



**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
RFP SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

<b>RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:</b>	#201607153 – Broadband Data Collection and Mapping Services
<b>SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:</b>	August 23, 2016
<b>QUESTION &amp; ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:</b>	Augusta 26, 2016
<b>PROPOSAL DUE DATE:</b>	September 7, 2016
<b>RFP ISSUED BY:</b>	ConnectME Authority
<b>PROPOSALS DUE TO:</b>	Division of Purchases Burton M. Cross Building, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor 111 Sewall Street 9 State House Station Augusta, ME 04333-0009
<b>Unless specifically addressed below, all other provisions and clauses of the RFP remain unchanged.</b>	

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Authority responses**

Question #	Question	Answer
1	For A1; A recent report indicates that the providers are no longer submitting updated coverage mapping to ConnectME directly. Rather they submit required FCC Form 477 coverage data, which can then be retrieved and manipulated by the ConnectMe mapping vendor. Is this accurate? Do broadband providers in Maine have any obligation or incentive to share detailed coverage maps of their infrastructure and service footprints? Will the	Yes, the description of the receipt of data is accurate. As broadband is an unregulated service, there is no obligation to provide data. However, the data is a required component for an award of a broadband infrastructure grant request to be considered by the Authority. Both means of collection will likely be required in order to gather information. Some providers will share information beyond Form 477 while others are less inclined to do so. Occasionally, the Authority acquires datasets unrelated to the provisioning of broadband services. Examples are geographic locations of facilities such as schools, libraries, hospitals, and others. Inclusion of these datasets is sometimes required in the analysis of information and the production of maps.

	<p>winning contractor be collecting the required data primarily from coverage maps sourced from the providers themselves, or indirectly from FCC Form 477 data? To this end, can you describe what datasets are meant by the note “datasets acquired by the Authority will be provided to the contractor for inclusion in the inventory”.</p>	
<p>2</p>	<p>For A1; The current street level broadband availability mapping has been criticized by some as being inaccurate, incomplete, and not current. Can you provide a summary of the known shortfalls in the current inventory and any strategies recommended by current contractor or ConnectME stakeholders to address the deficiencies? I.e. How to avoid the same data pitfalls experienced in previous inventory work?</p>	<p>Accuracy of the data varies, depending on the source. Some providers use street-level data while others provide data by census block. Street-level data is still preferred. The Authority looks to the selected contractor to identify and develop means to avoid potential pitfalls.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>For A1; To what extent has the authority previously leveraged speed tests from the consumer side of the equation to validate or measure actual bandwidths being delivered as compared to advertised bandwidth speeds? How much does the authority expect the future vendor to</p>	<p>The previous contractor periodically analyzed speed test data to report trends to the Authority. The Authority views this as crowdsourcing as data has come from various locations around the globe as well as discreet locations in Maine. The Authority welcomes any additional leveraging of crowdsourcing tools or applications that the selected contractor may propose to increase the data set and response rate. The Authority does not envision an independent server to be a critical element to obtain speed test information for various analyses.</p>

	utilize crowdsourced speed test data? Would an independent ConnectME speed test server that can measure locally and accurately be a valid element and expense to budget?	
4	For A2, how was this done by the Authority previously to reach the current inventory data? Was it all derived from self reported coverage from providers?	Current inventory data is the result of self-reported information, FCC Form 477 information, and some targeted outreach to providers on the part of the previous contractor.
5	For A3, unserved area asset identification, what infrastructure other than towers (towers, etc.) is anticipated/required to be inventoried?	The current definition of unserved is service of lower than 1.5Mbps download. Therefore, any technology delivering this speed range (<1.5Mbps) should be inventoried.
6	For A4, "Where available, the fixed wireless dataset must also include terrain-corrected and/or building-corrected transmission areas for fixed-wireless broadband providers". Have fixed wireless providers historically submitted only general 'reach' radius mapping from tower points with no terrain/clutter correction? Is the winning vendor expected to refine all fixed wireless coverage mapping to this engineering level of exclusionary detail - and if so will the fixed wireless providers cooperate and share data on tower equipment heights, types,	Fixed wireless providers have generally provided detailed information, taking terrain, clutter, and other variables into account. Presumably they have found it advantageous for the Authority to have this information when it receives inquiries about broadband service providers from the general public.

