



# PROJECT THOR RFP

NORTHWEST COLORADO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS REGIONAL BROADBAND PROGRAM

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (NWCCOG) is requesting responses to this RFP from qualified firms to provide resilient middle mile broadband network connectivity and aggregated bandwidth for all IP traffic delivered through a series of Meet Me Centers. These Meet Me Centers will be located initially around NW Colorado and are detailed in this RFP.

**Proposals will be accepted until 3:00 p.m. on Friday, November 30, 2017.**

**Questions will be accepted until close of business November 15, 2017.**

Proposals may be delivered via mail, in person, or via e-mail:

**Northwest Colorado Council of Governments**  
**Attn: Nate Walowitz, Regional Broadband Coordinator**  
**PO Box 2308 / 249 Warren Avenue Silverthorne, CO 80498 [nwalowitz@nwccog.org](mailto:nwalowitz@nwccog.org)**

Only proposals received (not postmarked) by the deadline will be accepted. No proposals which are received after the time and date stated above will be considered, and any proposals received after the scheduled closing time and date mentioned above shall be returned to the submitting firm unopened. Hand carried proposals must be delivered to the NWCCOG at the street address shown above.

NWCCOG seeks a Network Provider to create and support Project THOR (Network), a resilient middle mile network across Northwest Colorado that also aggregates bandwidth to ensure reliable low cost broadband services. Both of these roles may be addressed either by a single respondent or by companies partnered to meet the requirements of this RFP.

Any award will be based on the evaluation criteria contained in this RFP

The NWCCOG reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to waive informalities, and to preserve any RFP responses. The NWCCOG also reserves the right to award the contract as it deems will best serve its interests and those of the NWCCOG Regional Broadband Project Region.

## **REGIONAL BROADBAND PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Beginning in 2013 NWCCOG undertook the development of a regional broadband strategic plan with the intent of improving broadband throughout the region primarily for the sake of contributing to economic development but also to improve quality of life and contribute to public safety. Regional participants includes all of the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments members (Eagle, Grand, Jackson, Pitkin and Summit Counties; most municipalities in those counties; Steamboat Springs; Glenwood Springs; and Carbondale). Additionally, Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt Counties chose to participate.

Each participating county appointed a representative to serve on a Regional Broadband Committee to help guide the efforts of the NWCCOG Broadband program. This committee still meets on an as needed basis to share successes, work items, and Broadband initiative and challenges in their communities. NWCCOG issued an RFP and selected Mid States Consultants to create a strategic plan for the region.

In early 2014, NWCCOG transitioned its Broadband program from strategic planning to initiative driven implementation. Nate Walowitz was hired as the NWCCOG Regional Broadband Coordinator in April 2014 to lead this effort. One of first accomplishments was the development of a targeted, measurable, actionable Regional Project Plan. This action plan was created through the integration of a number of recommendations in the strategic plan and stakeholder specific requirements based on meetings and site visits with all of the region's government stakeholders.

Funding for the development of the Strategic Plan and the Regional Broadband Coordinator position is provided, in part, through a grant from DOLA.

In June 2014, the NWCCOG Regional Broadband Committee approved a project plan that included 23 initiatives for 2014 and 2015. Progress on these initiatives is being accomplished by working cooperatively with our government and Economic Development District partners.

One of the successful methodologies we are employing to support our initiatives is forging close relationships with multiple levels of government officials and existing or potential service providers. This has allowed NWCCOG to develop synergistic conversations and relationships which benefit broadband initiatives within each of our jurisdictions and the region as a whole.

NWCCOG is working to address some of the challenges to ubiquitous broadband deployment that our county and local government stakeholders have in common. The lack of population density, distance between population centers and our beautiful mountain terrain clearly affects the business case for service providers that wish to create or extend their broadband infrastructure and networks in our region. To help off-set these economic factors, we are working closely with our stakeholders, service providers and the State Office of Information Technology to coordinate and prepare responses for FCC Rural Broadband Expansion Experiments funding.

