



**Request for Proposal  
Mountain States Health Alliance, Johnson City, Tennessee  
FCC Healthcare Connect Fund**

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**Background and Goals**

Mountain States Health Alliance (MSHA) is based in Johnson City, Tennessee and operates 13 hospitals serving a 29-county, four-state region (Northeast Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, Southeastern Kentucky and Western North Carolina). It is a not-for-profit health care organization, created in 1998 and is the largest health care system in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia.

MSHA offers a large tertiary hospital with a level 1 trauma center, a dedicated children’s hospital, several community hospitals, two critical access hospitals, a behavioral health hospital, two long-term care facilities, home care and hospice services, retail pharmacies, a comprehensive medical management corporation, and the region’s only provider-owned health insurance company. The combined facilities include over 1600 licensed beds.

MSHA offers services in 90 locations through more than 250 providers with 23 specialties throughout the region. It has over 1000 doctors including primary care physicians, as well as many specialty and sub-specialty physicians with access to state-of-the-art facilities dedicated to

specialized medical services. With over 8,000 team members, associated physicians and volunteers, MSHA is the largest employer in the region.

The Children’s Hospital at Johnson City Medical Center has an affiliation with St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, one of only six affiliates in the nation. MSHA also has an affiliation with Vanderbilt University Medical Center for recruitment and specialty care requirements.

MSHA facilities have received numerous regional and national recognitions by Truven Health, Becker’s Hospital Review, Health Grades and US News. It has been recognized as of the 50 best employers in the nation for workers over 50 by AARP. It is also listed among the nation’s 100 Most Wired Hospitals by Hospitals and Health Networks.

HCP Sites that are participating in this consortium are listed in Section 2 of this RFP

The goal of this program is to connect all the remote sites to the hospital's information systems to provide a central source for patient information. Connecting the clinics to the hospital's network allows the clinics to access all of its resources including primary EMR applications, current and NextGen information services.

The long range vision of the MSHA is to enable a set of standard telehealth connection services that will interconnect throughout the region and facilitate any healthcare location in the state to share one or more telehealth services with any other healthcare location within Tennessee and Kentucky and ultimately to interconnect with other health care providers regionally and nationally.

This RFP addresses the telecommunications and network maintenance to interconnect the main hospital and data center in Johnson City and the remote hospitals and multiple clinics and doctor’s offices. This includes: bandwidth for general Internet connectivity, voice, data circuits for sending and receiving medical billing info, files and/or images to and from remote locations, medical administration & telemedicine.

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## Participating Sites

Sites that are participating in this consortium are listed in the following table:

HCP NO.	HCP Name	HCP Address
12631	MSHA-Dickenson Community Hospital	312 Hospital Drive Clintwood VA 24228
12801	MSHA-Norton Community Hospital	100 Fifteenth Street NW Norton, VA 24273
12803	MSHA-Russell County Medical Center	58 Carroll Street Lebanon, VA 24266

12834	MSHA- Johnson County Community Hospital	1901 South Shady Street Mountain City, TN 37683
14950	Smyth County Community Hospital	245 Medical Park Drive Marion, VA 24354
27129	MSHA dba Unicoi County Memorial Hospital	100 Greenway Circle Erwin, TN 37650
32651	MSHA - Johnston Memorial Hospital	16000 Johnston Memorial Drive Abingdon, VA 24211
32652	MSMG- Glade Spring Family Medicine	636 South Monte Vista Drive Glade Spring, VA 24340
49607	MSHA - Government Liaison Office	32 6th Street Bristol, TN 37620
49608	MSHA - Human Resources - Corporate	3135 Peoples Street #303 Johnson City, TN 37604
49609	MSHA - Medical Call Center	1021 W. Oakland Avenue Johnson City, TN 37604
49489	MSHA-Franklin Woods Community Hosp.	300 Med Tech Parkway Johnson City, TN 37604
49491	MSHA-Indian Path Medical Center	2000 Brookside Drive Kingsport, TN 37660
49492	MSHA-Johnson City Medical Center	400 N State of Franklin Road Johnson City, TN 37604
49495	MSHA-Sycamore Shoals Hospital	1501 West Elk Avenue Elizabethton, TN 37643
49496	Johnson County Specialty Hospital	203 E. Watauga Avenue Johnson City, TN 37601
49793	MSHA - ITC Data Center	602 Med Tech Parkway Johnson City, TN 37604
49794	MSHA - Patient Resource	525 N State of Franklin Rd Ste 9 Johnson City, TN 37604
49795	MSHA - Reimbursement Department	311 Princeton Road Johnson City, TN 37601
49796	MSHA – Patient Resource	108 Woodlawn Drive Johnson City, TN 37601