	<p>broadcast strength/reach, and direction? What does the 'where available' qualifier refer to?</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>In A5, there is a requirement for inventory data update methods and procedures that are sufficiently standalone as to be transferrable to any subsequent vendor or operator. Because this is a continuation or renewal of an existing program, will the winner of this RFP inherit existing inventory data update methods and procedures from the incumbent/previous vendor? If so, where can we access this body of work, documentation, tools, and/or code to review and assess now as part of developing a response to this RFP?</p>	<p>Yes, the selected contractor will receive the existing inventory data, methods, and procedures. That information is not available during the formulation of a response to this RFP.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>The online mapping tools described in A7 will be a key deliverable. The vendor is expected to 'create, host, and maintain' the tools. Can you confirm that the bidder can and should build and host the tool OUTSIDE of any existing state online mapping infrastructure and may do so independent of MEGIS, Maine OIT, or others who may have technology requirements and constraints that impact the development and delivery of the requested tools? In</p>	<p>The selected contractor may offer technology of their choosing. However, be advised that the State of Maine GIS infrastructure is based on the ESRI ArcGIS platform which should be used to improve interoperability and data sharing options. Data must be provided in open source formats that are easily incorporated in commonly used GS and CAD systems. Data must include metadata meeting FGDC standards and must be easily accessible to GIS and CAD users.</p>

	other words is a cloud based application built on the geo technology stack of the vendors choosing allowed?	
9	For A8; Can you provide a historical estimate of the number of requests and level of effort to fulfill this ad hoc custom mapping requirement.	Refer to the static map gallery from the ConnectME Authority website ( <a href="http://www.maine.gov/connectme/find_options/static-gallery.shtml">http://www.maine.gov/connectme/find_options/static-gallery.shtml</a> ). The number of maps included is a compilation of work performed since 2009, much of it funded by a federal grant which has ended. It totals nearly 1300 maps amassed over time. It is likely that there will be a periodic requests for some maps such as statewide, legislative districts, grant rounds, and such. There may be, on average, two to three requests per month or 35 to 40 per year.
10	For A9; can you provide a historical estimate of the level of consulting and GIS support generally required of this vendor?	See similar question #25.
11	Budget: The bidder is required to quote a fixed price. But in A8 and A9 there is also a requirement to provide an unspecified amount of maps and services on request, each time with a quote. Should the ad hoc services be considered a part of the base fixed price, or would these ad hoc requests be paid over and above the fixed price quoted for the core data and systems services?	Item 8 of the Scope of Services to be Provided (Part II, A, items 1 through 9) allows for requests over and above the fixed price. Item 9 of the Scope of Services anticipates that consulting and GIS staff support will be included in the fixed price.  See similar question #25.
12	Section B4 states that the vendor must "Avoid all conflicts of interest with broadband and communications service providers." Does a vendor relationship with	The Authority knows of no particular conflicts of interest and, no, a vendor relationship with a service provider does not appear to be a conflict.

	any internet service provider present a conflict on its surface? Can ConnectME provide any examples of conflicts of interest?	
13	Because this work will be a continuation of a 5 year effort, it is important for bidders to know the level of effort and budget invested to date as a guide to future work. Can you provide scope of work and budget details for the mapping and data collection work performed by the originally contracted vendor since 2010? Do the past three years annual mapping data activities and expenditures represent the expected future level of effort and investment by ConnectME?	A PDF version of the originally-contracted work is included in the E-MAIL message distributing this document. The work of the past three years is not representative of the level of effort as the federal grant funding much of the work was still in effect. The work of the past two years is a better reflection.
14	Can the Authority provide bidders the current or most recent GIS data sets it is using for broadband mapping? If any of these data sets contain confidential and proprietary information, can the Authority describe the database structure and provide a list of the files that are confidential, the type of point, line, or polygon geographic unit used, and a list and description of the attribute fields for the files?	The Authority cannot provide the datasets in advance of the proposal due date. Potential bidders are encouraged to look at the static map gallery to view the types of products we will be requesting, albeit fewer in number. File types encompass point, line, and polygon.
15	What mechanisms or processes in the current assessment tool and inventory exist to provide for	The previous contractor has most recently relied on data obtained directly from broadband providers as well as from FCC Form 477 data. Additionally, the Authority has acquired other datasets. The selected contractor will be expected to

