

ENHANCEMENT TO THE EXISTING NETWORK SYSTEM TO ACCOMMODATE TELEMEDICINE

Request for Proposal
Covington County Hospital
FCC Connected Care Pilot Program

Time frame: 12 to 36 months

Covington County Hospital is seeking bids for telecom services under the FCC's Healthcare Connect Fund. It is the vision of the Covington County Hospital to enable a set of standard telehealth connection services throughout Mississippi that will facilitate any healthcare location in the state to share one or more telehealth services with any other healthcare location within Mississippi and ultimately, to interconnect with other health care providers regionally and nationally. This RFP addresses the telecommunications, perimeter hardware, and network maintenance for Covington County Hospital. Simultaneous with the build outs identified herein, the Covington County Hospital will network architecture and routing to address the overall vision for network. Sites addressed by services provided in this RFP will then be prepared to participate in further network building addressed by the Covington County Hospital network implementation plan. Covington County Hospital is a non-profit healthcare rural health care providers in Mississippi. It provides services to its members, including educational programs for members and trustees, preferred vendor contracts, networking opportunities, physician and ancillary staff recruitment, collection agency services, and annual wage and benefit surveys. The connectivity provided will continue to build member capacity to electronically exchange health information and engage in telemedicine services. Covington County Hospital is requesting services for its members that currently do not have adequate telecommunication capacity to handle facility demands. In 2021 Covington County Hospital was the recipient of a Connected Care Pilot Program. Under this grant, they were able to purchase internet equipment for the purposes of building telemedicine opportunities. The services in those hospitals currently do not support exchange of patient data, images, or other records. In addition, they are poised to complete installation of telemedicine equipment purchased under FCC funding, but do not have the telecommunications capacity to employ the system.

Requested services.

This request for proposal establishes new private site connections at Covington County Hospital that currently have inadequate connectivity for their needs. Other sites in the consortium have established adequate connections, but they are not interoperable, which will be addressed in the overall network architecture of Covington County Hospital. There will also be a direct connection to the Covington County Hospital managing entity].

The services requested will provide connectivity to each site as specified in Table 1.1 and network diagram, attached. The configuration must support quality of service (QoS), specifically DSCP prioritization end to end for telehealth and secure reliable connections for electronic health information exchange. Eventually the connectivity will be able to provide additional services to [Consortium] members for a converged IP network that will consolidate many technologies into one platform. The successful bidder(s) will support routes for existing services at the original sites and referral hospitals and clinics to provide a seamless transition to their bandwidth solution(s). The hardware for the

connections will be purchased and configured through the successful bidder(s) to support these routes. Any ongoing changes to the hardware will be done by the managing entity, Covington County Hospital.

Telecom service options for remaining end-user sites should reflect overall pricing, quality standards, and network-wide service requirements as described below and in Table 1.1. Bids must be responsive to service needs established by end-user hospitals in Table 1.1. All sites will route to [Data Center location] which will eventually link all Covington County Hospital sites. A DS3 connection to [the Consortium Leader] will allow the Covington County Hospital sites to interoperate with other health care providers in [the State] and beyond.

The vendor(s) will be responsible for all network hardware purchasing and maintenance in accordance with the site needs

The vendor will be responsible for all network hardware purchasing and maintenance in accordance with the site needs in Table 1.1 and the parts list included. The vendor shall provide network services in a manner that meets HIPAA requirements concerning telecommunications.

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 should support: (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, the Covington County Hospital reserves the right to terminate all contracts, since services are not being met as specified.

1. Specified services and hardware necessary in Table 1.1
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:
 - i) An average end to centralized Covington County Hospital hub site delay of not less than 1Gbps

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE DESCRIPTION Any network build-out that is required by the responding bidder, is preferred to occur prior to any inclement weather or winter conditions, and therefore any construction should begin in 60 days. Please include a plan with timeline, and address ability to meet project timeline goals. Identify circumstances that may create project delays.

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.

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, complies with the Healthcare Connect Fund's eligibility requirements. Purchase price for each unit. Bundled

pricing may be cited, but individual components must be identified and detailed pricing provided. Shipping cost for each unit or shipment shall be included as well.

