

Town of Jamestown, Rhode Island

93 Narragansett Ave – Jamestown, RI 02835

INVITATION TO BID



Feasibility Study for a Community Network

Proposed Bid Price:\$ _____

Bid Price in words: _____

The undersigned bidder hereby states that they have carefully examined this **INVITATION TO BID** and further agrees to the provisions, requirement, terms and conditions, all of which are acknowledged to be part of this **BID PROPOSAL**.

Name of Bidder: _____

Address of Bidder: _____

Authorized Signature _____ Date: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

**ALL BIDS DELIVERED TO: Town Finance Director's Office
93 Narragansett Avenue,
Jamestown, RI 02835**

Bids must be received in this form at this office until 11:00 am, **Thursday, January 6, 2022** where they will be publicly opened and read shortly after in the Conference Room at the Jamestown Town Hall located at 93 Narragansett Avenue, Jamestown, RI. Bid documents shall not be separated and are to be submitted in a sealed envelope or carton and clearly marked as: "**Feasibility Study for a Community Network**"

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted online at www.bidnet.com and prior to 4:30PM EST **Tuesday, January 4th, 2022**. All answers to questions for this RFP will be posted online and at the convenience of the Town.

1. Overview

The Town of Jamestown believes that a robust broadband infrastructure is critical to the livelihood and enjoyment of its citizens and to future growth of Town commerce. Along with many residents and businesses of Jamestown, the Town has concluded that the Town's broadband communications needs are inadequately served by existing providers. The Town wants to explore options for a community directed Town-wide network. This Request for Proposal (RFP) solicits bids for a Feasibility Study, which will make recommendations to the Town relating to the viability of a Town-owned broadband network and other considerations that include:

- Level of community support and estimated subscription rate
- Funding options for construction and operation
- Long term financial plan that ensures continuity and growth
- Physical network proposal and technical options
- Estimated costs of design plan and options
- Competition from other providers and technologies

The Town desires to start this study as soon as possible and for the study to be completed no later than **June 30, 2022**.

The Town is soliciting responses from qualified network consulting firms that have extensive experience working together with towns and cities on strategic network planning, financial analysis and community relations. The selected firm will be expected to interact with Town officials and interested residents while preparing its report and to provide detailed information specific to Jamestown as described in the Scope of Work (Appendix A.)

This RFP provides information and requirements for responses from interested firms (Respondents), as well as information and requirements for interviews, to which multiple qualifying Respondents may be invited.

2. Evaluation Process and Criteria

All Respondents shall submit their bid response using Appendix B (Submittal Requirements) as a template.

Responses will be evaluated on the degree to which they help the Town meet the specific requirements of this RFP. The Town will review and analyze each response, which must contain:

- Scope of services – Comprehensive descriptions of proposed services
- Expertise – Demonstrated competency for all required services

- Timeliness – Ability to begin work with the Town promptly and along with a reasonable schedule to complete deliverables
- Price – The cost of requested services and if needed, prices for optional tasks and deliverables

Proposals will be evaluated on the assumption that the RFP response offers the Respondent's most favorable terms to the Town. The Town expressly reserves the right to negotiate with any Respondent, using the Respondent's RFP response as a basis for obtaining a best and final offer prior to award. Award may not be based on the lowest bid, but on the Town's sole opinion of which proposal best meets all RFP requirements.

For this solicitation, the Town is declaring that time is of the essence. By submitting a response, the Respondent agrees to negotiate in good faith with the Town to complete and finalize a contract in a manner consistent with the Project's proposed milestone dates as defined in this RFP.

2.1 Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by the Town's evaluation committee review of each Respondent's proposals:

- Experience with identical or similar projects
- Expertise in identifying and defining requirements for a Town-owned network
- Ability to comply with the proposed project schedule
- Qualifications of Respondent's personnel proposed for this project
- Respondent's project management, resources and financial standing
- Proposed prices for services

2.2 Liability for Costs Incurred for Proposal Preparation

The Town is not, and shall not be, liable or responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by a Respondent firm for the investigation, preparation, submission and production of a proposal, for expenses for any retained consultants or for any work performed by the Respondent's firm prior to an award. All proposal costs and expenses are the sole responsibility of each Respondent.