	annual updates to the dataset that will enable a successor to the operator or contractor to obtain and provide up to date information in the future?	use these means as well as others it may have to meet the contract requirements.
16	Will all GIS data products developed by the prior contractor for the Authority be available to the new contractor? If not, what data will not be available?	Yes, products will be available to the selected contractor.
17	The file RFP#201607153 - Broadband Data Collection and Mapping - 081216.pdf contains a footer stating, "Rev. 05/31/2016." Is this document the most current release of the RFP?	This is the most current release of the document. The footer pertains to the revised document template required of us by the Division of Purchases. An RFP amendment document will be released and distributed along with this Question and Answer document.
18	The level of effort involved to accomplish the requested services in Part II, pages 6-7, could vary substantially depending on a variety of factors, especially the level of independent data development and collection performed. Can the Authority provide guidance regarding the priority it places on cost vs. the level of validation activities? Does the Authority have a minimum requirement for independent development of broadband availability, speeds, levels, and type of service data by the contractor, or validation of these data elements if supplied by the provider? Does the Authority have a maximum budget under which all contractor activities, including independent data development and validation of provider-supplied data must fit?	<p>The Authority is interested in high-quality data at the lowest possible cost. The source of much of the data will be that which is supplied by providers as well as from the FCC Form 477, which requires information at the census block level.</p> <p>The Authority desires street-level data. Some providers accommodate the request more than others.</p>
19	What data sets referenced in Part II, A, 1 on page 6 does the Authority expect to be	The datasets to be acquired are unknown at this point. Datasets which the Authority has requested and added over time have not required great effort, in terms of validation, on

	<p>able to acquire and provide to the contractor?</p>	<p>the part of the previous contractor. The selected contractor may find broadband information in the Maine Office of GIS data catalog useful. It can be found at:  <a href="http://www.maine.gov/megis/catalog/">http://www.maine.gov/megis/catalog/</a></p>
<p>20</p>	<p>Part II, A, 1 of the scope of services on page 6 requires the contractor to collect data. To what extent does the Authority believe that the contractor will be rely on data supplied to the contractor or the Authority by broadband service providers regarding service availability transmission speeds, levels, and types, of service available, and to what extent does it wish to have the contractor perform independent efforts to collect or validate these data sets?</p>	<p>All historical data collected to date will be available to the selected contractor. It is expected that, going forward, the selected contractor will be able to rely on data submitted by some providers, while data from others will be more challenging to obtain. The selected contractor is expected to work independently to both collect and validate data, with periodic reports to the Authority regarding success and recommendations for change in approach to the particular aspect of the project and/or remedy to particular situations which may arise.</p>
<p>21</p>	<p>Regarding Part II, A, 2 of the scope of services on page 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Does the Authority have street-level data for broadband service availability, transmission speeds, levels, and types, of service available for any period after the conclusion of the State Broadband Data and Development program funding? If so, what is the most recent data set and is it available to review?</li> <li>o Does the Authority intend to require provider submission of street level data for broadband service availability,</li> </ul>	<p>The previous contractor has some street-level data from some providers through the fall of 2015. This information will be transferred to the Authority and will be shared with the selected contractor.</p> <p>The Authority cannot require data from any provider unless it is a party to an Authority-issued grant award. The Authority desires information from all providers. Contractor skill in obtaining information will be critical to the success of the contract. The Authority expects the selected contractor to propose methods for addressing non-submitting providers, with independent development of data being a possible approach.</p>

