



Request for Proposal (RFP) Solicitation for Citywide Fiber Optic Network Partnership



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Proposals are due by **5:00 PM CST on January 31, 2023**

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1. Description

The City of Joplin ("the City") published this Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit proposals from Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and vendors to partner with the City to meet its connectivity goals and further progress towards a Smarter Joplin by bringing fiber-optic broadband to every home and business in the City. Below identifies explicit needs of the City for a successful future partnership. With this partnership, the City would like to address the following requirements:

- 1.1 The City requests that the future partnership covers all of the City of Joplin.
- 1.2 The City requests Gigabit technology to be deployed.
- 1.3 The City requests future partnerships consider connection to city infrastructure.
- 1.4 The City prefers underground facilities to the maximum extent practicable; however, the City will consider aerial infrastructure with justification. Respondents shall provide approach to meeting this requirement (i.e., new and existing infrastructure).
- 1.5 The City will potentially make existing publicly owned infrastructure available for consideration in future negotiations.
- 1.6 The City is keenly interested in affordable rates (lower rates for low-income households) and prefers respondents support the [Affordable Connectivity Program \(ACP\)](#) providing gigabit connectivity to all residents and businesses.
- 1.7 Respondents must identify if they are self-funded or using City funds. If Respondent is proposing to fund the network, proof of funding specifically for Joplin must be made available. The City will not consider offers where the City funds the entire network.
- 1.8 Respondents shall provide a detailed financial model (as explained in Section 5 of this document).
- 1.9 As the City intends to provide resources, including American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, it is the responsibility of the partner to adhere to all guidelines set by the U.S. Treasury Department. Respondents shall provide an approach to remain compliant.

2. Background

In September 2018, the City of Joplin assessed whether the City should adopt a “Smart City” approach to support resilient infrastructure, drive socio-economic growth, and enhance the benefits of its citizens and businesses. Through evaluating the City’s current state, conducting peer city research, and obtaining design inputs, the City created a [Smart City Roadmap](#) (“Roadmap”) to help guide community leaders and City staff through the next steps of implementation. The Roadmap was approved by City Council in September 2019.

In 2021, Finley Engineering, Inc. and its partner CCG Consulting conducted a Broadband Gap Analysis that detailed the feasibility of bringing fiber to the City. The [Broadband Gap Analysis Report](#), delivered to the City in October 2021 concluded that one of the best paths forward for the City was to engage in a public-private partnership (P3).

This critical analysis concentrated on three major areas to assess fiber feasibility:

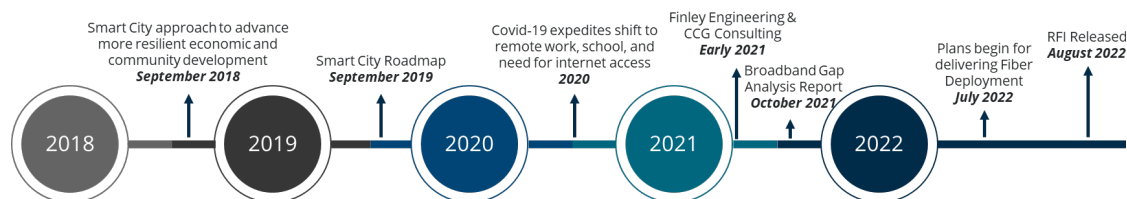
- a. an analysis of the Joplin market and the demand for broadband,
- b. an engineering estimate of the cost of building fiber across the entire City, and
- c. a financial analysis to explore if it is financially feasible for an ISP to build fiber.

The analysis identified the need for the City to approach the broadband market to support in future improvement of connectivity across the community.

In August 2022, the City began to seek a partner interested in helping the City bring fiber-optic broadband to every home and business in the City. The City released a Request for Information (RFI) to open a dialog with interested ISPs or other vendors interested in helping the City meet its connectivity goals and further progress towards a Smarter Joplin.

