

Wayne County, North Carolina



Request for Information ("RFI")

For

High Speed Internet/Broadband Services

1/1/2017

**Proposal Submission Deadline:
February 28, 2017**

Mail or Hand Deliver RFI Documents To Primary Contact:

Chip Crumpler, Planning Director
Wayne County
134 North John Street, P.O. Box 227
Goldsboro, NC 27533-0227

Note: This **is not** a request for proposals ("RFP")

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

SUBJECT: High Speed Internet/Broadband Service Expansion or Delivery

INQUIRIES: All inquiries or questions must be directed to Chip Crumpler, Wayne County Planning Director, 919-731-1650, or email chip.crumpler@waynegov.com

Questions must be received no later than **February 15, 2017**. If a determination is made that a clarification or change to the RFI document is required, a written addendum will be posted on the appropriate sections of the websites of the Issuers. Respondents are responsible for obtaining all RFI updates.

Responses must be delivered at the following address no later than 5:00 pm EST on **February 28th, 2017**.

Attn: Chip Crumpler, Planning Director
Wayne County
134 North John Street, P.O. Box 227
Goldsboro, NC 27533-0227

Submit one (1) hard copy and one (1) electronic copy (via email to chip.crumpler@waynegov.com) of your response including any product literature or data.

Submittals must be labeled:

“RFI for High Speed Internet/Broadband Service Expansion or Delivery”

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The County of Wayne and its Board of Commissioners have been working with a group of concerned residents and the North Carolina Information Technology's Broadband Infrastructure Office ("NC BIO") to find alternatives to improve Internet service around the County. This is a summary of the accomplishments of this workgroup.

The County has recognized the importance of access to high speed internet service. In an effort to gauge internet satisfaction an online survey was created and made available for 60 days. Paper copies of the survey were provided at all County libraries, the Tax office and the Planning Department. Notices of the surveys were sent through the public school system reaching 19,000 students. Advertisements of the survey were made in local newspapers, radio, and television and through social media outlets.

The survey received a total of 678 responses.

- 86.2 percent of the respondent households have internet service, 13.8% do not.
 - Of the ones that don't – 58.1% say that no company will provide service.
 - 23.7% say they can't afford it.
- 65% have a wired service while 23% rely on wireless or cellular.
- 59% are not satisfied with their internet, 41% are satisfied.
- 72% say speed was the #1 answer for dissatisfaction, cost was #2, and reliability was #3.
- 69% found the internet service too slow for streaming live video content, #2 was general browsing, followed by #3, loading of webpages frequently needed.
- 30% of the responses said they would be willing to pay up to \$50/month for internet, 26% said up to \$25/month and 12% would be willing to pay up to \$75/month.
- 83% of the responses agreed to allow their information to be used in an effort to identify service solutions.

Wayne County, hereinafter referred to as "County," issue this Request for Interest ("RFI") to gather ideas and interest from service providers of High Speed Internet/Broadband (hereafter "Internet") services for affordable, reliable high speed Internet access for residential, business, and government constituents throughout the County.

This RFI is intended to outline the market opportunity and invite interested providers to submit their ideas for new or expanded service delivery in Wayne County. This process is one of many steps that the County is taking to help unserved and underserved areas throughout the county.

The County seeks ideas and interest from respondents on how to achieve the sole object to provide high speed internet/broadband service in underserved or unserved areas throughout the county. High speed internet/broadband service can include but not limited to the deployment of a fiber-to-the-home solution, fixed wireless solution, or some other type of last mile solution. Interested parties should provide information on

how its services can meet the FCC's broadband benchmark speeds of 25 megabits per second (Mbs) for downloads and 3 Mbs for uploads (https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-331760A1.pdf) or provide information as to how your advertised speeds can meet the broadband speed guide provided by the FCC (<https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/guides/broadband-speed-guide>).

Note: The County welcomes responses to this RFI from ALL interested or potentially interested parties. Since this is **only** to solicit preliminary interest and ideas, this RFI **should not** be interpreted as an invitation for bids or request for proposals. For the purposes of this RFI, the terms "respondent", "providers", "vendor" mean an entity or entities submitting a written response to this RFI.

