

**Burke Partnership for Economic Development**  
**DBA Burke Development Inc. (BDI)**  
**Request for Proposals**  
**Burke County Broadband Expansion Pilot Program**

**Burke Development Inc. Desires to Engage Internet Service Providers Interested in Providing High Speed Internet to Portions of the County**

Burke Development Inc. (BDI) received a \$100,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to extend internet service to residential and business customers in unserved and underserved areas and is seeking a qualified Internet Service Provider (ISP) to provide broadband services and a 100% match for this grant.

**Project Description:**

A Broadband Feasibility Study, completed in 2013 by ECC in Burke County showed that there are large areas of rural regions in the county that are either unserved or underserved. This is supported by a survey of over 1,000 residents conducted by the NC Broadband Infrastructure Office confirming their lack of service. While we understand this project will be limited in its total reach, the unserved population totals 15,000 residents in 9,000 households and approximately 1,100 businesses. The qualified ISP would be required to design, build, operate and maintain a broadband network to provide data services. The ISP would be required to provide a minimum of \$100,000 to match the ARC funds. Per ARC regulations, the EDC will own all equipment purchased with the grant and match funds for ten years, after which time the equipment will be transferred to the project ISP.

To view a copy of the Broadband Service Study view the full press release at:

[https://burkedevinc.com/contact-burke-development-inc/news/.](https://burkedevinc.com/contact-burke-development-inc/news/)

If permitted by state law and approved by Burke County Commissioners, the selected ISP may be offered access to vertical assets and other related infrastructure on a competitively neutral basis to assist with the deployment of broadband as it relates to the scope of services. BDI will provide up to \$2,500 in in-kind matching funds.

**Scope of Services:**

BDI is looking for a qualified ISP to design, build and maintain broadband infrastructure to connect unserved and underserved areas of Burke County. Method of internet service delivery

shall be identified by the ISP in their proposal. The goal of this project is to provide affordable, adequate, high-speed internet access to as many unserved and underserved residents and businesses as possible with the funds as assets provided.

The selected ISP must display capacity to accomplish the following services:

1. Design a network that is cost-effective and which provides redundancy
2. Develop environmental documents, project recommendations and cost estimates
3. Prepare detailed design and construction plans, technical specifications and documents
4. Act as project manager for all construction phases
5. Provide on-site construction inspections and management
6. Conduct systems performance tests
7. Conduct final project inspections and prepare final construction report
8. Maintain the equipment needed to provide retail broadband services to residential and business customers
9. Provide management functions of the service provision, including sales, billing and customer service

### **Project Schedule**

Proposal submittal deadline	October 24, 2020 5 P.M.
Contract with selected partner	November 17, 2020
Project design complete	February 1, 2021
Project construction complete	September 1, 2021

### **Project Requirements**

Proposal submissions must include:

1. Description of the company, including location, number of employees, number of years of experience providing internet access, available resources and other information necessary to determine the capacity of the company to properly execute the work proposed
2. Description of past company record of network reliability and customer satisfaction
3. Business and technical plan describing the method to conduct the Scope of Services above
4. Description of anticipated area to be served
5. Anticipated service speeds provided to customers
6. Commitment of matching funds for the project
7. Detailed timeline of project

## **Evaluation**

The following criteria and associated importance will be used to evaluate proposals and select a partner:

- Capability to perform all aspects of the project (15%)
- Ability to meet project schedule (10%)
- Displayed history of network reliability and customer satisfaction (10%)
- Cost-effectiveness of anticipated technology (5%)
- Matching funds committed (10%)
- Ability to offer service to the largest amount of unserved/underserved residents/businesses (10%)
- Anticipated service speed (10%)
- Capacity to supply and maintain the equipment installed (5%)
- Relevant experience and expertise (5%)
- Experience partnering with local governments and non-profits on projects (10%)
- Experience working with Federal grant programs (5%)
- Quality and responsiveness of proposal (5%)

The selected qualified partner will be invited to negotiate a contract with Burke Development Inc. Should BDI and the selected partner be unable to reach an agreement, BDI will then select another company. BDI reserves the right to discontinue the selection process at any time prior to the awarding of the contract

## **Proposal Submissions**

Proposals must be received no later than 5:00 PM on October 24, 2020

Submit proposal to:

Burke County Broadband Project  
Burke Development Inc. (BDI)  
Attn: Alan D. Wood, President and CEO  
2128 S Sterling Street Suite 150  
Morganton NC 28655  
[alan@burkedevinc.com](mailto:alan@burkedevinc.com)

Faxed proposals will not be accepted. Proposals received after the closing date will not be reviewed.

## **Additional Information**

Applicants may contact BDI President Alan Wood at 828-764-9372 for questions.

**Reservation of Rights**

This request for proposals does not commit BDI to award a contract, pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this request or to procure or contract for services. BDI reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request or to cancel in part or in the entirety this RFP. BDI reserves the right to undertake such investigation as it deems necessary to verify the qualification of the company for the project.