A timeline representing the key dates is presented in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: City of Joplin Broadband Initiative Timeline



From the positive response the City received from ISPs, vendors, and potential partners, the City decided to publish this Request for Proposal (RFP). The City continues to recognize there are multiple partnership structures which were highlighted during the RFI process and are commonly negotiated between cities and ISPs. In some cases, ISPs are funding and owning a new fiber network entirely. In other cases, partnerships exist where a City funds some portion of the network (e.g., fiber backbone, empty conduit for ISPs to use), while multiple ISPs use the open-access network.

3. General Proposal Requirements

The City is seeking innovative partners to deploy a citywide open-access fiber network, and requires Respondents to provide the following information:

3.1. Company Profile

- 3.1.1 Provide a brief executive summary of Respondents proposal.
- 3.1.2 Provide the name(s), address, email address, and telephone numbers (office and cell) for the person(s) at Respondent that can answer questions regarding responses to RFP and will be involved in potential interviews/negotiations.
- 3.1.3 Provide detailed information about business structure of the Respondent. If the RFP response involves a partnership between multiple parties, provide the information for each partner, including:
 - 3.1.3.1 Which entity will serve as Prime? The Prime will need to provide the following information and only list the subordinate partners.
 - 3.1.3.2 The legal name of the respondent as is specified in its charter or other organizing/creation document, as well as the state in which the respondent business entity is organized (including DUNS number).
 - 3.1.3.3 Detailed organizational structure of Respondent (e.g., executive, project management, construction, subcontractors). How many people do you employ? How many of these employees work in areas related to telecom or broadband?
 - 3.1.3.4 Discussion of future local presence in City of Joplin.
 - 3.1.3.5 The names and mailing addresses of any parent or subsidiary of the respondent (namely, any other business entity owning or controlling the Respondent, in whole or in part) and a statement describing the nature of any such parent or subsidiary business entity.
 - 3.1.3.6 Please describe any partnership arrangements or other significant business arrangements that are integral to the proposed solution. If proposal includes group of ISPs and/or companies, please explain partnership structure.

3.2. Company Experience

- 3.2.1 Provide a brief company history, particularly as related to telecom and broadband
- 3.2.2 Provide any statistics related to Respondents current broadband-business that would be relevant and of interest to the City. This might include such things as the number of retail customers currently served or the number of miles of fiber owned.
- 3.2.3 Provide the same statistics as item 3.2.2 for operations currently in Missouri.
- 3.2.4 List all the states where Respondent has retail broadband customers and/or open-access customers.
- 3.2.5 Description of existing customers and any relevant past performance. If the RFP response involves a partnership between multiple parties, please provide this information for each partner.
- 3.2.6 Detailed description of Respondent's safety culture and safety record. If the RFP response involves a partnership between multiple parties, please provide this information for each partner.
- 3.2.7 Provide three (3) references (at a minimum) including entity, name of POC, phone number, email address, and location. If the RFP response involves a partnership between multiple parties, provide this information for the leading partner.

3.3. Project Execution

- 3.3.1 Provide customer service ratings and description of how Respondent will provide customer service as part of future partnerships.
- 3.3.2 Provide detailed description of future pricing and guarantees (all rates and products) to City customers (e.g., business, residential, and City government)
- 3.3.3 Provide the anticipated timeline of execution and connecting the City of Joplin.
- 3.3.4 Does the Respondent anticipate opening a local business office or does the Respondent have a local business office in place? If Respondent plans to open local business office, please provide its approach.

4. Technical Requirements

The Respondent must meet the following technical parameters. Any details of the engineering design beyond these parameters are at the discretion of the Respondent. Respondent should note in the RFP response if it intends to deviate from any of the following requirements. If Respondent deviates from the requirements, the Respondent shall include a description of the alternate approach and explain briefly why the alternate approach will be adequate.