2. RFI TIMELINE

A. Important Dates

Publish RFI	January 1, 2017
Deadline for Questions	February 15, 2017
Responses Due by 5:00 pm	February 28, 2017
Review of responses completed by County	March 15, 2017

B. Contact for questions and information requests

All general communications regarding the RFI or requests for additional information should be directed to:

Attn: Chip Crumpler, Planning Director
Wayne County
134 North John Street, P.O. Box 227
Goldsboro, NC 27533-0227

C. Further Process

Wayne County will evaluate the information gathered through this RFI process and make a determination on whether to proceed with a formal request for proposals (RFP) related to the deployment of high speed internet/broadband services.

An electronic copy may be downloaded from www.waynegov.com

Access to County data for the identification of demand and assets is available by request.

Any amendment or addendum to this RFI is valid only if issued in writing by the Wayne County.

Any changes in the process or updates to the schedule above will be posted on the websites of the County.

3. OBJECTIVES OF RFI

Located in the coastal plain region of eastern North Carolina, Wayne County is a strategic business location boasting a skilled workforce, an excellent transportation system with access to national markets and a strong economy that supports our region's diverse industries. Rich in history and full of modern amenities at a low cost of living, Wayne County is also a great place to live and rear a family.

Wayne County has four key industry sectors that are important to our community such as advanced manufacturing, aerospace & defense, agriculture & business, and the automotive industry. Quality education at all levels is a top priority in Wayne County. Our local and regional institutions pride themselves in preparing students who are job-ready. From a comprehensive public school system through higher education and ongoing professional training, Wayne County is committed to providing quality education for our residents and businesses. Wayne County offers a variety of housing options to meet every lifestyle and budget. The following graph provides a snapshot of the housing data in the County.

Housing Data

Housing units	53,213
Homeownership rate	60.7%
Housing units in multi-unit structures	13.7%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units 2009-2013	\$108,600
Households 2009-2013	47,330
Persons per household	2.54

All of these factors contribute to Wayne County's RFI for an Internet solution that will serve residents, business and governments throughout the County. Because areas of Wayne County are currently underserved or have no internet service, Wayne County wishes to obtain access to high quality Internet access at the benchmark speed by the FCC (see <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-finds-us-broadband-deployment-not-keeping-pace>) for its citizens and to encourage economic development.

The County is relying on the private sector and seeking last mile internet service providers to provide Internet to connect and serve the underserved or unserved rural areas of the County. A county-wide solution is optimal; however, it is understood that certain areas could potentially be chosen as a pilot for providers that do not have an existing footprint in the County. Incumbent providers are strongly encouraged to provide information as to proposed or future deployment in the identified unserved and underserved areas of the County.

The County believes that increased deployment of affordable broadband services is key to fostering innovation, drive job creation, and stimulate economic growth. Respondents to this RFI should provide options or recommendations to provide service to unserved or underserved areas.

4. REQUESTED INFORMATION

4.1. Cover Sheet (Attachment A)

- 4.1.1. Provide the full legal name of the Provider. Provide specific information concerning the agency, including: the agency's legal name and type of entity
- 4.1.2. The cover sheet must be signed by an owner, corporate officer, or agent authorized by the Provider.
- 4.1.3. The names of all principals of the Provider must be disclosed on the cover sheet; specifically, all persons who have an equity interest in the Provider organization and/or hold a senior leadership position in the Provider organization.

4.2. Previous Experience

- 4.2.1. Identify your previous experience in providing Internet services and broadband content in other markets
- 4.2.2. Customer segments served
- 4.2.3. Services and content offered, including pricing and contract terms
- 4.2.4. Customer Service capabilities and Technical Support practices, including service standards
- 4.2.5. Identify three references (names and contact information) who are familiar with your previous experience as a service provider

4.3. Preliminary proposal for Internet service and broadband content you would offer in the Wayne County market

- 4.3.1. Provide a detailed preliminary description of Internet service and broadband content you would propose to offer in the Wayne County market
- 4.3.2. What customer segments would you serve?
- 4.3.3. What services and content would you offer to various customer segments, including pricing and contract terms?
- 4.3.4. What Customer Service and Technical Support would you offer?
 - 4.3.4.1. How and where would you staff this?
 - 4.3.4.2. What service standards would you provide?