All subcontracting shall be pre-approved by 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, complies with the Healthcare Connect Fund's eligibility requirements. Purchase price for each unit. Bundled pricing may be cited, but individual components must be identified and detailed pricing provided. Shipping cost for each unit or shipment shall be included as well.

All subcontracting shall be pre-approved by Covington County Hospital. The Prime Contractor/Bidder shall be responsible for all subcontractor(s) work and payment. Covington County Hospital will not pay any subcontractor or third parties directly. Proof of release of liens of subcontractors will need to be submitted prior to invoice approval.

A deadline for bid submissions will be 28 days after the posting of the Form 461 on the USAC web site. Program rules require the Form 461 and RFP to be posted for a minimum of 28 days, meaning that at a minimum a contract could not be signed until the 29th day after posting of the RFP. You must submit 4 copies of your proposal in electronic PDF to Covington County Hospital, c/o: Gregory M. Cole, Chief Compliance Officer, Covington County Hospital, gcole@covingtoncountyhospital.com

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 SPIN/498 ID as required by the Healthcare Connect Fund Order. A SPIN/498 ID number may be obtained by contacting the Universal Services Administrative].

All costs may not qualify for HCF funding. It is critical that accurate, detailed cost information should be provided for all portions of the bid proposal. To obtain funding for the services and equipment being requested through this RFP, Covington County Hospital is subject to the rules and regulations of the FCC Healthcare Connect Fund program. Vendors must meet all program requirements. Once Covington County Hospital has submitted its' Form 461 and this RFP it will be posted to the USAC website. More information on bidding and posting rules can be found at: <http://www.usac.org/rhc/healthcare-connect/default.aspx>

PROPOSAL EVALUATION 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 Covington County Hospital or reflected as an expense of the resulting contracts. Proposed vendor responses will be based on but not limited to the following:

1. Cost (25%)
2. Bandwidth-25% minimum of 100
3. Leverage Existing Resources- 25% able to work with existing infrastructure
4. Technical Support- 25% consultation, repair, and support

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 Covington County Hospital reserves the right to waive all issues of form or presentation in considering bid presentations for acceptance or rejection, if, in the sole opinion of the [by Covington County Hospital, such waiver is in the best interests of the project.

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>

The selection decisions made by Covington County Hospital and reported to USAC under this RFP are final and appeals or re-submissions will not be considered.

Covington County Hospital reserves the right to issue any resulting order with the vendor(s) whose proposal, in the judgment of the group, most nearly conforms to the specifications and will best serve the needs of the Covington County Hospital and is not obligated to accept any proposal received. It may accept proposals in whole, in part, or may reject all proposals.

Contact on this RFP

Dr. Gregory M Cole
Chief Compliance Officer
Covington County Hospital
POBx 1149
Collins, MS 39428
gcole@covingtoncounthospital.com

TABLE 1.1

Category	Equipment/Service	Terms
Network Infrastructure and equipment	2 (48 port) PEO network switches, management card, vertical wall mount rack 3 patch panels, 3 access point ethernet wiring 3Wi-Fi access points Rack-mounted, Battery Backup for servers Fiber Connections from ER to Main Data Hub. 1Gb SFP+ LR Gbics	1
Installation of network equipment	Cost of installing new equipment (above) and upgrading the existing network	1
Connected care information services	Telehealth platform with remote capabilities to connect patients to practitioner and electronic Patient Care Record.	12 – 36 Months

2 Aruba JL659A 48 port POE switches with dual power supplies and stacking cables or equivalent

2 Aruba 10Gb SFP+ LR Gbics or equivalent

2 APC SUA1000RM1U Smart-UPS 1000VA USB & Serial RM 1U or equivalent

2 APC AP9641 management card or equivalent

1 6U vertical wall mount rack or equivalent

3 Aruba 6E access points or equivalent

6 strand single-mode fiber connection from main data closet to ER

Category 6 cabling in ER for AP placement and jacks available in exam rooms