- 4.1 A fiber network should be designed to pass every home, business, underserved areas, and government location within Joplin's City Limits.
- 4.2 The network should be capable of delivering gigabit download speeds and denote upload speeds capable of meeting federal guideline minimums. Respondent must document how technology will be scalable to meet future bandwidth needs to every subscribed customer in Joplin's City Limits.
 - 4.2.1 The design will incorporate a drop network access point (NAP) design that will enable the easy placement of a fiber drop to premises that take service.
 - 4.2.2 The network should be designed so that it will continue to provide the promised broadband speeds at the expected busy hour when the network carries the most local broadband traffic.
 - 4.2.3 The design should include all huts, cabinets, and other network elements needed to make the fiber network functional and ready to accept electronics.
- 4.3 The City's preference is to use buried fiber. Describe the number of miles of proposed aerial and buried fiber in Respondent plan.
- 4.4 For buried infrastructure, locating wire must be installed with all buried fiber. All conduits shall be placed at a minimum depth of 36".
- 4.5 For aerial fiber, Respondent will execute a pole attachment agreement with the owner of any utility or light poles to be used for aerial construction and will adhere to the requirements of such agreements for purposes of performing make-ready work or in placing fiber on aerial poles.
- 4.6 Respondent shall obtain all needed permits, rights-of-way, and easements from the appropriate government entity for public rights-of-way and from private landowners for private rights-of-way. These shall include, but are not limited to, all authorities having jurisdiction (local, state, and federal), railroad crossings, water crossings, wetland crossings, and road crossings.
 - 4.6.1 Respondent should provide independent inspection of the construction process (meaning the inspectors are independent from, and not employed by the Respondent) so that the constructed network meets the design specification of the network.

- 4.6.2 Describe proposed process for construction inspection and describe the functional independence of the inspectors.
- 4.7 Post-construction, Respondent shall provide a copy of the final construction / as-built drawings to the City in shapefile format to the City.
- 4.8 Respondent shall adhere to all national standards related to fiber construction and fiber electronics (Appendix A).

5. Financial Requirements

The City's goal is to solicit the market for an ISP partner that will fund all or most of a network build. The City will not entertain proposals where the City funds the entirety of the network.

City leaders have prioritized the use of ARPA funds and other potential City resources to aide in strengthening the Joplin's Smart Grid for resiliency, reliability, and redundancy of current broadband systems. These resources may be allocated towards a future P3 at the discretion of the City Manager with approval from City Council on future partnership(s). The intended outcome of this RFP is to progress with the negotiation and development of a collaborative partnership focused on improving connectivity to further Joplin in its Smart City goals.

NOTE: Respondents have the option to keep financial information confidential. If a Respondent wishes to use this option, the Respondent shall respond to the financial questions in this section with a separate document labeled as "Confidential Financial Information." Please note, a Respondent should understand that at some future point, if the City enters negotiation towards a partnership that your financial information might be made public, however, for purposes of this RFP, the City will keep financial information confidential and will circulate only to selected members of the RFP review team.

5.1. Financial History

- 5.1.1 How long has the Respondent been operating in its current corporate structure?
- 5.1.2 Provide a copy or link to two most recent audited financial statements for the responding organization. If Respondent is proposing a solution that involves multiple partners, provide financial statements for each partner.
- 5.1.3 Has the business declared bankruptcy in the last ten years? If yes, explain and describe the current status in relationship to the bankruptcy.
- 5.1.4 Disclose any lawsuits during the past five years that might have an impact or bearing on a broadband business.

5.2. Ability to Fund the Network

- 5.2.1 This RFP assumes that the Respondent will finance a substantial portion of the proposed network. Please describe Respondents funding plans by answering the following questions:
- 5.2.2 What is the estimated cost, or range of costs, needed to build the proposed solution and launch the broadband business?
- 5.2.3 How much funding is the Respondent seeking from the City as part of its financing plan? At what stage of the project would Respondent expect the City to make the desired contribution?

5.2.4 Please describe the amount of funding that will come from various sources as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Respondent Equity | \$ |
| Other Equity | \$ |
| Contribution from the City | \$ |
| Bank or Other Loans | \$ |
| Grants | \$ |
| Other | \$ |
| Total | \$ |

5.2.5 Provide a brief description of the source and assumptions made for each of the above sources of funding

5.2.6 If the Respondent is proposing to contribute debt or equity to fund the project, provide evidence that the needed funds are available.

5.3. Other Financial Questions

5.3.1 If Respondent wants the City to contribute funding to the network, describe if Respondent is looking for a grant from the City or if the funding is specifically tied to any specific function, such as providing the City with a private network.

