



**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**Broadband Mapping Project**  
**Request for Information**

TODD STAPLES, COMMISSIONER

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**Statement of Purpose.** The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) requests information for the delivery of broadband service to unserved and underserved Texans. TDA anticipates seeking grants administered through the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and / or the Rural Utilities Service of the United States Department of Agriculture to secure funds for a statewide mapping project, and possibly also for broadband service delivery expansion into more unserved and underserved areas of the state. These funds have been appropriated in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 and TDA is taking this action in anticipation of decisions from the federal agencies on how they will use state governments to administer the funds. This is not a request for proposals but the information submitted will be helpful in developing such a request once the federal agencies make administration decisions.

Pursuant to the initiatives set forth in Broadband Data Improvement Act of 2008 (hereinafter "BDIA"), 47 U.S.C. § 1301, et seq., the TDA anticipates the mapping project will be utilized to: (1) provide a baseline assessment of broadband service deployment in the State of Texas; (2) identify and track areas that have low levels of broadband service deployment, the rate at which residential and business users adopt broadband service and other related technology information services, and possible suppliers of such services; (3) identify barriers to the adoption by individuals and businesses of broadband service and related technology information services, including whether or not the demand for services is absent or the supply for such services is capable of meeting the demand for such services; (4) identify the speeds of broadband connections made available to individuals and businesses within the State of Texas; (5) create or facilitate, in accordance with the BDIA a local technology planning team to benchmark technology use across relevant community sectors, set goals for improved technology use within each sector; and develop a tactical business plan for achieving its goals, with specific recommendations for online application development and demand creation; (6) establish a plan to work collaboratively with broadband service providers and information technology companies to encourage deployment and use, especially in unserved areas and areas in which broadband penetration is significantly below the national average, through the use of local demand aggregation, mapping analysis, and the creation of market intelligence to improve the business case for providers to deploy; (7) establish a plan to improve computer ownership and Internet access for unserved areas and areas in which broadband penetration is significantly below the national average; (8) collect and analyze detailed market data concerning the use and demand for broadband service and related information technology services; (9) develop a plan to facilitate information exchange between public and private sectors regarding the use and demand for broadband services

between public and private sectors; and (10) create within the State of Texas a geographic inventory map of broadband services, including the data rate benchmarks utilized by the Federal Communications Commissions which reflect different speed tiers, which shall identify gaps in such service through geographic information system mapping and provide a baseline assessment of statewide broadband deployment in terms of households with high speed availability.

**Eligibility.** Responses will be accepted from contractors with proven experience in delivering statewide broadband mapping, and that can specifically address the initiatives and capabilities set forth in the BDIA. Customer references and a list of completed projects will be required. Additionally, companies with business interest in broadband service delivery and contractors with expertise in broadband service delivery are encouraged to submit information on the topics requested.

**Response to RFI.** Each response must include the following information:

**a. Overview of the Company**

Provide a description of the company, including general experience and history in performing broadband mapping services or experience with broadband service delivery, date founded, number and location of offices, total number of professionals and employees in the company, description of specialty practice areas and company philosophy. Describe structure of company ownership (e.g., publicly held corporation, partnership, etc.) any parents, affiliates or subsidiaries of the company.

**b. Detailed Plan of the Proposed Broadband Mapping Service**

Information provided should include, but not be limited to, responses to the following questions and requests:

- 1) Describe the approach your company would take in preparing a map of existing facilities with respect to the following matters: geographic granularity, identification of facilities based on speed tiers and broadband technology, feasibility of integrating a state map into a searchable national database, access by telecommunications providers and public entities to mapping information, and updating the map after the completion of the initial mapping.
- 2) In identifying areas that are underserved or unserved, describe the approach your company would take to assess demand for broadband service and the long-term feasibility of broadband service. How would important public and quasi-public users, such as education, health, law enforcement, and local government institutions be incorporated into the assessment?
- 3) What steps would your company take to ensure widespread participation of broadband providers and potential providers in the collection of data and the representation of their facilities on the broadband map, including steps to address issues relating to confidentiality of competitively sensitive information and other challenges that may arise?
- 4) Please provide an estimate of the cost of preparing a broadband map for the State of Texas. Specify the major tasks that would be included in preparing the map.

NOTE: TDA may identify specific project parameters in a possible subsequent request for proposals. Submissions to this current request for information will be used only for informational purposes and it is understood that the cost estimates in subsequent submissions will vary according to those project parameters.

- 5) How long would it take your company to complete the broadband map from the date of an award of a contract by the State of Texas?
- 6) Please list any prior experience your company has in preparing comprehensive broadband maps for other states.
- 7) Does your company have recommendations on how the State of Texas could satisfy its 20% matching obligation under the BDIA? Could your company assist the State of Texas in identifying organizations that would participate in satisfying the match obligation?
- 8) Could your company provide assistance in preparing a BDIA grant request for funds for mapping?
- 9) Would a broadband map prepared by your company assist the State of Texas in establishing programs to improve computer ownership and Internet access for underserved and unserved areas? If so, how?

Text should be no less than 10-point font type size (Times New Roman or Arial).

**The Next Steps.** This Request for Information (RFI) is issued solely to assist TDA in its planning processes and for data collection purposes. It does not constitute a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), a Request for Proposals (RFP), or other solicitation document, nor does it represent a definite intention to issue an RFQ or RFP in the future. This RFI does not commit the department to contract for any supply or service whatsoever.

TDA will review all responses that are timely submitted. If funds become available to TDA through the ARRA for this purpose, the department will determine the best plan for broadband mapping and pursue developing it. As the next step, all persons who are interested in developing a broadband inventory map of Texas would be requested to submit their proposal for developing this product.

**Deadline for Submission of Responses.** Responses to this request should be submitted to Mr. Rick Rhodes, Assistant Commissioner for Rural Economic Development, Texas Department of Agriculture, P. O. Box 12847, Austin, Texas 78711. The street address is 1700 North Congress, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor, Austin, Texas 78711.

Fax: (888) 216-9867, e-mail: [rick.rhodes@texasagriculture.gov](mailto:rick.rhodes@texasagriculture.gov)

Submissions must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 15, 2009.

TDA will send an acknowledgement receipt by email indicating the response was received.

**Assistance and Questions.**

Please contact Rick Rhodes (512) 463-7577 or by email at [rick.rhodes@texasagriculture.gov](mailto:rick.rhodes@texasagriculture.gov) with any questions you may have.