2.3 Right of Evaluation and Selection

Upon completion of the Town's evaluation and review of all responses, the Town may choose to select a short list of Respondents to interview prior to the start of any

negotiations. If interviews are deemed unnecessary, the Town may select one or more of the highest-ranking Respondents to begin contract negotiations. If the Town cannot negotiate a contract successfully with the initial selected Respondent, the next highest-ranking Respondent will be contacted to begin contract negotiations.

The Town expressly reserves the right to:

- Conduct discussions with any or all Respondents regarding any content in their proposal
- Waive or decline to waive, any defect or non-compliant response in any proposal
- Cancel or amend this RFP or issue additional requests for proposals
- Request and receive presentations about proposals if the Town believes additional information is needed to support the selection of a Respondent
- Select one or more Respondent's proposals based solely on the Town's analysis and evaluation of all proposals
- Not select any proposal

The Respondent acknowledges, understands and agrees to be bound by the requirements set forth in this RFP and further agrees that it is compliant with all requirements. The Respondent additionally agrees that the Town shall not be liable, under any circumstances, for disclosure of any materials submitted by the Respondent for or in support of their pursuit of obtaining a contract for services as required under this RFP.

It is the policy of the Town that contracts are awarded only to responsive and responsible Respondents. To qualify as responsive, the Respondent must provide thorough and complete responses as required by this RFP. To qualify as responsible, the Respondent must prove it has all necessary experience, resources, organization, staffing and facilities as required by this RFP.

Any proposal determined to be non-responsive, including instructions governing the submission of proposals, will be disqualified without evaluation unless the Town determines that the noncompliance is in its best interest to request corrective action or to waive.

Unless otherwise specified in this RFP, all communications, responses, and documentation must be in English and all costs or figures be in U.S. currency.

Respondents are prohibited from communicating directly with any elected Town official, Town employee or Town contractor except as specified within this RFP and individually identified to Respondents during the proposal development, submittal and review processes.

A Respondent may withdraw its proposal prior to the RFP response deadline. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. Proposals will be opened and initially documented on or after the response deadline. Proposal reviews will begin at the convenience of the Town. All proposals received by the Town become the property of the Town on the date and time of this RFP deadline. All proposals that are the property of the Town may be released to the public in whole or in part as required under applicable laws, including the requirements of granting authorities, Freedom of Information Act and Rhode Island General Laws. Pricing and all other information that is an integral part of a proposal is not to be considered as or is to be marked confidential.

The proposal constitutes an offer by the Respondent to do business with the Town under the terms, conditions and pricing offered by the Respondent, and all proposal terms offered shall be irrevocable for ninety (90) days after the RFP response deadline.

The Town, at its sole discretion, may incorporate any portion of a Respondent's proposal, including all answers or other information provided by the Respondent during presentations or negotiations contained within that proposal into an agreement between the Respondent and the Town.

Any information provided to the Town prior to the date of issuance of this RFP, either verbally or in writing, shall not be binding upon the Town in any manner.

The Town reserves the right to use all concepts and any other information contained in any proposal to obtain the most beneficial and effective means to achieving the Town's goals and objectives for this project. Selection or rejection of any proposal shall not affect this right. At the Town's discretion, an award may be made to one or more Respondents that demonstrate the ability to deliver all or portions of this project's requirements in a timely and cost-effective manner.

On submission of their proposal, the Respondent attests to have read, understood and agreed to all requirements, terms and conditions of this RFP, including all attachments, exhibits, appendices and published addendum prior to this RFP response deadline.

