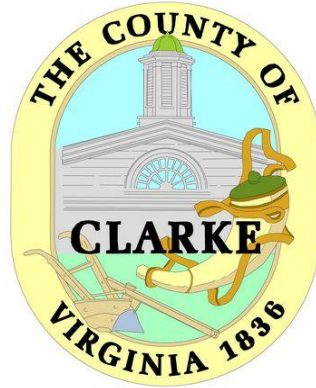


REQUEST FOR INFORMATION



**RFI TITLE: PROVISION OF BROADBAND INTERNET AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES**

RFI NUMBER: RFI #17-0725

RFI DUE DATE: JULY 25, 2017

RFI DUE TIME: 3:00 P.M. (LOCAL PREVAILING TIME)

I. Request for Information (as publicly advertised)

PUBLIC NOTICE
RFP #17-0725
PROVISION OF BROADBAND INTERNET, AND
TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES

The County of Clarke, Virginia, is soliciting input, ideas, and recommendations from internet service providers and telecommunications infrastructure companies to expand availability of broadband internet and mobile telecommunications services to Clarke County residents and businesses. With this information, the County hopes to determine the level of interest and capabilities of industry providers to provide this expansion and to identify potential partnership opportunities that could facilitate this effort.

Responses should be clearly marked, “RFI #17-0725 Provision of Broadband Internet, and Telecommunications Services” and must be received in the Clarke County Purchasing Office before 3:00:00 P.M. (local prevailing time), Tuesday, July 25, 2017.

RFI documents are available at Clarke County Purchasing Office, 129 Ramsburg Lane, Berryville, VA 22611, phone 540-955-5185. RFI documents can also be found on-line at www.clarkecounty.gov by clicking on business and current solicitations.

Thomas J. Judge
Director of Joint Administrative Services

II. Special Terms and Conditions

A. Purpose and Goals

1. The purpose of this Request for Information is to solicit input, ideas, and recommendations from internet service providers and telecommunications infrastructure companies to expand availability of broadband internet and mobile telecommunications services to Clarke County residents and businesses. With this information, the County hopes to determine the level of interest and capabilities of industry providers to provide this expansion and to identify potential partnership opportunities that could facilitate this effort.

B. Background

1. Clarke County currently has several forms of internet access available to residents and businesses, each with their own limitations. Wired cable internet access is provided by Comcast in the County's two incorporated towns and in limited areas along primary highways. Digital subscriber line (DSL) service is provided by Verizon in various areas around the County although availability of this service is decreasing. Wireless internet service is available through several local Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISPs), satellite internet providers, and licensed telecommunications providers through the use of mobile "hotspots." While it appears that the County has various options available for residents and businesses to access the internet, the balance of the County lacks reliable, affordable, and cost-effective access to "broadband" internet as defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) – minimum 25 megabits per second download and 3 megabits per second upload.

2. The County is also aware that many residents rely on mobile phones as their primary means of telecommunication in addition to accessing the internet. Given the County's varied terrain and rural population density, there are areas where mobile telephone connectivity is limited and even unavailable. Expanding and improving mobile telecommunications is of equal importance to the County as expanding and improving its broadband internet options.

3. The County recently undertook two initiatives to help address these concerns. In December 2016, the Board of Supervisors accepted the "Telecommunications Infrastructure and Broadband Study" prepared by The Atlantic Group. This detailed engineering study analyzes the County's current telecommunications and broadband networks and provides strategies and recommendations for the County to pursue to facilitate the expansion of these networks. The County also recently adopted (June 20, 2017) new zoning regulations for the siting of new wireless communication facilities and the co-location of antennas on existing structures. These regulations propose to allow new monopoles up to 199 feet provided they are located in areas where gaps in coverage exist and would help facilitate the development of a seamless, County-wide telecommunications and broadband

network. The proposed regulations have been formally recommended for adoption by the Planning Commission and are being presented to the Board of Supervisors for final consideration.

A separate file titled “Appendix A for RFI #17-0725 Provision of Broadband Internet and Telecommunications Services” can be seen on the Clarke County Website, www.clarkecounty.gov, by clicking on business and current solicitations. This file is the text amendment that was adopted by the BOS on June 20, 2017.

4. While many rural Virginia counties are undergoing similar efforts to expand services and have offered public assets such as buildings and land for potential new communications facilities, Clarke County’s public assets are limited in rural areas where the need exists. The County’s Sanitary Authority owns and maintains water towers in the unincorporated villages of Millwood and White Post and in the Town of Boyce that can provide co-location opportunities. Aside from these facilities, the majority of County-owned properties are located in and around the Town of Berryville where broadband and mobile telecommunications options are more accessible.

C. Tentative Time Frame

RFI ADVERTISED	June 29, 2017
RFI SUBMISSION DUE DATE	Must be received in the Clarke County Purchasing Office before 3:00:00 p.m. (local prevailing time) on Tuesday, July 25, 2017

D. Addenda

1. Addenda may occur prior to the due date. It is the vendor’s responsibility to check the website (www.clarkecounty.gov) listing frequently to ensure that all solicitation information is complete and accurate.
2. Each Contractor should ascertain before submitting a bid how many Addenda, if any, were issued.