## General Provisions

1. Frequently, sites have completed their original contract term, and have the benefit of being month to month, while maintaining their originally contracted rate. Requested bid contract terms are month to month, 1 year, 3year, and 5 year terms. When bids are reviewed, the benefits of not having a contract, or having a short term contract term, will be considered, along with price, and other factors such as implementation /cutover complexity.
2. To warrant consideration for an award of contract resulting from this RFP, proposers must agree to participation in the FCC Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) as administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) mechanism as provided for and authorized under the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Reference 47 U.S.c. § 254, "Universal Service").
3. Vendors acknowledge that any contractual relationship resulting from this solicitation of proposals may be partially or entirely dependent upon the successful receipt of HCF subsidies.
4. Mountain States Health Alliance will contract directly with organizations capable of performing the requirements of this RFP. Proposers must be represented directly. Participation by brokers or commissioned agents will not be allowed during the proposal process.
5. Mountain States Health Alliance is not responsible for any costs incurred by a vendor related to the preparation or delivery of the proposal, or any other activities carried out by the vendor as it relates to this RFP. Changes in applicable laws and rules may affect the award process or any resulting contracts. Vendors are responsible for ascertaining pertinent legal requirements and restrictions. Vendors are encouraged to visit the official FCC website pertaining to the Healthcare Connect Fund, at: <http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/rural-health-care#HCF>.
6. Mountain States Health Alliance may seek clarifications concerning the submitted proposal.
7. This RFP will become part of the contract with the selected proposer(s) for services. The proposer(s) will be bound to perform according to the terms of this RFP and their Proposals. The contract is to be a consortium-level contract and Mountain States Health Alliance will sign the contract for all locations.
8. The bidding period is 28 days from the day it is posted on the USAC web site. The proposal evaluation period is anticipated to be 30 business days.
9. In some cases, bids are being requested for connections and services that already have

circuits in place and are under existing contracts. Vendors holding these contracts should view this RFP as an opportunity to extend or expand what is already in place and are under existing contract. If existing vendors' bids are deemed to be the most "cost effective," the existing vendors' solutions may be selected with whatever contract modifications are required to meet the new circumstances and HCF rules. New Vendors are welcome to bid on services

10. Quotes may be requested for variable levels of service. This will enable Mountain States Health Alliance to weigh the pros and cons of higher levels of service against the additional cost incurred. However, it is recognized that for a variety of reasons different service providers will have different increments of service that they can provide. Vendors should feel free to quote the increments of service (even if not identical to what is in our request) they are in a position to deploy.
11. In those circumstances in which variable levels of bandwidth are being requested and quoted, vendors will be asked to incorporate the variable bandwidth levels and associated costs into the contract in order to allow HCPs to "turn up their bandwidths" without the need to engage in a new competitive bidding process.
12. In accordance with the Site and Substitution Rules found in the Order (47 C.F.R §54.646) Mountain States Health Alliance will extend this RFP to include new healthcare providers that become new members of our consortium during the length of this agreement.
13. The vendor(s) will be responsible for all network hardware purchasing and maintenance to terminate the new connection at the premise and provide a single point of demarcation.
14. Vendor(s) may be required to purchase local access from the local exchange carrier to complete last-mile connectivity to nearest POP. The end user site would be responsible for internal wiring and connection to the room locations where the telehealth equipment will be located. The vendor will be responsible for all network hardware purchasing and maintenance in accordance with the site needs the parts list included. The vendor shall provide network services in a manner that meets HIPAA requirements concerning telecommunications.