NWCCOG Economic Development and Broadband teams are actively engaging with regional and local economic development officials to understand the population, visitor, and business metrics for each area and how Broadband availability and performance affects each community.

The NWCCOG Broadband project and our constituent government agencies continue to drive service providers to improve broadband services in NW Colorado.

One of the final recommendations of the regional strategic broadband plan is the creation of a regional network to address two of the largest region-wide challenges; middle mile network reliability and the cost of bandwidth.

Project THOR is designed to address both of these challenges through the creation of a resilient network architecture and the regional aggregation of bandwidth.

## Terms

### **NWCCOG Network Administrator**

NWCCOG developed the requirements for the Project THOR network and will contract with the selected Network Provider to deliver services based on the current and future Project THOR requirements. The Network Administrator will be the primary interface to the selected Network Provider.

### **Regional Broadband Committee (Regional Broadband Steering Committee)**

The NWCCOG Regional Broadband Committee or the Regional Broadband Steering Committee is comprised of IT Directors and County Officials who oversee the NWCCOG Regional Broadband Program

### **Network Provider**

The Network Provider is responsible for design, configuration, delivery, and management of all services defined in the RFP which support the objectives and intents of the Project THOR network.

### **Meet Me Center**

A Meet Me Center is a defined location where regional resilient connections and bandwidth are consolidated for connections to local community anchor institutions, businesses, and local Internet Service Providers. These locations may be owned by local governments or Community Anchor Institutions to support the Project THOR network.

### **Participating Entities**

Participating Entities are comprised of local governments, Community Anchor Institutions, and other organizations that will contract with the Network Provider and utilize the Project THOR network for resilient regional connectivity and bandwidth aggregation.

## Scope of Work

The purpose of this RFP is to find a qualified and experienced Network Provider to deliver Project THOR, a resilient open access transport, aggregation of bandwidth across all participants (Participating Entities), buildout and management of Meet Me Centers, and management of the entire proposed solution. Open access means that access and use of network services and Meet Me Centers will not be restricted, except for technical and/or financial limitations.

The Network will provide resilient broadband transport, IP services, network management and maintenance to Meet Me Centers. The Network Provider should be able to demonstrate core telecommunications competency as well as ability to support the unique requirements of Project THOR.

The Network Provider will assist the NWCCOG Network Administrator in leasing bandwidth and access

to providers and other potential users.

The Network Provider may also assist and support governments, providers and other interested parties acquire connectivity between the Meet me Centers and their points of presence.

The primary roles of the Network Provider are to operate, monitor, and manage the Network. This includes; configuration and maintenance of network components, fiber optic network components, capture and report network outages and anomalies including traffic throughput issues, and manage projects for the continued enhancement of the network as required by NWCCOG.

Meet Me Centers will be initially established at government and community anchor data center locations. Additional Meet Me Centers will be developed as required to serve expanding participant needs. See the map above for a visual depiction of the desired connectivity and Meet Me Center locations.

NWCCOG reserves the right to remove any task or refine the scope of work described below. NWCCOG also reserves the right to request best and Final Offers (BAFO) from Network Providers and negotiate final pricing with the selected vendor(s). Contract terms and conditions will be provided to the awarded vendor only.

## **1. Network Design**

- a. Develop a network design and pricing** that meets the Project THOR requirements and the individual needs of Participating Entities;
- b. Resilient Network Connectivity;**
  - i. Create a resilient network to support a regional resilient network loop that has both primary and secondary routing paths for network traffic to and from the Meet Me Centers;
  - ii. As requested by Participating Entities support a regional resilient network loop that has both primary and secondary routing paths for network traffic from Participating Entities locations and the Meet Me Centers.
- c. Bandwidth Aggregation**
  - i. Develop a methodology and an implementation plan to deliver savings to Participating Entities by aggregating the bandwidth usage by all Participating Entities;
  - ii. Support and recommend to the Network Administrator additional opportunities for additional bandwidth cost savings.