Respondents must identify any conflict of interest that may arise from providing services to the Town. In addition, the Town reserves the right to:

- Disqualify a Respondent or reject any proposal at any time if a real or perceived legal or policy conflict of interest is presented;
- Require the Respondent to take any action or supply information necessary to remove any conflict; or
- Terminate any contract arising from this solicitation if any such relationship is

found to constitute or have potential to create a real or perceived conflict of interest that cannot be resolved to the Town's satisfaction

2.4 Response Requirements

A response will not be deemed received in full until the Town has received six (6) bound hard copies and one (1) electronic copy of a response. Hard copies shall be sent by regular mail, hand delivered or sent via commercial courier to the Town of Jamestown, 93 Narragansett Avenue, Jamestown, RI 02835. Faxed or telephone proposals will not be accepted. Additionally, an electronic copy of the response must be provided on a USB drive that is enclosed with the required hard copies. Respondents assume all risks for their selected method of delivery.

2.5 Questions Regarding RFP

All questions regarding this RFP must be submitted online at www.bidnet.com and prior to 4:30PM EST **Thursday, January 6, 2022**. All answers to questions for this RFP will be posted online at this site. Answers to questions will be at the convenience of the Town.

2.6 Availability of Proposals

Any information that the Respondent requires to be restricted under a non-disclosure agreement cannot be included in their proposal.

2.7 Timeline and Due Dates

Project Timeline – *all dates are subject to change at the Town's discretion.*

- 11/5/2021 – RFP Released
- 12/3/2021 – RFP Addendum Released
- 11/5/2021-1/4/2022 – Online RFP questions and answers
- 1/6/2022– RFP Due – 11:00AM EST
- 1/7/2022 – Begin Town reviews of responses
- 2/7/2022 – Estimated start of Finalist interviews
- 2/28/2022 – Estimated Respondent Selection
- 3/2/2022 – Estimated start of contract negotiations
- 6/30/2022 – Proposed Due Date of Final Report

It is anticipated that this project will be completed within five months of award. The final report is proposed to be completed by **6/30/2022**. A proposed schedule for this project is required as part of the response and will be a component of the criteria for award of the contract.

3. Background and Project Scope

The Town of Jamestown occupies Conanicut Island in Narragansett Bay. It is approximately 8.7 miles long in its entirety and varies from 1 to 1.6 miles in width, with an area of 9.44 sq. miles.

The year-round population reported in the 2010 census was 5,600 and the 2020 census is anticipated to report a population of more than 6,000.

Over the past two decades, Jamestown has experienced an assimilation into the suburban spread moving from Providence southward and along the Rhode Island coastline. Construction of new and improved roads has made Jamestown a more desirable place to live for those employed elsewhere in the State. Subdivisions and in-fill housing development have further changed Jamestown into a more suburban town, although the Town still has many rural and village characteristics.

The primary broadband service provider in Jamestown is Cox Communications, which currently offers DOCSIS 3.0/3.1 in most areas of the Town. Verizon offers DSL service and has publicly stated that it has no plan to bring FIOS service to Jamestown.

For the southern portion of the island, Verizon, AT&T and T-Mobile are currently macro site tenants on Town-owned property and collectively provide 3G/4G/5G cellular services.

OSHEAN (Ocean State Higher Education and Economic Development and Administrative Network) provides broadband transport services and internet access to both the Town and School district at Jamestown Town Hall and Melrose Avenue school, respectively. The Town Library is also connected to OSHEAN's network, but through another OSHEAN Internet reseller and provider, OLIS (Ocean State Library & Information Services).

The OSHEAN Beacon 2.0 48 strand fiber backbone traverses all of Jamestown and employs laterals to provide fiber services. For the Town of Jamestown, OSHEAN's fiber runs east and west, and leads off the island in two locations. OSHEAN directly peers to the global educational network, Internet2.

The role of OSHEAN as an infrastructure resource and potential partner for the Town's municipal network should be evaluated as a component of this study.