5.3.2 Describe any other City assets or services that the Respondent would like to receive from the City.

5.3.3 If the Respondent is proposing any ongoing revenue for the City, describe how and when such payments would be calculated and paid.

5.3.4 Describe any other financial terms and conditions Respondent wants the City to consider.

5.3.5 Please indicate the level of monetary support Respondent will need from the City.

5.3.6 Please provide a detailed list of expectations Respondent would like the City to provide in a potential future partnership agreement (e.g., ROW, permits).

5.3.7 Please describe Respondent's intent and approach to seek and use future grant funding to support the future build of the citywide network.

6. Resources Provided by City

The City has identified key resources to be provided to all Respondents and are provided on the City's procurement website. If Respondents encounter issues with accessing these files, please contact Johan Bullington (JBulling@joplinmo.org).

These resources are (Appendix B):

- Broadband Gap Analysis Study
- Smarter Joplin Roadmap
- Request for Information
- City relevant GIS data
- Joplin Development Code
- Code of Ordinances, City of Joplin

7. RFP Instructions, Definitions, and Schedule

The response should be prepared simply and economically, providing straightforward and concise responses to all questions and addressing all City requirements. False or inaccurate information will result in the rejection of the response. Once a response has been submitted, product substitutions or changes to design, material, or process may not be made without the prior written approval of the City.

RFP Modifications

The City reserves the right to modify or change any information presented in this RFP as more information becomes available. Any RFP modifications will be provided by means of Addendum.

Responsibility for Costs

The Respondent shall be fully responsible for all costs incurred in the development and submission of the proposal or any other costs incurred prior to the issuance of an agreement or contract. The City shall not assume any contractual obligations as a result of the issuance of a proposal request, the preparation or submission of a proposal, the evaluation of proposals or the final selection of a proposal.

RFP Submittal Deadline

The City will accept electronically submitted responses no later than **5:00PM CST on January 31, 2023**. The Respondent should provide a single PDF file unless otherwise indicated (i.e. financial confidentiality). Late submittals will not be considered. All responses must be clearly labeled in the subject of the transmittal email as “RFP for Solicitation for Citywide Fiber Optic Network Partnership”. The City urges respondents to initiate email transmittals in advance of the deadline to mitigate risk of nonreceipt.

RFP Questions

All general questions pertaining to this RFP must be submitted by email to:

Johan Bullington

Email: JBulling@joplinmo.org

Deliver the RFP to

All submittals must be submitted directly to:

Johan Bullington

Email: JBulling@joplinmo.org

Respondents that wish to be notified of the responses to questions by other parties should request at the above email address to be added to the list of interested parties.

Any written questions from Respondents must be received no later than **December 9, 2022**. Questions or requests for clarifications received after this deadline will not be answered. The City will provide written answers to all questions and circulate the questions and answers to all known interested parties.

Schedule of Activities

The City has established the following schedule:

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Issue RFP | November 29, 2022 |
| Final acceptance for Respondent questions | December 9, 2022 |
| City will respond to all questions | December 22, 2022 |
| RFP responses due | January 31, 2023 |

RFP Format

In order to facilitate a timely and fair evaluation of RFP proposals, a standard response format has been developed and is documented in this section. All Respondents are required to format their proposal in a manner consistent with the guidelines below:

| Section | Topic |
|----------------|---|
| 1 | Letter of Transmittal |
| 2 | Executive Summary |
| 3 | General Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Company Profile▪ Company Experience▪ Project Execution |
| 4 | Technical Approach |
| 5 | Financial Approach |
| 6 | Additional Information |

The topics must be organized under the specific section as stated above and indicated appropriately. Each topic must be addressed in the proposal, or the proposal may be rejected.

Authorized Representative

Respondent should indicate the name, title, and contact information of the person who will be authorized to enter into an agreement with the City if selected.

Confidentiality

The City shall use reasonable efforts to preserve the confidentiality of any proprietary or confidential information submitted by the Respondent which is clearly designated and identified as such. Given that the City is a governmental entity, it has commitments and obligations subject to “freedom of information” laws or similar statutory disclosure requirements. The City is subject to full compliance with these laws and statutory requirements. Compliance with these laws or statutes shall be deemed not to constitute a breach of requested confidentiality of a given proposal response to the RFP.