E. Inclement weather: In the event that the Clarke County Purchasing Office is closed on the day the Request for Information is due; the due date will be postponed to the next business day that Clarke County Public School Administrative Offices are open at the appropriate times as stated in the RFI. Please check the County website, www.clarkecounty.gov, under business, and current solicitations for updates regarding any changes in due dates.

F. Points of Contact

It is preferred that all questions be submitted in writing by emailing Mike Legge, Purchasing Manager, at mlegge@clarkecounty.gov. Please have all questions to Mr. Legge by noon on Tuesday, July 18, 2017 to ensure that answers can be provided in a timely manner before the due date.

After the due date, Mr. Brandon Stidham, Clarke County Planning Director, and/or assigned County personnel will be responsible for communicating and working with vendors that responded.

Should you need to contact someone regarding this document, the following names are listed for your convenience. Please be sure to contact the person best suited to answer your questions or concerns.

NAME	TITLE	VOICE
Thomas J. Judge	Director of Joint Administrative Services	540-955-6172
Mike Legge	Purchasing Manager	540-955-5185
Pat Wiley	Administrative Assistant-Purchasing	540-955-5148
Brandon Stidham	Clarke County Planning Director	540-955-5130

III. Requested Information and Optional Respondent Meeting

A. The County seeks a “hybrid” solution of wired and wireless internet service providers committed to providing reliable mobile telecommunications service and broadband internet access to the Federal standard for all residents and businesses. The County requests specific input on the following items through this RFI process:

- Obtain input on the recommendations provided in the County’s new Telecommunications Infrastructure and Broadband Study.
- Obtain input on proposed new zoning regulations for the siting of new wireless communication facilities.
- Identify areas of the County that respondents believe could realistically be served with enhanced mobile telecommunications and broadband internet access within the next 5-10 years along with strategies and approaches to accomplish this enhancement.

- Determine the industry’s perspectives on possible public-private partnership roles that the County can serve to further this effort.

B. Following the closing date of the response period and internal review of the RFI responses, the County plans to invite all respondents to attend a meeting with County elected and appointed officials and Staff to discuss the requested information in greater detail including possible strategies and partnership opportunities. This meeting is optional but very important to the County’s planning process. It should be noted that any respondents who choose not to attend this meeting will not be disqualified from participating in any potential future procurements or projects.

IV. Responses and Optional Respondent Meeting

A. Interested companies are invited to respond to this RFI by submitting a written response to the County in any format deemed appropriate by the respondent including but not limited to formal proposals, white papers, lessons learned, etc. Note that all of the information shall be submitted in a sealed envelope or box and should be clearly marked, “RFI #17-0725 Provision of Broadband Internet and Telecommunications Services.”

B. In the event that the County receives sufficient information through this RFI process, the County may consider issuing a competitive solicitation. This RFI is not a competitive solicitation and no contract award shall result. This RFI will not be used to evaluate, rank, or select vendors, nor will it be used to pre-qualify or screen vendors for a subsequent competitive solicitation process, if any. The County will not pay for the preparation of any information submitted or for use of that information. The County reserves the right to utilize any information submitted by respondents in its best interest without any obligation, liability, or consideration on the part of the County.

C. Ownership of all data, materials, and documentation originated and prepared for the County pursuant to this RFI shall belong exclusively to the County and be subject to public inspection in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; however, respondents shall invoke the protection of this section prior to or upon submission of proprietary data or other materials and must identify the data or other materials to be protected and state the reasons why protection is necessary. Means of disposition of proprietary materials after the RFI responses are reviewed should be stated by the respondent. Respondents should indicate on their cover sheet the portions of their response that are proprietary including the page number(s) and specific reason(s).

V. RFI Supporting Documentation

- A. Link to download the Telecommunications Infrastructure and Broadband Study
- B. Link to download draft Wireless Communication Facilities text amendment

Attachment A – Request for Information - Response Form.

Note: Responses should be clearly marked, “RFI #17-0725 Provision of Broadband Internet and Telecommunications Services” and must be received in the Clarke County Purchasing Office before 3:00:00 P.M.(local prevailing time) on Tuesday, July 25, 2017.

1. NAME AND ADDRESS OF FIRM SUBMITTING A RESPONSE

SIGNATURE		
BY (print name)		
TITLE	DATE	
COMPANY NAME		
STREET ADDRESS		
CITY, STATE, ZIP		
TELEPHONE	FAX	E-MAIL

7. RECEIPT OF CORRESPONDENCE

The undersigned acknowledges receipt and inclusion of the following into the bid: (If none, write "NONE".)

- A. Pre-bid minutes _____ Dated: _____
- B. Pre-bid minutes _____ Dated: _____
- C. Addendum No. _____ Dated: _____
- D. Addendum No. _____ Dated: _____

APPENDIX A

A separate file titled “Appendix A for RFI #17-0725 Provision of Broadband Internet and Telecommunications Services” can be seen on the Clarke County Website, www.clarkecounty.gov, by clicking on business and current solicitations. This file is the text amendment that was adopted by the BOS on June 20, 2017.