	<p>transmission speeds, levels, and types over the duration of the performance period(s)? Does the Authority intend to require that the contractor independently develop data for non-submitting providers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Please clarify the "levels" sought.</li> <li>o What level of independent data collection or validation of provider-supplied data has been performed on existing data sets for broadband service availability, transmission speeds, levels, and types?</li> </ul>	
<p>22</p>	<p>Regarding Part II, A, 1-2 of the scope of services on page 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o To what extent are providers currently consistently reporting street-level data to the Authority for broadband service availability, transmission speeds, levels, and types, and is it provided in point, polygon, or line form?</li> <li>o To what extent are providers with the largest geographic coverage, such as Time Warner</li> </ul>	<p>There is no requirement for providers to report information to the Authority. The only exception to this is for providers which are a party to a ConnectME Authority grant award. A requirement of the grant program is to report information such as the question poses.</p> <p>The Authority expects cooperation from all providers in supplying coverage information with street level accuracy and including maximum upstream and downstream speeds.</p> <p>Previously, under the federal grant program, providers were required to submit data to participating states but this required ended in 2014.</p> <p>The Authority continues to host a speed test application on its website. Data received is periodically analyzed. This will be a requirement of the new contractor.</p> <p>The Authority continues to use all speed tiers as identified by the FCC, and expects reported information to include maximum upstream and downstream speeds, as well.</p>

	<p>Cable and FairPoint currently consistently reporting street-level data to the Authority for broadband service availability, transmission speeds, levels, and types?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o To what extent are DSL providers currently consistently reporting street-level data to the Authority for broadband service availability, transmission speeds, levels, and types?</li><li>o To what extent are fixed wireless providers currently consistently reporting street-level data to the Authority for broadband service availability, transmission speeds, levels, and types?</li><li>o Is ConnectME still performing speed testing? Is this a part of the data collection or validation effort required of the contractor?</li><li>o What speed tiers is the Authority currently using in its data classification system and what tiers would it expect the</li></ul>	
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	<p>contractor to use?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Is there a speed threshold under which data collection is not required?</li> </ul>	
<p>23</p>	<p>Regarding Part II, A, 3 on page 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Does this refer only to infrastructure that could be utilized to provide <i>wireless</i> infrastructure?</li> <li>o Does the Authority have a pre-existing data set of public and private infrastructure that could be utilized to provide broadband service? If so, may bidders review this data set?</li> </ul> <p>Regarding Part II, A, 4 on page 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Are fixed wireless providers currently consistently providing the Authority with propagation maps? If so, what standards if any are there for such maps, such as signal strength or data transmission rates?</li> <li>o Does the Authority expect the contractor to develop propagation maps for fixed wireless broadband service?</li> <li>o If so, have fixed wireless providers given the Authority data about base station locations, frequencies used, transmit power, height above</li> </ul>	<p>Part II.A.3. should be interpreted to mean any public and private infrastructure, distinguished by but not exclusive of any type of technology.</p> <p>All existing data regarding known infrastructure will be shared with the selected contractor but not with potential bidders in advance of the September 7 deadline for submitting a proposal.</p> <p>For both fixed and mobile wireless, some, but not all providers are supplying data to the previous contractor with detail regarding speed.</p> <p>Yes, fixed wireless broadband service is a dataset which will be included in some mapping requests.</p> <p>Again, some fixed wireless providers have shared information regarding station locations, frequencies, power, and antenna detail.</p>

	ground level, and antenna models?	
24	Does Part II, A, 7 of the scope of services on page 7 require the online search tool to return a map showing the polygon areas of coverage or is a list of possible providers acceptable?	A list of possible providers is a sufficient initial response. There may be times when a coverage area map might be requested by the Authority. This would likely occur in order to more definitively clarify information which might be conflicting.
25	<p>Regarding the services requested in Part II, A, 8 and 9 at page 7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Does the Authority expect these services to be included or excluded from the fixed-price proposal?</li> <li>o If excluded, will the contractor be allowed to provide pricing time-and-materials or fixed-price proposals when work related to these parts is requested? Or is the Authority requesting separate time-and-materials rates for these items in this proposal?</li> <li>o Can the Authority characterize the expected type, volume and frequency of requests over a typical period?</li> </ul>	<p>Services related to Part II, A.8. should be excluded from the fixed price proposal as they are to be priced and quoted based on the specific request. Services related to Part II., A.9. should be included in the fixed price quote.</p> <p>Quotes for the excluded item (Part II, A.8.) will generally be based on time and materials but the nature of the request may warrant a fixed price quote.</p> <p>It is difficult to characterize requests which fall under Part II, A.9. Detail and complexity has varied with the previous contractor. For planning and budgeting purposes in preparation of a proposal in response to this RFP, use one to two requests per month for questions, matters requiring in-depth analysis, and collaborative efforts to support the Authority.</p> <p>See similar question #11.</p>
26	What is the expected cycle of updates? Twice Annually? Annually? More or less frequent?	Part II, A.1. specifies an annual update.
27	Appendix E, paragraph 1. For the purposes of the Economic Impact Statement, does the	Maine-based businesses are those with headquarters in Maine or with offices in Maine which employ Maine residents. Exclude businesses and individuals from the calculation when