3.1 Project Scope

Residents and businesses of Jamestown have long considered that their needs for a robust, modern communications infrastructure have not been adequately addressed by the Town's broadband and cellular providers noted in Section 3.

To date, the Town is not aware of any plans by these companies to deploy new network technology island-wide that would simultaneously and equitably provide and offer new tiers of high-performance Internet services for all Town residents, businesses and visitors.

Jamestown requires substantially better Internet services to enable residents to work at home and for businesses to improve their access to all forms of Internet services through new island-wide communications paths. Visitor's expectations are to have equal or higher quality of service that they enjoy in their home communities.

The Town recognizes that there are significant economic considerations that make it unlikely that any major incumbent provider or new service providers will adequately address the Town's existing and future communications requirements and needs through new construction or major island-wide upgrades to their networks.

The Town of Jamestown has decided to commission this study to evaluate the feasibility of creating an island-wide network, specifically designed and to be operated to provide network-based services to all Town's residents, businesses and visitors.

We are aware that many municipalities have considered and used the feasibility study process to determine if creating a community-based network is a viable option to solve the need to invest for the future. We have chosen this process because we also believe it is the most viable approach for Jamestown to determine if its residents and businesses fully support the creation of an on-island community network.

This RFP solicits proposals from experienced network planning organizations and others that have helped towns of similar size and characteristics to Jamestown. We will require that the selected Respondent work closely with the Town, Town government and other interested parties to gain an accurate understanding of this community's needs, expectations and concerns. We further require that the selected Respondent will propose a network design or alternate designs with estimated construction costs, offer one or more funding strategies and develop a multi-year financial model.

A more detailed scope of required services is found in Appendix A of this document.

Appendix A: Scope of Work

- 1) Assessment of community needs and interest:
 - a) Assess residential needs with regards to services, cost expectations and estimated subscription rate. This should include an evaluation of the entire Town's interest in telephone services that could be offered for both residential and business use.
 - b) Assess business needs with regards to services required and desired, cost expectations and estimated subscription rate. Consider both small and medium storefront businesses and at home businesses.
 - c) Assess how an island-wide network could fulfill unidentified opportunities due to the absence of adequate cellular service in multiple geographic locations on the island
 - d) Compare a needs assessment with current services and identify and characterize shortfalls
 - e) Discuss how your proposal will determine needs of the Town's non-resident property owners and summer visitors and estimate any additional requirements to assess these needs
 - f) Explain how these assessments be performed and the plan to engage the entire community in the process. Detail any past or current experiences with community volunteers and advocacy groups.

- 2) Assessment of Jamestown's requirements compared to communities engaged in similar projects:
 - a) Provide information on municipalities that have built community networks. Provide data for municipalities with a measurable percentage of non-resident property owners and a seasonal population.
 - b) Municipalities that have started a community-wide project, but opted out or failed during planning, deployment or operation
 - c) Discuss the importance of municipal wiring infrastructure and/or maintenance facilities, since Jamestown does not have a municipal light and power company. Provide examples and discuss how municipalities have built and operated networks without municipal-owned utilities.
 - d) Discuss the potential of collaboration with the Town's electrical power provider National Grid through any planned or future SmartGrid deployment.
 - e) Discuss any advantages and disadvantages of including neighboring communities to achieve scale for deployment. Provide examples of similar collaborations.

- 3) Assessment of competitive and other challenges:
 - a) Discuss the expected reactions from incumbents and opinions of what objections will be raised and if blocking issues are likely to be presented
 - b) Discuss possible alternative responses from incumbents, such as Fixed

Wireless and how this type of response could be evaluated against that of a community-wide network deployment

- c) Note any environmental, economic, legal challenges that may be specific to Jamestown and Rhode Island

