, 1:00 P.M.**

*Q&A revised to add Section D.*

## SECTION A

1. Task 1 and Schedule of Events: The schedule of activities indicates a Final selection date of August 24, 2024 and the completion date for Task one completion for timely registration of potential subgrantees is September 1, 2024. This is a one-week turnaround time. Does the State DOT have an expected list of potential subgrantees?  
**State does not have an expected list of potential subgrantees. Per NBO's BEAD application, subgrantees will be selected via a process that will commence in approximately mid-September 2024. The deadline for Task 1 will be changed to November 1, 2024.**
2. Additionally, has the Letter of Intent and Request for Application already been developed?  
**Per NBO's BEAD application, the RFA (including the LOI requirements) is under development now and we plan to publish it in mid-September 2024.**
3. What is the expected number of BEAD programming sub-recipient?  
**Somewhere between 1 and 40.**
4. Re: Task 1c: States, "Process large and numerous documents in a variety of formats (e.g. hexagonal GIS files)." Do you have any sense of the average file size?  
**NBO anticipates that files may be 20MB or larger.**
5. Re: Qualifications, Knowledge, and Experience, States, "Furthermore, such tasks will be required to be signed off on by a Professional Engineer for Task 2, and by a NEPA certified individual for Task 3." The requirement states "such tasks" – not all of the task 2 items are engineering in nature, does all work in task 2 require PE sign off, or only those requiring engineering judgement?  
**If engineering judgment is not required for a particular task, another representative of the consultant may sign off.**
6. Re: Task 3 - NEPA and Section 106 Compliance and Monitoring: Can NBO expand or clarify tasks needed regarding Section 106 compliance support. Specifically, does NBO need qualified technical subject matter expert reviews of Section 106 materials provided by a subgrantee? Or, is the Section 106 support specific to assisting with and preparing Section 106 coordination with the SHPO and appropriate THPOs, and evaluating subgrantee compliance with the required Section 106 approval processes?  
**Section 106 compliance will not begin until after subgrants are in place, so the number of organizations subject to the rules will be limited. NBO will review Section**

**106/NEPA documentation before sending it to our federal funder, NTIA. Follow up will also be necessary to ensure continuing compliance.**

## **SECTION B**

1. With the task due date one week after selection, will NDOT consider extending the Task 1 deadline?  
**Yes, the deadline will be moved to November 1, 2024.**
2. If Task 1's deadline cannot be extended, would NDOT be open to alternative methods to ensure project build-time?  
**Task 1's deadline will be extended, but NBO may also be open to alternative methods depending on the details.**
3. Can you elaborate on the expectations of processing large and numerous documents in various formats?  
**Large documents may be up to 20MB. The volume of documents may be upwards of 100 per application, depending on how the applicants submit. As we move through quarterly reporting and annual monitoring, the volume of documents could reach 1,000 per project.**
4. What forms of data should be used when storing application materials for batch download? What is the exact nature of the downloaded materials, and how would the agency like to receive the data?  
**For example, data on a single application should be downloadable in the application format or as an individual Excel file. Batch downloads should be available for multiple or all applications in a single Excel file.**
5. Can you clarify what "process" means for the GIS data files? Do we need to read the data in the files and capture key fields, or upload and store the files and make them available for download?  
**NBO and subgrantee staff need to be able to access, examine, print, and download the files.**
6. How many subgrantees does NDOT envision monitoring on an annual basis?  
**We estimate monitoring up to 40 subgrantees per year.**
7. What is the budget for each task or the overall project?  
**To be negotiated after selection of consultant.**
8. Given the many variables related to the RFQ, can the consultant provide a fee estimate based on an annual hourly rate schedule to be further refined upon subsequent scope discussions with NDOT?  
**Respondents should not submit a fee estimate with their Statement of Qualifications. NBO will negotiate fees with the top candidate.**
9. Would you expect this work to be performed virtually or on-site? If on-site, what % of the time would you expect?  
**NBO has no preference. As long as communication is managed and work progresses, on-site vs virtual is negotiable.**

**SECTION C**

1. What type of certification is required for Transportation Planning, NEPA, Environmental Studies and CE&I? Will qualifications and experience in areas of discipline such as grant administration and telecommunications engineering & construction suffice?  
**Requirements for certification can be found in NDOT's Standard Work Categories document, linked [here](#). Grant administration is listed under the description for 102 Transportation Planning. Categories 110 NEPA and 150 CE&I are related primarily to transportation-related projects, however scoring of respondents to this RFQ will be based on the qualifications and experience pertaining to the scope of services outlined in the RFQ.**
2. Is there draft Request for Applications documentation that can be reviewed by bidders?  
**The RFA will be published in mid-September 2024. It cannot be released prior.**
3. Does NBO have an estimated range for how many Defined Project Areas (DPAs) will be created?  
**We anticipate about 80 DPAs.**
4. Does the scope include screening, curing and evaluating applications for the Letter of Intent (LOI) and Request for Application (RFA)?  
**No. Optimally, the software would support screening and evaluation of applications by NBO staff and other subject matter experts (SMEs). Alternately, we would upload completed assessments into the software, to ensure a single location for all project files.**
5. Does the scope include a pre-award risk assessment as part of the LOI process?  
**See answer to #4, above.**
6. Does the NBO have a GIS contractor in place for the scope of the RFQ? If not, does the scope include implementing GIS technology for analysis, grant optimization, tracking and reporting?  
**Yes, NBO has a GIS contractor.**
7. If there are no applications for a DPA, will NBO consider low earth orbiting satellite technology?  
**Please see the BEAD NOFO for details about allowable technology.**
8. Does the scope include determining the Extremely High Cost Threshold (EHCT)?  
**No. That is NBO's responsibility.**
9. Will the NBO require grant applicants to apply to 100% of all BSLs in a DPA?  
**Please review NBO's Initial Proposal Volume 2 (IPV2), available at [broadband.nebraska.gov](http://broadband.nebraska.gov).**
10. Does the scope include additional monitoring activities of subgrantees if NBO determines that the risk for a specific project has increased?  
**Yes. The pre-award risk assessment will help NBO to set initial monitoring plans, which will be updated at least annually.**
11. Will all subgrantee reporting be quarterly, as proposed in the draft IPV2, or twice yearly, the minimum specified in the NOFO?  
**Subgrantee reporting will be required quarterly for the duration of the project.**