## **2. Network Build**

- a. Build out network elements** that implement the network design and requirements of Project THOR and Participating Entities;

## **3. Network OAM**

- a. Develop and gain approval of an OAM plan** to support the Project THOR network.
- b. Technical Network Provisioning:** The Network Provider should have capabilities to connect Meet Me Center Participating Entities on the Network, have capabilities to troubleshoot network connectivity issues, and provision network electronics. The Network Provider should specify relevant certifications, qualifications, and awards.

- c. **Monitoring and Inspection of the Network:** The Network Provider must set up a system for 24/7 monitoring and develop a plan for inspection of network equipment, cabling and any Network Provider owned or contracted infrastructure and maintenance of the Network to prevent down-time and minimize the likelihood of network outages; Network performance and outage reports will be sent to the Network Administrator.
- d. **Physical and Network Routing Maintenance:** The Network Provider will be responsible for performing locates and physical maintenance of the Network. The Network Provider must:
  - i. Immediately communicate problems and work to resolve emergency issues;
  - ii. Schedule maintenance;
  - iii. Provide notification to Network users of maintenance and emergency issues in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Network Provider Agreement;
  - iv. Keep a regular weekday schedule and provide a plan for off-hours 24 hour service as needed for network support and emergencies.

#### 4. Meet Me Center Design

- a. **Develop a common Meet Me Center design** that meets the Project THOR requirements and the individual needs of Participating Entities;

#### 5. Meet Me Center Build

- a. **Build out network elements** that implement the network design and requirements of Project THOR and Participating Entities;

#### 6. Meet Me Center OAM

- a. **Develop and gain approval of an OAM plan** to support the Meet Me Center requirements and the Project THOR network.
- b. **Technical Network Provisioning:** The Network Provider should have capabilities, to connect Meet Me Center Participating Entities on the Network, have capabilities to troubleshoot network connectivity issues, and provision network electronics. The Network Provider should specify relevant certifications, qualifications, and awards.
- c. **Monitoring and Inspection of the Meet Me Center:** The Network Provider must set up a system for 24/7 monitoring and develop a plan for inspection of network equipment, cabling and any Network Provider owned or contracted infrastructure and maintenance of the Network to prevent down-time and minimize the likelihood of network outages; Network performance and outage reports will be sent to the Network Administrator.
- d. **Physical and Network Routing Maintenance:** The Network Provider will be responsible for performing locates and physical maintenance of the Network. The Network Provider must:
  - i. Immediately communicate problems and work to resolve emergency issues;
  - ii. Schedule maintenance;
  - iii. Provide notification to Network users of maintenance and emergency issues in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Network Provider Agreement;
  - iv. Keep a regular weekday schedule and provide a plan for off-hours 24 hour service as needed for network support and emergencies.

#### 7. Network and Meet Me Center Security

- a. **The Network Provider will be responsible for defining and instituting a physical and logical Network Security Plan (including an annual security audit) for the entire network.**
  - b. **The Network Provider will be responsible for instituting a Network Security Plan (including an annual security audit) for all Meet Me Centers and developing a process for third parties to securely physically and electronically access the Meet Me Centers;**
  - c. **Network Provider will support security provisions to comply with HIPPA Network standards;**
  - d. **Network Provider will support security provisions to comply FBI Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) security policies;**
  - e. **Network Provider will comply and support all provisions of the State of Colorado Information Security Act**
  - f. **Network Provider will comply and support all provisions of the State of Colorado Information Security Policies**
  - g. **Network Provider will develop and implement a plan demonstrating conformance to ISO/IEC 27033 Network Security Standard**
  - h. **Network Provider will support security requirements of Participating Entities**
- 8. Network/Participating Entity Billing**
- a. **Provide billing directly to Participating Entities;**
  - b. **Implement Direct Billing to Participating Entities;**
  - c. **Verify and Validate Billing;**
    - i. Create and Implement a process to ensure timely and correct billing;
    - ii. Have a documented data collection and retention process to validate billing;
    - iii. Have a documented process for appeals
- 9. 3<sup>rd</sup> Party and Carrier Peering Interconnections**
- a. **Additional Anchor Institutions and Third-party Users:**
    - i. The Network Provider will work with Network Administrator to help bring in as many third-party users as Network Participants or Carrier/Internet Service Providers as possible;
    - ii. This may be accomplished through provision of lit services and/or and dark fiber leases;
    - iii. This may be accomplished through provider to provider peering.
- 10. Program Management**
- a. **Operations:** The Network Provider will provide administrative, billing, and operations services to the NWCCOG Broadband Steering Committee, including coordination of meetings and meeting agendas.
  - b. **Business Development or “Network development”** NWCCOG, in cooperation with the Network Provider will develop a contract template, pricing schedule and terms. The Network Provider will negotiate contracts for final approval by NWCCOG;
  - c. **The Network Provider will develop a plan for utilization and buildout of dark fiber** where needed;
  - d. **Maintain an inventory of fiber and Network assets** and fiber that may be available to be leased or IRU’d;