Proposal Disposition

Any proposals received in response to this RFP shall become the property of the City.

RFP Response Review

The City will evaluate each Respondent's responses to this RFP. The City's goal is to eventually reach an agreement with one Respondent to build and operate a new broadband network in the City. The City reserves the right to take no action after reviewing responses. The City reserves the right to ask for clarifications of responses to the RFP either in writing or by video conference. The City may eliminate from consideration any Respondent that does not provide response to City questions or does not meet City minimum requirements. The City will notify any Respondents who do not meet our minimum requirements in a timely manner.

The selection committee will review each response based on the categories below independently, and the City reserves the right to reject any proposal that scores poorly on one or more categories. The City expects to conduct interviews with a short list of candidates based on the responses to the categories below.

- a. **Company Profile: (10 Points)** Review will emphasize organizational structure, partnership structure, and available resources to construct the citywide network.
- b. **Company Experience: (10 Points)** Review will emphasize direct experience and success with delivering similar services as well as integrity, reputation, safety, and efficiency of the Respondent.
- c. **Project Execution: (10 Points)** Review will emphasize ability to commence and connect the City of Joplin promptly or within the time specified, without delay or interference. An anticipated timeline of execution and connecting the City of Joplin is required to be provided by the Respondent.
- d. **Technical Requirements: (20 Points)** Review will evaluate the Respondent's capabilities and approach to address technical requirements in the RFP. The design should provide a resilient city-wide network meeting national standards related to fiber construction and fiber electronics. The fiber network should be designed to pass every home, business, and government location within Joplin's City limits. The respondent must display an adequate plan for the construction process, minimizing disruptions to the City.

8. General Provisions

Minimum Effective Period of Proposal

All proposals are required to remain in effect for at least 120 days from the date submitted to the City for review. This should be taken into account during budget preparations.

Public Information

All information, documentation, and other materials submitted in response to this solicitation are considered non-confidential and/or non-proprietary and are subject to public disclosure. Respondents may request company specific business and proprietary information not to be released and allowed by Missouri Statute.

RFP Acceptance and Rejection

The City reserves the right to accept any proposal or part of a proposal; to reject any or all proposals; to waive irregularities or informalities in any proposal, in any manner deemed in the best interest of the City.

Presentations and Site Visits

The Respondent may be invited to make a presentation in person or by conference call.

MBE/WBE

Please state whether Respondent or any potential sub-contractors participate in the Minority and Women Business Enterprise Initiative (MBE/WBE).

Type of Contract

The final contract form shall be negotiated between and be mutually acceptable to the parties. Any contract(s) resulting from this effort will be negotiated at the sole discretion of City of Joplin (the "City"), and/or their agents.

Clarifications and Interpretations

Any clarifications or interpretations of this RFP that materially affect or change its requirements will be provided by the City as an addendum. These items must be received by the City 10 days prior to the proposal due date to allow for proper notification. All such addenda issued by the City shall be issued before the proposals are due as part of the RFP, and all Respondents shall acknowledge receipt of and incorporate each addendum in its responses. All additional information or addenda will be posted on the city website at <http://joplinmo.org/index.aspx> in the left-hand column under Bids/Projects. Please check regularly and/or sign up to receive notifications.

Respondents shall consider only those clarifications and interpretations that the City issues by addenda five (5) days prior to the submittal deadline. Interpretations or clarifications in any other form, including oral statements, will not be binding on the City and should not be relied upon in preparing responses.

No Lobbying

Respondent acknowledges and accepts that from the Date of Issuance of the RFP until a

final decision has been made by the City, it will not take any action, make any effort or support or engage others on its behalf to take actions or efforts with attempt to influence the decision-making process for this RFP in favor of the respondent. This includes direct contact with the City Council, City Manager and staff of the City of Joplin, the selection committee, board members of the Joplin Chamber, and others who may be engaged in the process. Additionally, the Respondent acknowledges and accepts that it will not attempt to use public communication such as the news media, social media, etc. as a means of attempting to influence the RFP evaluation or decision-making process. Any respondent violating any of the aforementioned conditions is subject to immediate disqualification from consideration.

