



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Request for Proposal

Community Connections

FCC Healthcare Connect Fund & Telecommunications Program

Community Connections is seeking bids for telecom and Internet services under the FCC's Healthcare Connect Fund and Telecommunications Program, for up to 5 years. Community Connections is a health services organization with a total of two locations, one in Ketchikan, with the other in Craig, and is seeking options to compare and weigh, their budget, overall cost, and features and benefits from the proposed network solutions.

Overview

Community Connections is a Nonprofit Corporation in good standing, with principal offices located at 721 Stedman St, Ketchikan, AK 99901. Clients receive services in person and remotely using telehealth technologies. Some of the services that the network must support are: speech, physical and occupational therapy, Psychological assessments, individual, family and group counseling and skill building. Additional administrative functions such as team meetings, submitting reports and keeping secure and confidential patient records should all be supported. Their mission is *“Providing individualized, customer guided supports that encourage independence, community belonging and quality of life.”*, and core values are

We believe that there is strength in diversity and we value those natural individual differences such as culture, religion, personality, and disability that both challenge us and make each of us unique. Our services focus on bringing out the best in each person, and respecting the unique talents, interests, and values of both staff and the individuals we serve. We build on people's strengths.

We are committed to excellence and continuous improvement and will strive to use best practice in our management, and all of the services we provide. If we try something and it doesn't work we are willing to try another way.

We seek to maximize community participation of the people we serve. This means that through thoughtful planning, services are provided in the most natural and inclusive ways possible. Our services will be invisible to other community members and encourage independence.

We value professional integrity and respect and these values provide a foundation for how we treat our staff, peers, and the individuals we serve. This means assuming positive intent, practicing direct and supportive communication, maintaining confidentiality and honesty, and working toward mutual understanding.

We believe in the importance of collaboration and shared leadership and work to develop positive relationships and partnerships with the individuals we serve, other organizations, their staff, and with each other. Leadership is encouraged at all levels, most importantly in the families and individuals we serve.



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Requested Services

This request for proposal is seeking three options to establish new private and Internet connections at each of the sites described below in *Table 1*. *Table 2* describes private network requirements and *Table 3* describes Internet requirements. This proposal does not require vendors to provide the maximum speeds, but rather this request is to propose a range of speeds that are minimally required now and provide flexibility over time. If a vendor can demonstrate network efficiency with less than the maximum bandwidth requested, that solution will be considered.

Questions and answers related to this RFP should be posted to <https://health-econnect.net/rhc-qa/>. Your personal and business identity will remain confidential to the public. Only Community Connections and this consultant, Health-e Connect, have the capability to see who posted questions. Answers will be posted to any submitted question.

In all options the following should be considered.

Quality of Service (QoS)

All local access circuits and Vendor's core infrastructure network should be designed to deliver QoS, specifically DSCP from end-to-end. Vendor will be required to prioritize traffic with QoS to ensure packet delivery and latency remains at or above industry standards for the routing protocols as well as for switching.

Network IP services

(As a requirement the vendor must be able to guarantee that the requested services are included in the SLA/contract for each connection that will be made. If the parameters cannot be met after the point of implementation, Community Connections reserves the right to terminate any and all contracts, based on the fact that services are not being met as specified.)

1. Specified bandwidth for each site as contracted can be demonstrated and obtained
2. Administrative network security policy and operational requirements for data transport that meets HIPAA security and privacy requirements of State and Federal regulations and statutes.
3. Support for standards-based encryption protocols.
4. Requirements defined for common technical standards and operational procedures to maintain system reliability, relevant parameters include:
 - 4.1. An average end to centralized Ketchikan hub site delay of less than 20 millisecond is preferred for terrestrial circuits
 - 4.2. Provide less than (<) 0.1% packet loss.
 - 4.3. Provide less than (<) 20 millisecond jitter (delay variance).
 - 4.4. Provide no less than 99.99% network availability annually.

Proposed system testing and acceptance provisions will be required on all bid proposals. Community Connections reserves the right to work in concert with the selected vendor to develop appropriate test and acceptance criteria for a specific installation or configuration, to be defined and accepted by both parties prior to contract initiation.



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Bid Time Frame and Due Date

Community Connections will accept bids for 40 days. The last day to submit a proposal for service will be Monday, March 27 by Noon, Alaska time.

Additional Information

Community Connections has 4 other clinical offices, an off site data center and a SIP trunk as part of their enterprise data network. The SIP trunk is 14 channels, with a contract expiration in 2025. Proposals providing a discount for the SIP trunk under either the Telecom program or the Healthcare Connect Fund, will be accepted. The other clinical locations are connected with either local DSL service or local loops.

Locations

Headquarters
721 Stedman Street
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Craig - Main Office
1800 Craig-Klawock Hwy #241
Craig, Alaska 99921

Table 1

Private Network Bandwidth

Location	Minimum bandwidth	Maximum bandwidth
Headquarters	50/50 Mbps	1/1 Gbps
Craig - main office	30/30 Mbps	100/100 Mbps

Table 2

Internet Only Bandwidth

Location	Minimum bandwidth	Maximum bandwidth
Headquarters	50/50 Mbps	1/1 Gbps
Craig - main office	30/30 Mbps	100/100 Mbps

Table 3



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Bid Criteria

Criteria	Evaluation Weight (%)	Minimum Requirement
Cost	40	Must provide the best value when all factors are considered.
Contract modification provisions	10	Contract should allow for upgrades, downgrades and moves without penalty.
Management capability, including solicitation compliance	10	Vendor must demonstrate a minimum of 5 years experience with the USAC RHC program, specifically in Alaska.
Quality of transmission	10	Network engineering standards, and build quality to provide quality transmission will be evaluated.
Reliability of service	10	History of unscheduled network outages will be considered.
Technical support	10	Availability of technical support and ease of access and working with network technicians to resolve issues, will be evaluated.
Personnel qualifications, including technical excellence	10	Individual program experience as well as technician seniority, certifications, education and training will be evaluated.