- e. **Network Mapping:** Network Provider will work with NWCCOG and the Network Provider to ensure that the Network map and inventory of all assets is accurate at all times.
- f. **Strategic Planning:** Network Provider will assist NWCCOG with long-term strategic planning of network expansion and regional coordination.
- g. **Business Operations:** Network Provider will provide administrative, billing, and operations services to the NWCCOG Broadband Steering Committee, including coordination of meetings and meeting agendas.
- h. **Future Planning – Participants, Carriers, Resiliency, Partnerships**
  - i. Support the Network Administrator in recommending, planning, and implementing future opportunities to integrate additional partners, carriers, and Participating Entities on the Network;
  - ii. Recommend to Network Administrator opportunities for increased cost savings, network reliability, and other network services that could be beneficial for Participating Entities.

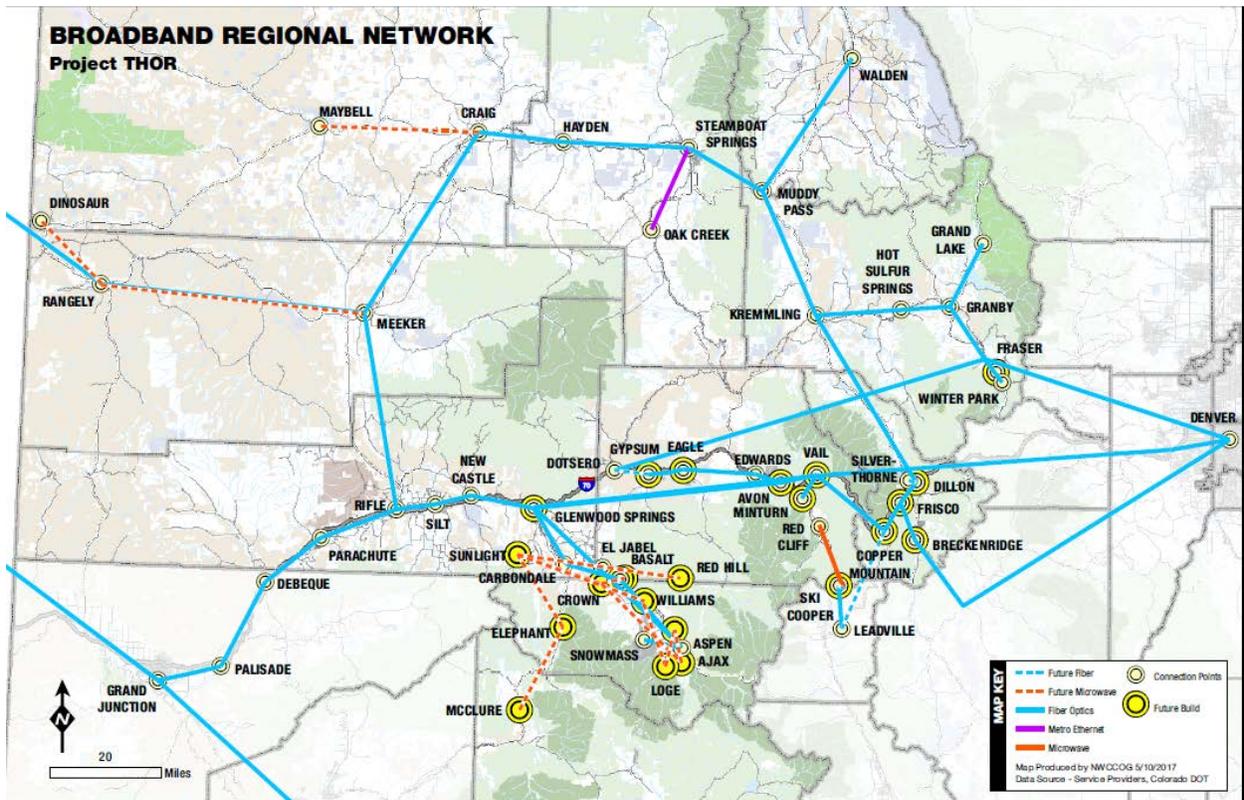
**11. Network Circuit Costs and Bandwidth Aggregation Savings**