Miscellaneous

Respondent must disclose any potential conflict of interest with the City and any of its employees.

Respondent shall hold all information provided in its response in confidence and shall not reveal its proposal to or discuss its proposal with others until all relevant contracts are awarded. By the submission of a proposal, the Respondent represents and warrants that in connection with the response that no attempt has been made nor will be made to restrict competition, to induce any other person or party to submit, or conspire with any other parties to restrict or otherwise manipulate prices or competition relating to this RFI or any resultant contracts.

The City does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. The City is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, citizens, volunteers, contractors, vendors, and clients. The City expects the Respondent to comply with these standards.

Appendix A – National Standards

NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE, NFPA 70

The National Fire Protection Association has acted as the sponsor of the National Electrical Code (NEC) since 1911. The original Code was developed in 1897 as a result of the united efforts of various insurance, electrical, architectural, and allied interests. The purpose of the NEC is the practical safeguarding of persons and property from hazards arising from the use of electricity. The NEC provides the minimum code requirements for electrical safety. In telecommunications distribution design, the NEC must be used in concert with the ANSI/EIA/TIA standards identified below, which are intended to insure the performance of the telecommunications infrastructure.

ANSI/TIA/EIA STANDARDS

The Telecommunications Industry Association/Electronics Industry Association (TIA/EIA) engineering standards and publications are designed to serve the public interest by eliminating misunderstandings between manufacturers and purchasers. The standards facilitate interchangeability and improvement of products and assist the purchaser in selecting and obtaining the proper product for his or her particular needs.

The TIA/EIA Standards are updated every five years. Due to the rapid changes in the telecommunications and electronics industries, TIA/EIA publishes periodic Telecommunications Systems Bulletins (TSB), which provide additional guidance on certain technical issues that must be addressed prior to the next scheduled revision of the standards. The information contained in TSBs is usually incorporated into the applicable standard during the next standards revision. Standards and publications are adopted by TIA/EIA in accordance with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) patent policy. The TIA website is: <http://www.tiaonline.org/>

FIBER OPTIC TEST STANDARDS, TIA/EIA-526 (SERIES)

The TIA/EIA-455 series, together with its addenda, provides uniform test procedures for testing the fiber optic components intended for, or forming a part of, optical communications and data transmission systems. This series contains standard test procedures for optical fibers, cables, transducers, and connecting and terminating devices.

CUSTOMER-OWNED OUTSIDE PLANT (OSP), ANSI/TIA/EIA-758

The ANSI/TIA/EIA-758 provides industry standards for the design and construction of customer-owned OSP infrastructure. Unless specified otherwise by one of the cities, the fiber network should be designed and constructed to be in compliance with ANSI/TIA/EIA-758.

NATIONAL ELECTRIC SAFETY CODE

The NESC sets the ground rules for the practical safeguarding of persons during the installation, operation, or maintenance of electric supply & communication lines & associated equipment. It contains the basic provisions that are considered necessary for the safety of employees & the public under the specified conditions. The NESC continues to be a stronghold in the U.S. electrical industry & communications fields and serves as the authority on safety requirements for power, telephone, cable TV, & railroad signal systems.

Appendix B – Resource Links

Broadband Gap Analysis Study

http://www.joplinmo.org/DocumentCenter/View/10293/Joplin-Internet_Broadband-Gap-Report-v2---10_06_2021-2

Smarter Joplin Roadmap

<http://www.joplinmo.org/DocumentCenter/View/9575/Smarter-Joplin-Roadmap-Optimizedpdf>

Request for Information

<https://www.joplinmo.org/Bids/PlanHolders/646?documentId=10752>

City relevant GIS data

<https://www.joplingis.org/portal/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=29730f3185ea4ad1a6e9c4373fb80aac>

Joplin Development Code

<https://www.joplinmo.org/DocumentCenter/View/10755/Joplin-Development-Code>

Code of Ordinances, City of Joplin

https://library.municode.com/mo/joplin/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COORJOMI