## **Notice of Intent to Bid and Submissions of Questions and Requests for Clarification**

1. A letter signifying the bidder's intent to bid on this project must be received via email (hardcopy optional) no later than 10 days after the RFP is posted for bidding. The "letter of intent" should be sent to:

**Stephen Rau, Chief Executive Officer**  
**CHANNELFORD Associates, Inc**  
**2006 Channelford Road**  
**Westlake Village, CA 91361**  
**[steve@channelford.com](mailto:steve@channelford.com)**  
**805-495-3255**

2. The following information should be included: a) name and address of the company; b) the company's authorized representative's name, title, address, phone and email address. Only bidders submitting such a notice will be eligible and receive the answers of questions submitted by all bidders concerning this RFP. This does not preclude any bidder from submitting a bid.
3. Questions concerning this RFP should be submitted to **Stephen Rau** at the above address. Vendors are invited to submit written questions and/or requests, interpretations, consideration, or acceptance concerning this RFP within 15 business days from the posting of the RFP. Any communications not sent to the email address above will not be entertained. In addition, please ensure that the subject line of the email references "Mountain States Health Alliance Consortium Network – Letter of Intent to Bid."
4. All questions and responses will be shared with all bidders who have submitted a letter of intent to bid as outlined in Item 1 above via email.
5. In the event it becomes necessary to amend, add to or delete any part of the RFP, the amendment will be posted on the USAC website. All those bidders who provided a letter of intent to bid as outlined in Item 1 will be notified of the revision.

## **Proposal Requirements**

Proposer is the person responding to the RFP.

1. Provide name address, telephone number and email address and any other relevant contact information.
2. Please provide pricing for a range of contract terms per 1 in General Provisions.

3. State non-recurring cost and identify what the cost covers. Include all estimated taxes, surcharges and fees, if applicable.
4. State monthly recurring cost of each requested service, separately identified, including all estimated taxes, surcharges and fees, if applicable.
5. Provide name(s) of billing party/parties.
6. Provide sample bill for services. Explain whether services will require multiple accounts with you company.
7. The Healthcare Connect Fund Order requires that the successful bidder obtain a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN). This may be obtained from USAC at <http://www.usac.org/sp/default.aspx>. Please provide the Universal Service SPIN number of billing party/parties and indicate whether the billing party/parties have complied with all USAC requirements to participate in the Healthcare Connect Fund program.
8. Affirm that any and all hardware provided will be new and not refurbished equipment as well as a listing of such equipment.
9. Provide the process for Mountain States Health Alliance to report any problems with the facilities, circuits, network, and telecommunications services including the minimum response time that can be expected. Also, please state response time for arrival of an on-site technician for troubleshooting, if required.
10. Contract term should begin upon installation of the last circuit or the contract date, whichever is later. If other please specify.
11. Bid proposals must be sent via email to Stephen Rau at the above address no later than midnight Central Standard Time on the 28<sup>th</sup> day after the posting date as published on the USAC website; <http://www.usac.org/rhclhealthcare-connect/tools/search-posted-services/consortia.aspx>. Hard copies are optional

### **Project Management and Implementation Schedule**

Bidders shall include a Detailed Project Management Plan for implementing and installing the firewalls. The Detailed Project Management Plan shall include narrative information and detailed project milestone and schedule information presented in Microsoft Project file format. The Bidder shall include an estimated start time and completion date for the project. Bidders shall outline their implementation plan for the project described in the RFP. The plan should include timetables that address the

following issues:

### **Project Management**

Provide a description of the Bidder's management team for this project. List all key personnel and their qualifications.

### **Project Schedule**

Provide an implementation schedule for the proposed service, including delivery dates, implementation milestones, task relationships and dependencies, and a timeline.

### **Broadband System (private Intranet) and public Internet Services System Architecture and Development**

Provide descriptions of how the service(s) will be designed, including details of customer testing and final implementation, the extent to which broadband (private Intranet) and public Internet connectivity to participating Mountain States Health Alliance entities will be guaranteed; how the private Intranet and public Internet service will deliver differentiated levels of service depending on the different bandwidth needs; quality of service (QoS) requirements of the Mountain States Health Alliance users.

### **Ongoing Service Maintenance and Assistance**

Bidders shall provide details of all maintenance activities and how assistance will be provided to Mountain States Health Alliance users.

## **Bidder Qualifications and References**

Bidders shall demonstrate their ability and competency to complete the project by providing the information below. A brief description of the Bidder Company and services offered, including:

1. Full legal company name.
2. Year business was established.
3. Number of people currently employed.

4. Most recent annual report, if a public company.
5. A description of the qualifications, experience, capability and/or capacity of the Bidder to successfully provide the broadband service and complete the project in a timely manner.
6. A description of the qualifications of the members of the proposed project team that will be assigned to the project.
7. Information on current broadband clients including: Total number of current Clients.
8. A list of broadband services provided to similar communities.
9. Evidence of successful completion of a project of a similar size and complexity.
10. References: Contact information for three references from projects similar in size, application and scope and a brief description of their broadband installations.
11. Previous experience with us: Bidders must state clearly any past business relationship with our legal entity or any of our locations listed in this RFP.
12. Bidder must provide evidence of financial stability.