- a. **Costs and Savings** will be pursued to ensure Project THOR is delivering measurable price savings and network reliability benefits to Participating Entities;
- b. **Non Recurring Expenses** A portion of the savings will be sent to the Network Administrator to assist in reducing needed non-recurring expenses to acquire additional fiber routes, lit fiber services, and additional regional meet me centers.

## Meet Me Center Locations

Initial Meet Me Centers	Location
Breckenridge, CO	Breckenridge Town Hall
Vail, CO	Town of Vail Data Center
Eagle County	Eagle County Government Facility, Gypsum, CO
City of Glenwood Springs	City Hall Data Center
Rio Blanco County	County Data Center Meeker, CO
Craig	Craig, CO
Northwest Colorado Broadband	Steamboat Springs, CO
Rifle	TBD
New Castle	TBD
Parachute	TBD
Kremmling	TBD
Grand County	Grand County

## Project THOR Initial Network Map



## Pricing

Network Provider must include an hourly rate schedule as well as a compensation schedule that includes the following:

### Network Costs

Item	Unit Cost (Monthly)	Discount from Retail
Transport Costs for Primary Routing Path to IXC		
Transport Costs for Secondary Routing Path to IXC		
Transport Costs for Primary Regional Transport Loop		
Transport Costs for Secondary Regional Transport Loop		
Support costs for Inter-Carrier peering		
Transport Network Configuration		
Transport Costs for CAIs to Meet Me Center (if requested)		
24/7 365 monitoring of network for outages and service degradation		
24/7 365 emergency troubleshooting and response		
Network infrastructure design and additions		
Non Recurring Costs for initial network configuration		
Hourly Costs for Additional Services		
Monthly Administrative Fees		
5 gigabyte IP (per MB)		
10 gigabyte IP (per MB)		
20 gigabyte IP (per MB)		
30 gigabyte IP (per MB)		
40 gigabyte IP (per MB)		
50 gigabyte IP (per MB)		
60 gigabyte IP (per MB)		
70 gigabyte IP (per MB)		

### Meet Me Center Costs

Item	Cost per Site	Discount from Retail
Meet Me Center Design		
Meet Me Center Configuration		
Meet Me Center Equipment		
Meet Me Center 24/7 support		
Non Recurring Costs for Additional Meet Me Center Integration		
Installation per site (must be fully loaded and		
Meet Me Center Moves/Adds/Changes		

Total Transport Cost (Monthly)		
Total IP Cost (Monthly)		
Total Network Non Recurring Costs		
Total Network Support Cost		
Total Meet Me Center Support Cost		
Total Meet Me Center Equipment Costs		
Total Installation per site (must be fully loaded and include labor)		

**PROJECTED OVERALL SAVINGS AND NRE FUND**

Total Savings off Retail for all services		
Total Potential Monthly Amount Transferred to Network Administrator for NRE		

**Response Requirements**

Vendor must respond to the following:

A cover letter stating the name, address and telephone number of the proposing Vendor. This letter must bear the signature of the person having the authority to make the proposal for the firm.

