

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

LLANO COUNTY, TEXAS

Pursuant to Texas Government Code § 2254 et seq and Texas Local Government Code §§ 262. 022(4) and 262.030, Llano County, Texas seeks the submission of qualifications related to the procurement of professional consulting services to be rendered to the County by a qualified broadband professional to map internet services in Llano County and provide recommendations for improved internet services. This request for qualification (RFQ) does not require or seek a price for the consulting service. Once the RFQs are evaluated and selection is made Llano County will negotiate with the selected finalist.

Backgrounds

Llano County is a rural county spanning approximately 966 square miles that includes the Cities of Horseshoe Bay, Llano and Sunrise Beach Village. Llano County also has many unincorporated communities with the largest being the community of Kingsland. Llano County has in excess of 7,500 residences and multiple small businesses.

The population of Llano County is just over 20,000 and has one school district, the Llano County Independent School District (Llano ISD), two private schools, one rural hospital, multiple fire departments and four emergency management service locations.

Internet service in Llano County is inadequate in the cities and rural areas. The Lower Colorado Authority and some Internet Service Providers (ISP) have installed fiber optics in parts of Llano County. Llano County has been able to install fiber optics in most county departments but those departments where it is not installed experience significantly slow upload and download speeds.

The COVID pandemic has revealed the deficiencies and vulnerabilities in internet coverage in Llano County for both virtual employees and students. According to the Llano ISD, as many as 25% of students in Llano County did not have access to internet to attend school virtually. Businesses throughout Llano County are also hindered due to the lack of reliable internet and slow upload and download speeds.

The American Rescue Plan, recently provided by the federal government, has provided funds to improve internet infrastructure in rural counties, including Llano County. This makes funds available to improve internet services with funds encumbered by the end of 2024 and spent no later than December 31, 2026.

Purpose

The purpose of this RFQ is to request qualifications from qualified internet professional consulting companies or individuals to conduct, but not limited to the following:

1. Map the current internet service providers in Llano County including, but not limited to, the name(s) of the company, the location and expanse of the service area covered, the infrastructure in place, the customer base, the system used, the upload and download speed, the capability to expand services and any required additional infrastructure to do so.

2. Provide Llano County with a detailed report and mapping of broadband availability (e.g., served vs underserved or unserved) areas in Llano County.
3. Identify where internet is lacking in the county and to determine the best action to provide or improve service, including the best system to use and potential ISP(s) to provide this and why.
4. Prioritize the locations and systems to be deployed to provide or improve internet service with a consideration to reaching the most users in concentrated areas, the ease of providing the service, the internet infrastructure already in place to utilize, the time required to implement, the need for additional infrastructure and the cost that might not be borne by the ISP.
5. Determine necessary easements, right-of-way, co-location, zoning and permitting to build additional infrastructure to support the project.

The selected consultant shall provide monthly progress reports to the Llano IT Committee and the study is to be completed within 90 days of the execution of the contract.

Qualifications

Qualifications submitted to Llano County should include the name of the company and name(s) of the internet professional(s) conducting the aforementioned tasks, including:

1. Dates and years of professional consulting experience in FCC compliance, broadband, fiber engineering, network backbone, wireless PtP & PtMP, fixed wireless, unlicensed and licensed wireless, satellite, internet provider services and/or installation and maintenance of such systems.
2. A summary of the prior work experience or services rendered regarding the aforementioned tasks with a preference of work conducted in rural counties.
3. A list of references related to prior professional services rendered regarding the aforementioned tasks.

Responses

Questions regarding this matter may be directed to the Office of the County Judge, Llano County, Texas, Llano County Courthouse, 801 Ford Street, Llano, Texas 78643 or call 325-247-7730. Questions are to be received by September 6, 2021 and responses will be published on the Llano County website <https://www.co.llano.tx.us> for all to view.

Written responses to this Request for Qualifications must be submitted to and received by Llano County on or before 12:00 noon on Monday, September 13, 2021 at the Office of the County Judge. Llano County Courthouse, 801 Ford Street, Suite 101, Llano, Texas 78643.

Responses and Questions may also be emailed to jbuchanan@co.llano.tx.us prior to the deadline.

Signed this 10 day of August 2021

Ron Cunningham

Ron Cunningham, Llano County Judge

PUBLIC NOTICE— (Request for Qualifications)—PROFESSIONAL BROADBAND SERVICES

Llano County seeks the submission of qualifications related to the procurement of professional services to be rendered to the County by a qualified Broadband Internet Professional Consultant to map internet services in Llano County and provide recommendations for improved internet services. Inquiries and submittals should be directed to the Llano County Judge, 801 Ford Street, Llano, Texas 78643, (325) 247-7730 and are posted on the Llano County website at <https://www.co.llano.tx.us>. RFQs must be received no later than 12:00 noon on Monday, September 13, 2021.