

**SOUTHEAST KENTUCKY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
MOVING EASTERN KENTUCKY FORWARD WITH BROADBAND**

I. General Information

Project Objective: Develop a feasibility study identifying short and long-term projects promoting economic development utilizing broadband.

Issuing organization: Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation
(SKED)
2292 S. Highway 27
Somerset, KY 42501

RFP Issued: August 18, 2016
Questions must be received by: August 25, 2016 4:30 p.m. EST
Reponses to questions: August 29, 2016 4:30 p.m. EST
Due date for proposals: September 6, 2016

The policy of the SKED Board is to solicit proposals with an honest intention to award a contract. This policy will not affect the right of SKED to reject any or all proposals.

Contact for further information: Brett Traver, Executive Director
btraver@centertech.com
Phone: 606-677-6100

II. Summary

The Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED) is seeking consulting services to conduct a feasibility study to identify economic development projects that capitalize on the installation of broadband fiber to create jobs in 26 negatively impacted coal counties. Consultant will identify 3-5 short-term projects that have strong community support and can be completed in 6 – 24 months at a cost of \$500,000 - \$2 million and 3 – 5 long-term projects that require additional planning and funding.

Process will consist of data analysis on available workforce, business sites and buildings; Kentucky Wired fiber installation plan; and other planned activities related to the Kentucky Wired project. A significant amount of time should be spent in the field to determine the best projects and confirm community support. Grading criteria will be developed by the consultant to allow for ranking of each project. A detailed plan for each short-term project should include: itemized cost estimate; initial site plans; source & use of funds; economic impact analysis; community suppot and additional information as needed to seek funding for each project.

Long-term projects should provide preliminary information about the project including a broad scope budget and preliminary plan of action to help move forward toward more detailed plans and potential funding.

III. Background

SKED is a community development organization formed in 1986 to create employment opportunities in a 45-county service area in Southern and Eastern Kentucky. It accomplishes this mission by recruiting new businesses, making direct loans, providing entrepreneurial training and technical assistance to businesses, and providing economic development services to local communities. Since its creation, SKED has secured loans and grants totaling more than \$20 million, providing funding for over 250 businesses which in turn have created more than 10,000 jobs throughout the region.

IV. Scope of Work

SKED is seeking a consultant to lead the efforts in identifying projects that will leverage the broadband services that will be available through the KentuckyWired I-Way Broadband network to diversify the economy and create jobs in the negatively impacted coal counties of: **Bell, Boyd, Breathitt, Clay, Elliott, Floyd, Harlan, Jackson, Johnson, Knott, Knox, Laurel, Lawrence, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Magoffin, Martin, Menifee, Morgan, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Rockcastle, Whitley, and Wolfe counties**. The Project Area is one of the poorest regions in the nation and has been since the original war on poverty began in the 1960's. The population of the 26-county area is 589,519. The median household income is \$27,824 which is 65% of Kentucky's median income. The poverty rate for the area is 29.6% compared to 18.6% for the state. These economic conditions have been exacerbated by the drastic decline in jobs in the coal industry during the past 10 years. Limited resources and infrastructure must be utilized to the fullest extent in order to make a positive difference in the current economic conditions.

This feasibility study will effectively evaluate how best to use the available broadband services to diversify the economy and create jobs in Eastern Kentucky. SKED is working with the SOAR Initiative, Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, Center for Rural Development, East Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program, Kentucky Highlands Investment Corp., MACED, the Area Development Districts and other local economic development organizations on this mission and should be valuable partners in this initiative.

Some of the questions we want to address are as follows:

- How can broadband services be best utilized for job creation and economy diversification?
- What short-term projects would have the most impact on job creation?
- Which communities are best prepared to utilize these services?
- Which communities are prepared to invest their own time, money and efforts into their project?
- What partnerships can/should be developed to bring the project to fruition?
- What is the proposed budget for each project?

- What are the funding opportunities?
- What is the potential economic impact for each project and how do we best leverage the project for the greatest effectiveness?

We want the process to include staff, board members, partner organizations, community and industry partners from throughout the region.

The consultant will work with SKED staff, a Planning Committee of Board Members and regional leaders.

V. Deliverables

A final list of short-term projects will include:

- Strategic analysis of the project
- Economic impact analysis
- Cost estimates to include; site, infrastructure, building, renovation, engineering, permitting and other costs as needed
- Preliminary site, building and renovation plans including renderings
- Marketing plan for projects
- Source and use of funds document to bring the project to fruition
- Detailed listing of community support
- All other applicable documents to make the project shovel ready and best positioned to seek state and federal funding

A final list of long-term projects will include:

- Strategic analysis of the project
- Economic impact analysis
- Cost estimates to include; site, infrastructure, building, renovation, engineering, permitting and other costs as needed
- Preliminary site, building and renovation plans including renderings
- Next steps to bring this project closer to shovel-ready

VI. Timetable

Questions must be received by:	August 25, 2016 4:30 p.m. EDT
Reponses to questions:	August 29, 2016 4:30 p.m. EDT
Due date for proposals:	September 9, 2016 Noon EDT
Reach award decision and notification:	September 15, 2016
Planning activities:	September 16 – October 3, 2016
Execution of activities:	Oct. 3, 2016 – Feb. 28, 2017
Plan draft submitted to SKED & Partners:	March 14, 2017 (Comment Period)
Final plan submitted:	April 14, 2017
Public revel at communities	April 17 – 14, 2017

VII. Selection Process

A SKED committee will review all proposals. In evaluating proposals, price will not be the sole factor. The Committee may consider any factors deemed necessary and proper, including but not limited to: price, quality of service, response to this request, experience, staffing and general reputation.

VIII. Information Required of Respondents

In responding to the RFP please use the following format.

Section 1. Summary of Proposal

Provide a brief summary of the Sections II through VI of the proposal.

Section 2. General Description of Planning Activities Recommended

Provide a brief statement of your understanding of requested effort including conclusions.

Section 3. Work Plan

Provide information about proposed activities that would involve key stakeholders such as SKED Board and staff, regional economic development leaders, state and local elected officials, etc. Also provide a timetable for completing the process within the timeframe in Part VI.

Section 4. Staffing Plan, Including Resumes

Please identify each person who will work on the project and identify his or her role. Also provide a resume and reference for each member.

Section 5. Budget

For each task in Section III, please identify the expected hours of staff members identified in Section IV and the total cost. SKED will reimburse the consultant for completed tasks associated with developing the strategic plan. Please identify detailed costs for anticipated meetings.

SKED staff will be available to assist in arranging meetings, information gathering, surveys and other activities determined during the planning of activities.

Please use the following budget format:

Activity	Staff	Hours	Project Cost
		Total	

Section 6. References

Please supply the names of three references for which you have worked on similar projects. Include the current contact information for each reference.

IX. Proposal Submission

Proposals should be prepared in a straightforward manner to satisfy the requirements for the RFP. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content.

Questions regarding this RFP shall be emailed to Brett Traver, executive director, at btraver@centertech.com by 4:30 p.m. EDT August 25, 2016.

SKED Committee may request representatives of a bidding organization be available for an in-person or teleconference interview. Any travel expenses and costs related to the interview will be the responsibility of the bidder.

SKED will reach a decision on awarding the contract no later than September 15, 2016.

X. Additional Information

Consultants may provide any additional information it feels would assist SKED in the selection process.