- 4) Provide recommendations for a distribution network topology and underlying technology components:
 - a) Propose one or more network designs for Jamestown that show a fiber backbone, neighborhood distribution plans and other supporting infrastructure
 - b) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of deployment strategies such as Fiber to the Premises (FtTP), fixed wireless and alternative technologies that should be considered
 - c) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a mixed deployment strategy for neighborhoods with limited distribution characteristics, e.g., all underground utilities
 - d) Discuss technology choices in terms of operational costs, flexibility to support tiered services and future viability. These should include Active Ethernet optical networks, GPON/NG-PON optical networks, 5G macro/small cell wireless and fixed wireless (mmWave mesh and/or CBRS).
 - e) Discuss any special considerations for providing services to Jamestown's summer population and visitors
 - f) Discuss the OSHEAN backbone and if it has advantages over potential backbone/backhaul offers by incumbent providers
 - g) Discuss how the proposed network can evolve to increase capacity and incorporate future Internet services and network-based technologies, e.g., driverless vehicles
 - h) Discuss how the proposed network addresses likely needs and performance shortfalls of incumbent's existing networks and potential for continued hybrid infrastructure deployment, e.g., small cells

- 5) Network construction:
 - a) For the proposed network design(s), estimate the cost of construction for:
 - i) Network backbone
 - ii) Neighborhood laterals
 - iii) Residences and businesses
 - iv) Routing, switching and endpoint access technologies
 - v) Network huts or other support structures on Town-owned or controlled parcels
 - b) Estimate cost differences for aerial, underground, microtrenched or other installation methods
 - c) Estimate benefits/disadvantages of build-once versus construction on subscription
 - d) Discuss possible strategies to lower initial construction costs

- e) The Town currently owns ~190 parcels throughout the island of which ~140 parcels have no easements and could be made available to support this project. Indicate how these parcels could be of use for construction, operations and maintenance.
- 6) Recommendations for funding of network construction and early operation:**
- a) Discuss various options for public, public/private partnership and fully private funding with terms for future Town ownership
 - b) Discuss project bonding strategies
 - c) Discuss consequences of a pure finance arrangement versus a financing and operations partnership
 - d) Discuss any funding methods that could be considered, such as property assessment, RI/Federal economic development under Broadband funding programs or other means of long-term funding
 - e) Potential revenue from dark fiber leasing
- 7) Network operator recommendations:**
- a) Existing ISPs, including incumbents, Town run or other private network operator(s), including discussion of important licensing, contractual and other terms, e.g., length of contract
 - b) If voice and video services are found to required, discuss how those services would be provided and managed by network operators in a) above
 - c) Discuss strategies for the community to maintain local control of the entire network and to enable long-term responsiveness to change in needs
- 8) Provide a pro forma analysis and show all assumptions for the first 10 years of operation of the most viable design and operations approach. Note that RI laws regarding prevailing wages must be included for all cost modeling.**

Appendix B: Submittal Requirements

Responses to this Request for Proposal must include the following information in sections as numbered below:

All respondents should provide proposals in the following format:

- 1. Cover Letter:** Indicate your firm's interest in the project. Include company name, address, contact name, email, and phone.
- 2. Overview of Respondent** Include company(s) history, number of employees by major roles, company locations, location of office where this project will be primarily managed, location of primary workforce, plans to procure additional resources or subcontractors for this project, length of time Respondent's firm has provided similar services and other relevant information.
- 3. Project Team, Roles and Resources:** Identify proposed Team members and their roles in this project. Include all subsidiaries, business partners and subcontractors.
- 4. Contingencies:** Provide any known or anticipated resource(s) or time constraints, potential project conflicts, conflicts of interest or issues that could limit or prevent performance of the work required in this RFP.
- 5. Project Experience:** Provide information about comparable project experience for any projects that are currently in progress or have been completed within the last five years:
 - 1) Project Name
 - 2) Project Location
 - 3) Project Type
 - 4) Client Name
 - 5) Client Contact Name, Title, Address, Telephone Number and Email
 - 6) Date of Completion, length of project
 - 7) Other Project summary information

Respondent must provide at least one completed feasibility or design study that contains many or all examples of the requirements of this RFP.