Individual or Company Overview: A descriptive background/history.

State principal business location and any other service locations. What is your primary line of business?

How long have you been providing services?

State how many locations where your services are now in use.

Are you a single source Provider, or will subcontractors also be used?

**1. Statement of relevant qualifications and experience.**

**2. Project approach:** Network Providers must address each task described in the Scope. Describe your approach, methods, tools, and how you will meet the requirements. Additional and alternative approaches may be included including items not listed in the scope.

**3. SLA Plan and NOC Services:** Network Providers must propose recommendations for providing services that will meet quality of service and carrier-standard service level agreements (SLA’s). Specifically include a Mean-Time-To-Repair, emergency and non-emergency response

time. Network Providers must also include detailed information regarding Network Operation Center (NOC) services.

**4. Project team:** Include a statement that your response includes the expert technical capability to provide the services, the manpower to execute the services either on-site or remotely. Include resume(s) or bios of individual(s) who will be performing the work. Network Providers must include certifications.

**5. Subcontractor plan:** Network Providers must identify subcontractors, provide company information and clearly identify those tasks that the subcontractors will be responsible for. Also indicate if you have worked with these subcontractors before and in what capacity.

**6. References:** Please provide a minimum of three (3) references where your firm and/or your proposed project team have deployed a similar service. Please include client's name, address, phone number, e-mail address, and description of work.

**7. Financial statements:** Include information relevant to your financial stability: financial statements, revenues over the past three (3) years, any pending lawsuits or legal actions against your company, and contact information for your financial institution. Include your coverage for general liability, workers comp, professional liability and errors & omissions insurances.

**8. Pricing:** Proposal must include a pricing model in accordance with the matrix below. Alternative pricing proposals will be considered as long as the pricing matrix below is also completed.

## NETWORK PROVIDER QUALIFICATIONS

Proposals will be considered only from Network Providers who have experienced personnel and necessary equipment to provide the required services. The NWCCOG may request information substantiating the requirements. Failure to provide this information may result in a Vendor's proposal being declared non-responsive.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

The NWCCOG will analyze information provided by all Network Provider RFPs. Criteria considered by NWCCOG in ranking proposals will be as follows:

Company Overview - 5 Points

Solution Capabilities and NWCCOG Requirements - 30 Points

Qualifications/Professional – 20 Points

Competence/Training 20 Points

References 5 Points

Total Cost for Service 20 Points

TOTAL 100 Points

## **AWARD CRITERIA**

The NWCCOG will make this award based on best qualified solution.

## **EVALUATION AND CONTRACT AWARD**

The NWCCOG shall evaluate and select a Network Provider to provide the required services based on the completed proposal responses. The NWCCOG shall be the sole judge in determining how the evaluation process shall be conducted and what Vendor shall be considered for award as deemed to be in the best interest of the NWCCOG.

## **PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS**

The proposal must be signed by a company representative authorized to bind the Network Provider contractually. Failure to read the RFP and these instructions will be at the Network Provider's own risk. Corrections and/or modifications received after the closing time specified will not be accepted.

All information submitted in response to this RFP is public after the award and/or contract has been executed with the successful Vendor. If Vendor includes as part of the response to the RFP any information that the Vendor believes to be a trade secret or other privileged or confidential data, the Vendor must supply under separate cover and identify as confidential. Statements that the entire proposal is confidential will not be honored. NWCCOG will endeavor to keep that information confidential, separate and apart from the proposal subject to the provisions of the Colorado Open Records Act or order of court.

## **INNOVATION & COMMENT**

Vendor may include any other information that is believed to be relevant but is not specifically asked for in this RFP. Vendor may explain in detail any innovation, alternatives, or more cost-effective approaches available in any area of the RFP. Vendor may provide suggestions of other products or services available that may assist the Region.