	<p>Governor's order referenced intend that a "Maine based business" be one with headquarters in Maine, or should we include subs/partners who have employees based in Maine?</p>	<p>the above is not the case.</p>
<p>28</p>	<p>Appendix D, Cost Proposal. Is it permitted to present pricing detail in addition to the summary on the form which will enable the evaluators to recognize one-time fees from recurring fees in order to fully evaluate the projected budget?</p>	<p>Yes, inclusion of pricing detail is permitted but the Cost Proposal Form will be used as the basis for calculation and scoring.</p>
<p>29</p>	<p>Part II, A, 4 states "Fixed wireless must include terrain-corrected and/or building-corrected transmission areas for fixed-wireless broadband providers (so that areas blocked from service by buildings, mountains, or hills are shown as not receiving service. The base data source for address location shall be the State of Maine NG911 data, where available". Subsequently, we have 3 questions related to that section</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We assume you are referring to something analogous to a propagation map. Your paraphrased requirement states <i>fixed wireless must include <u>building-corrected transmission areas</u> so that areas <u>blocked from service by buildings...are shown as not</u></i></li> </ol>	<p>NG911 is not an elevation source dataset. The selected contractor is expected to obtain elevation datasets including the as-built environment to the maximum extent practicable before performing Radio Frequency (RF) propagation modeling functions to determine coverage extent based upon industry standards for Signal to Noise Ratio (SNR) required for establishing a connection to the fixed wireless transceiver.</p> <p>The State of Maine and others have acquired substantial LIDAR. The selected contractor is expected to use this data as needed to assist in this task.</p> <p>The Authority encourages fixed wireless providers to release precise specifics of their locations but recognize that may not always be possible.</p> <p>The Authority reference to fixed wireless is intended to encompass all operators using fixed wireless frequencies.</p>

	<p><u>receiving service.</u> Does your NG911 data include building heights, widths and refractive values of exterior composition for every structure in the state or is the assumption that the contractor is to purchase such data, if available, or use industry standard clutter data (empirical generalizations) for its fixed wireless modeling software (e.g. EDX)</p> <p>2. Do you anticipate that fixed wireless providers will be providing the exact specifics of their transmit locations or is the intent to utilize empirical generalization to create the provider-by-provider attributes of this layer?</p> <p>3. Are you referring to unlicensed, fixed wireless (such as 900 MHz, 2.4 GHz, 3.650 GHz, etc.) or all operators using fixed wireless frequencies including FCC licensed bands such as Educational Broadband Service, Broadband Radio Service, Advanced</p>	
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	Wireless Service (et al)?	
30	<p>On page 6, section A. 1, the RFP indicates that the contractor will create a statewide inventory of wired and fixed wireless high speed internet service to identify where current terrestrial broadband service and infrastructure exists and does not exist at a street-level of detail. In previous data collections/analyses, what was the level of data granularity on the maps (e.g., for wired services – addresses, streets/road segments, census blocks, and/or a combination of multiple types)?</p>	<p>Most of the coverage area data obtained was street-level in granularity, though some was based on road segment and still other was based on census block.</p>
31	<p>On page 6, section A.4, the RFP indicates that the dataset must be developed for use with accuracy standards equal to or better than the State of Maine NG911 roads data. Is there a publication available on those standards for review by respondents?</p>	<p>The metadata for the State of Maine NG911 Roads is available at:  <a href="http://www.maine.gov/megis/catalog/metadata/ng911rdss.html">http://www.maine.gov/megis/catalog/metadata/ng911rdss.html</a></p>