4.4. Other information, advice, or counsel you would offer to Wayne County with respect to this project

5. AREAS OF COOPERATION

To the extent not covered in previous responses, this section highlights ways that the County could cooperate with respondents to improve the business case for proposed solutions. We encourage respondents to be creative and suggest other types of partnerships or business opportunities of interest

Specifically, this section could include:

1. Resources and facilities: Explanation of need for access to community assets and resources. Respondents should also address the relative importance and impact of variations in terms or more flexibility with respect to accessing the following types of community assets, facilities, and policies:

- a. Pole Attachments
- b. Utility conduits
- c. Dark fiber
- d. Backhaul or ISP partnerships involving local, statewide or regional fiber assets
- e. Public Rights of Way
- f. Undergrounding policies
- g. Other community assets, facilities (including radio towers) or policies not specifically mentioned above

2. Regulatory environment: Description of any rules or regulations at the federal, state or local level that could impact the feasibility or underlying economics associated with the proposed solutions. Responses should also include an explanation of any forms of proposed regulatory relief, including streamlined permitting, which could improve the economic case for the business models or network solutions proposed or for other network solutions that respondents considered but dismissed due to existing regulations and their effect on economic viability of such proposal.

3. Contracting issues: Explanation of any material considerations or expectations that respondents have with respect to any of the following issues likely to be negotiated during any future Requests for Proposal:

- a. Intellectual property
- b. Insurance c. Indemnities
- d. Warranties
- e. Dispute resolution
- f. problems with current providers if any.
- g. Other contracting issues not specifically listed above

4. Other partnership or revenue opportunities: Discussion of any other types of partnerships or working relationships between respondents and Supporters which could improve the business case for respondents to partner with one or more Supporters. For example, a company may work with universities and the surrounding communities to develop partnerships that allow the company to deliver voice, video and data services, and/or to pilot cutting-edge new products, recruit new employees, or enter branding and marketing agreements.

6. TERMS, CONDITIONS AND DISCLAIMERS FOR RFI

Responses to this RFI become the exclusive property of the County. All documents submitted in response to this RFI may be regarded as public records and may be subject to disclosure. This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes and does not constitute a solicitation. No material submitted in response to this RFI will be returned. Respondents are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFI.

1. Confidentiality

All submissions are subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law. To the extent that respondents desire to submit proprietary information to the County, the County represents that it will use all reasonable efforts to claim available exemptions under the NC Public Records Law (NCPL), and will notify the affected respondent if an NCPL request is received in connection with that proprietary information. The respondent will be given an opportunity to seek court action to prevent release of information. All materials that the respondent believes are proprietary **MUST** be labeled “CONFIDENTIAL.” The County cannot guarantee that its efforts to claim available exemptions will be successful and the County may be required to disclose the respondent’s information, even that which is labeled proprietary, privileged and/or confidential.

2. Incurred Costs

The County will not be liable in any way for any costs incurred by respondents in replying to this RFI, including, but not limited to, costs associated with preparing the response or participating in any site visits, demonstrations, conferences or oral presentations.

ATTACHMENT A: COVER SHEET

Name of Person, Business or Organization:	
Type of Entity: (e.g. Sole-Proprietorship, Partnership, Corp., Non-Profit, Public Agency)	
Federal Tax ID Number:	
Contact Person - Name	
Contact Person - Address	
Contact Person - Phone Number (s)	
Contact Person - e-mail address	

By signing this ***Cover Sheet*** I hereby attest: that I have read and understood all the terms listed in the RFI and I have read and understood all terms listed in this request.

Signature of Authorized Representative
Representative

Printed Name of Authorized
Representative

Date

Printed Title of Authorized Representative