12. Does NBO have reporting requirements in addition to the requirements of the BEAD Program criteria specified in the NOFO?  
**Please review NBO's Initial Proposal Volume 2 (IPV2), available at [broadband.nebraska.gov](http://broadband.nebraska.gov).**
13. Does the scope include at least once yearly site visits? If so, can site visits be consolidated for subgrantees with more than one project area? How many subgrantee applicants does NBO estimate for the NBEAD project (range)?  
**Yes, site visits will be completed at least once per year. Yes, site visits may be consolidated for subgrantees with multiple projects. We anticipate monitoring of up to 40 subgrantees.**
14. Does the scope include working with NBO to do targeted outreach to entice applicant interest, modifying DPA boundaries, creating additional financial incentives, preparing documentation for NTIA waiver for additional incentives, or applying matching funding sources from state and local entities, as specified in the IPV2?  
**No. Those activities are the responsibility of NBO.**
15. Does the scope of work include any outbound technical assistance, or inbound inquiries only?  
**There may be some outbound technical assistance, though the expectation is that it will be minimal.**
16. Will the vendor be able to craft data submission requirements for initial and subsequent data submission?  
**NBO will work with the vendor to determine optimal data submission requirements that meet the needs of NBO and are not overly burdensome for subgrantees or the vendor.**
17. What type of assistance with local and state permitting, as specified in Task 2 4.b. does the NBO envision? Could NBO provide examples?  
**Knowledge in this area is appreciated but not required.**
18. Will NBO consider working with a separate vendor for Task 3?  
**Respondent's team is expected to complete all services contemplated under this RFQ. Subconsulting work is allowed.**
19. What is the budget for the scope of work in the RFQ?  
**To be determined by this RFQ process.**
20. Is the term of the contract five years?  
**The initial plan is a 5-year project period. If that changes, NBO will communicate with the consultant in plenty of time to make adjustments.**
21. What tasks in Task 2 will a Professional Engineer need to sign off on? Will subgrantee applications require a Professional Engineer stamp as a submission requirement?  
**Submitted applications will include network designs, which will require sign off by a professional engineer, as will review of the actual build. A professional engineer will also need to sign off on the project closeout. Tasks that do not require professional engineering experience will not require a professional engineer stamp.**

22. Task 2.1.b requires review of invoices and seems to be related to the review of engineering designs in 2.1.a. Does this refer to review of the bills of materials related to proposed network designs or to ongoing review of project related expenses?  
**Consultants will be asked to offer opinions about the reasonableness of invoices related to work delivered in the reporting period/project progress to date.**
23. Task 2.3 in the scope of work mentions “on-call” status for monitoring subgrantee’s performance. What exactly is meant by “on-call”?  
**NBO may not need assistance with every report from every subgrantee, so these services would be used as needed.**

## SECTION D

1. For Task 1, is the NBO seeking only a portal to receive and securely store the Request for Application (RFA) and Letter of Intent (LOI)? Alternatively, will the NBO also seek a comprehensive grant management system with capabilities to track application status, store communication and correspondence, receive payment requests after milestones are met, integrate with Nebraska's payment system, export reports to meet NTIA standards, and maintain an audit trail for NTIA and Office of Inspector General (OIG) inspections? If a full GMS is required, would NBO allow for implementation to be developed in sprints?  
**NBO is seeking a comprehensive grants management system. Implementation could be developed in sprints, as long as everything integrates smoothly and meets project timelines.**
2. For Task 1.1 RFA, does the NBO already have a template designed for the request, or will the selected contractor need to design one?  
**NBO has developed the Request for Applications and related documents.**
3. For Task 1.3, will the technical assistance scope be solely focused on how to interact with the portal, or will it also include technical assistance regarding NTIA regulations and the Uniform Guidance?  
**Technical assistance from the contractor will be limited to interactions with the software.**
4. Task 2 appears to have subrecipient monitoring focused primarily on the engineering needs of the grant. However, it is silent on other aspects of subrecipient monitoring, such as NTIA pass-through entity requirements for reporting, conducting risk assessments, designing and reviewing financial and performance reports, and following up with audit deficiencies or other items as listed in 2 CFR 200.332. Will these additional monitoring responsibilities be included in the scope of Task 2 or will NBO perform these actions in house?  
**NBO will handle subgrantee monitoring aside from the engineering aspects in-house.**
5. Does NBO expect the contractor selected under this RFQ to review audited financial statements?  
**No. The contractor will not be responsible for reviewing audited financial statements.**
6. Will NDOT consider exceptions to the PSA or Insurance Requirements?  
**Insurance requirements may be negotiated with the selected consultant based on the nature of the services provided.**

7. Will the NDOT consider a limitation of liability for the chosen proposer?  
**See answer to #6, above.**

End