## **LOCAL PREFERENCE**

Preference will be given to companies with Colorado and/or NW Colorado local resources to support the objectives of this RFP.

## **PAYMENTS**

Project THOR Participating Entities will be invoiced directly at completion of work for Non-Recurring Expenses (NRE) and on an ongoing basis for Monthly Recurring Charges (NRC).

## **CONTRACT**

NWCCOG anticipates this to be an initial 3 year contract, subject to performance reviews.

NWCCOG anticipates that the selected Network Provider will work seamlessly to represent NWCCOG in

planning, construction and service coordination meetings with the Federal, State, Local Government, other community anchor institutions, organizations, vendors and service providers.

The Network Provider will collaborate and implement plans for network resilience; including physical and logical redundancy and fault tolerance.

## **KEY TARGET DATES**

Listed below are the key target dates associated with the project described in this

RFP Dates are approximate and may vary:

10/30/2017 Issue Date of DQ

10/30/2017 – 11/15/2015 Question Period

11/15/2017 Questions received during the question period will be emailed to all respondents, along with the answers

11/30/2017 by 5:00 p.m. MDT RFP Due Date and Time

Only 1 electronic copy of the proposal (if hand delivered) should be submitted.

## **WRITTEN AGREEMENT**

The selected Network Provider shall be required to enter into a written agreement with the NWCCOG. Signature on the Proposal Cover Sheet shall serve as an acknowledgement that the Network Provider is willing to enter into an agreement with the NWCCOG if their proposal is accepted.

## **OMISSIONS**

Should the NWCCOG omit information from this RFP that is necessary for a clear understanding of the work, or should it appear that various instructions are in conflict, then the Vendor shall secure written instructions from the NWCCOG at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to the time and date of the proposal opening.

## **DEBARMENT**

By submitting this proposal, the Vendor certifies that neither the company nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, in the process of debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal state department or agency.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

The NWCCOG adheres to a policy of equal opportunity and non-discrimination and will ensure that all Vendors will be treated fairly and equitably throughout the bidding process, including the advertisement, evaluation and selection stages.

## **COST OF DEVELOPING PROPOSALS**

All costs related to the preparation of the proposals and any related activities are the sole responsibility of the Network Provider. The NWCCOG assumes no liability for any costs incurred by Vendors throughout the entire selection process.

## **PROPOSAL OWNERSHIP**

All proposals, including attachments, supplementary materials, addenda, etc. shall become the property of the NWCCOG and will not be returned to the Network Provider.

## **ADDITIONAL GENERAL INFORMATION & CLARIFICATIONS**

For additional information or clarification concerning the services specified in this RFP under Scope of Work, interested parties must submit their questions or comments, in writing via e-mail, to Nate Walowitz, [nwalowitz@nwccog.org](mailto:nwalowitz@nwccog.org). Questions will be received, answered in writing, and sent via e-mail to all firms who received the RFP or expressed interest in accordance with the dates designated in this RFP.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Late Proposals will not be accepted or considered. It is the responsibility of the Network Provider to ensure that his/her Proposal is properly delivered to the required authority at the time and place designated in this RFP.

NWCCOG will notify unsuccessful Network Provider via email or by telephone within approximately fifteen (15) days following the closing date for receiving Proposals. The NWCCOG's silence does not imply any acceptance or rejection of any quotation offer.

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute a commitment by NWCCOG to award a contract. NWCCOG reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals received in response to this RFP, to waive minor irregularities and informalities in Proposals received, or to cancel this RFP if it is in the best interest of the NWCCOG or Region to do so. The Network Provider agrees, if his/her Proposal is accepted by NWCCOG, to furnish supplies and/or services in strict accordance with the proposal specifications and at those prices set forth for each item in said Proposal.

The NWCCOG is exempt from federal tax (84-0639906), Colorado sales tax (State sales tax exempt no. 98-01956).