6. Insurance: Provide insurance certificates confirming coverage as set forth in the paragraphs below, that the Town shall be notified not less than thirty (30) days prior to any cancellation or material change in coverage, that coverage secured by the Respondent shall be on a "Per Occurrence" basis, that all insurance policies shall be obtained and maintained with companies rated "A" or better by AM Best. Respondent's insurance shall cover its subcontractors that perform any of the work on this RFP, or the Respondent shall

require its subcontractor to maintain insurance of the type and amounts required of the Respondent.

Insurance coverage shall be written for not less than the limits of liability described in the following paragraphs or such limits as may be required by law, whichever are greater:

1. Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance covering all employees of the Respondent and any of its subcontractors wherever they may be in the United States, so long as they are engaged in the work covered by this Contract. Workers' Compensation insurance in amounts required by applicable law and Employer's Liability insurance with a limit of at least two million dollars (\$2,000,000.00) per occurrence is required.
2. Commercial General Liability Insurance (Bodily Injury and Property Damage) which shall provide not less than five million dollars (\$5,000,000.00) combined single limit liability insurance, per job aggregate, on a per occurrence basis, protecting the Respondent and any of its subcontractors from liability arising out of the work on this RFP for:
 - (1) bodily injury, sickness, or disease, including death at any time resulting therefrom, sustained by any person; and
 3. damage to or destruction of property, including loss of use thereof.
3. Protection and Indemnity Policy in an amount not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000).
4. An Excess/Umbrella policy in an amount not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000).
5. "All Risk" property insurance in an amount equal to the replacement cost of any and all equipment owned, leased, or borrowed while in the Respondent's or its subcontractor's care, custody, or control, including while in transport at the direction of the Respondent or its subcontractors. Such "All Risk" insurance shall also cover all materials and equipment stored on a project site for incorporation into the work on this RFP.
6. Automobile liability insurance covering death or injury to any person or persons, or damage to property arising from the operation of vehicles or equipment, with limitations of not less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000).
7. Professional liability insurance, with limitations of not less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000) combined single limit for each occurrence and two million dollars (\$2,000,000) in the aggregate.

Include a statement that the Town, its subsidiaries, affiliates, directors, officers and owners shall be listed as additional insureds for general liability, protection and indemnity, excess liability, and automobile liability coverages required under the final contract with the Town. This coverage shall be primary and non-contributory. In addition, the Respondent and all of its subcontractors will waive all rights of subrogation against the Town, its subsidiaries, affiliates, directors, officers and owners, and the Respondent will waive any and all rights to recover against the Town, or its subsidiaries, affiliates, directors, officers and owners, for any loss or damage to the Respondent arising from any cause covered by any insurance required to be carried.

8. Time Schedule: Indicate a proposed timetable, based upon the scope of work, and experience with similar projects in type and scope.

9. Proposed Project Cost Summary: Provide a detailed project cost using Appendix C.

Appendix C: Cost Summary

The Town strongly encourages respondents to bid on the entire Scope of Work described in Appendix A. All respondents must estimate the level of effort they will expend on each component. The Town, at its sole discretion, may consider bids where respondents choose to exclude one or more of the components in the Scope of Work and only if exceptions are clearly noted.

The Town may consider an award for work only in a subset of components.

All prices must be inclusive of all costs and fees.

Responses must provide estimated project, cost, time and supporting information as shown below. The format of each Scope of Work response is at the discretion of the Respondent.

	Scope of Work	Estimated time, cost	Requirements, dependencies, comments or other information
1	Assess needs, interests, concerns		
2	Assess build out requirements and opportunities		
3	Assess competition, obstacles and challenges		
4	Propose Network topology and technologies		
5	Estimate Network construction, infrastructure		
6	Funding model(s) for construction, operations, maintenance		
7	Candidate operators, support/maintenance contractors		
8	Pro Forma models		
	TOTAL COST, EST TIME		