## Pricing and Cost Information

Vendors submitting proposals should identify all costs associated with the solution they are quoting. All hardware **MUST BE** new and not refurbished equipment. Bids must be accompanied by sufficient descriptive literature and/or specifications to clearly identify the item and provide for competitive evaluation. Quotes should include the following:

1. Implementation fees, including purchase of required new hardware for end-to-end connectivity and initial configuration of network hardware.
2. Ongoing transmission fees for end-to-end connectivity.
3. Ongoing manufacturer maintenance for the new hardware that will be purchased.
4. Any other costs associated with the solution that may add cost to participants.
5. Pricing for services or equipment that include ineligible components must be provided for comparable services or piece of equipment that includes only eligible components.
6. Bidders are requested to provide the cost for (1) owning and (2) leasing the requested infrastructure.

Bid proposals should identify all costs that are included in bid in sufficient detail as to confirm the proposed solution, including installation, configuration, maintenance and any recurring costs. Bid needs to comply with the Healthcare Connect Fund's eligibility requirements. Identify the purchase price for each unit. Bundled pricing may be cited specified but individual components must be identified and detailed pricing provided. Shipping cost for each unit or shipment shall be included as well.

All bid proposals must understand and acknowledge USAC invoicing requirements and formats.

Bidder will conform to invoicing procedures and processes as promulgated by USAC. Any successful bidder(s) is required to have a current Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) as required by the Healthcare Connect Fund Order. A SPIN number may be obtained by contacting the Universal Services Administrative Company ([www.usac.org](http://www.usac.org)).

Bidder must provide copies of all paper bill formats

## Proposal Evaluations

Any and all costs incurred by Vendor(s) in preparing and submitting a proposal are the Vendor(s) responsibility and shall not be charged to the Consortium or reflected as an expense of the resulting contracts. Proposed vendor responses will be based on the following:

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Cost, including monthly recurring charges and installation charges	25%
Prior experience including past performance	25%
Billing Format – (Clarity & Simplicity of Format, Single bill for all services)	25%
Single carrier solution (Including last mile owned and operated by carrier)	25%

Bidder must address all items included in this RFP. No partial proposals will be accepted. Ultimately an award will be made to the bidders who has submitted a proposal where it is determined to be most cost effective to MSHA. No other factors or criteria will be used in the evaluation.

Allowance of the substitution of sites and services over the life of the contract or participation in the HCF program is required. MSHA may add sites and/or upgrade or change services throughout the length of the contract term without having to re-bid. MSHA requests that bids allow site and service substitutions in accordance with Appendix D, 47 C.F.R. § 54.646.

All service providers must file FCC Form 498 to obtain a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN)/498 ID and acknowledge participation in the HCF Program on the FCC Form 498 to participate in the HCF Program. Service providers understand their responsibility to sign, certify, and submit proper invoices and documentation (included submitting bills for services with a breakdown of eligible and ineligible services) to be reimbursed. The invoicing deadline is 6 months after the end of the commitment period.

The selection will be based on all factors indicated in this section, and may not go to the lowest bidder if cost is outweighed by a combination of other features in the winning vendor's bid. The point scale listed above will determine the most cost-effective solution for Mountain States Health Alliance's members.

Mountain States Health Alliance reserves the right to select bid proposals which, in its sole judgment, most nearly conforms to the specifications set forth herein.

Mountain States Health Alliance reserves the right to waive any and all issues of form or presentation in considering bid presentations for acceptance or rejection, if, in its sole opinion,

such a waiver is in the best interests of the project. **All existing circuits from our existing providers shall automatically be considered a proper response to this RFP and will be automatically included as part of all bid evaluations.**

Changes in applicable laws and rules may affect the award process or any resulting contracts. Vendors are responsible for ascertaining pertinent legal requirements and restrictions. Vendors are encouraged to visit the official FCC website pertaining to the Healthcare Connect Fund, at: [www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/rural-health-care](http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/rural-health-care)

The selection decisions made by Mountain States Health Alliance and reported to USAC under this RFP are final, and appeals or re-submissions will not be considered.