



**BROADBAND**

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- MEMBER JURISDICTIONS**
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  - City of Steamboat Springs
  - Town of Hayden
- EAGLE COUNTY**
  - Avon
  - Basalt
  - Eagle
  - Gypsum
  - Minturn
  - Red Cliff
  - Vail
- GRAND COUNTY**
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  - Grand Lake
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  - Kremmling
  - Winter Park
- JACKSON COUNTY**
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- PITKIN COUNTY**
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- SUMMIT COUNTY**
  - Breckenridge
  - Blue River
  - Dillon
  - Frisco
  - Montezuma
  - Silverthorne

August 5, 2021

Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (NWCCOG) is requesting responses to this RFP from qualified firms to provide resilient middle mile broadband 24/7/365 Network Operator services for the Project THOR Network.

**Proposals will be accepted until 5 PM MT on Friday, August 27, 2021.**

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

**Northwest Colorado Council of Governments**  
**Attn: Nate Walowitz, Regional Broadband Director**  
**PO Box 2308 / 249 Warren Avenue Silverthorne, CO 80498 [nwalowitz@nwccog.org](mailto:nwalowitz@nwccog.org)**  
**Questions will be accepted until close of business August 20, 2021.**

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 so 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 Operator to maintain and support Project THOR (Network), a resilient middle mile network across Northwest Colorado.

Note: Respondents eligible for award of this contract may not currently be a private last mile service provider in the Project THOR service area. Responses from INDEPENDENT subsidiaries of private last mile service providers in the Project THOR service area will be considered.

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

In 2019 NWCCOG launched Project THOR (Network) to deliver affordable, accessible, reliable middle mile broadband to communities across Northwest Colorado and other regions statewide.

The Network provides resilient broadband transport, IP services, network management and maintenance for our Ciena network equipment, leased fiber and lit fiber infrastructure. The Network Operator should be able to demonstrate core telecommunications competency, history of successful network operations for government and/or commercial organizations as well as ability to support the unique requirements of Project THOR.

### Scope of Work

The purpose of this RFP is to find a qualified and experienced Network Operator to help us continue to support Project THOR.

The Network Operator will assist the NWCCOG in monitoring, and managing the Network 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Network Operator may also assist, and support governments, IP, and last mile providers acquire connectivity on the Network between the Meet me Centers, Meet Points, and their points of presence on an as needed basis.

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

Meet Me Centers and small Meet Points are 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 in Exhibit A for a visual depiction of the network architecture.

NWCCOG reserves the right to refine and/or clarify the scope of work described in this Scope of Work based on bidder questions. This information will be sent to all potential bidders if they register their interest in responding to this RFP by sending an email to [nwalowitz@nwccog.org](mailto:nwalowitz@nwccog.org).

NWCCOG also reserves the right to request Best and Final Offers (BAFO) from Network Managers during a down selecting process to negotiate final pricing with the selected vendor(s). Contract terms and conditions will be provided to the awarded vendor only.

All responses are confidential and NWCCOG does not consider the selection process to be open to public disclosure or review.

**1. Monitoring and management of the Network:** The Network Operator must set up a system for 24/7 monitoring and develop a plan for inspection of network equipment, cabling and any Network Operator 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. The Network is comprised of a total of 42 network devices, (36 core and 6 edge devices) Ciena Waveserver AIs, 8700, 5170, and 39xx devices.

**2. Network Security:** The Network Operator will be responsible for instituting a Network Security Plan (including an annual security audit) and developing a process for third parties to securely access the Network.

**3. Physical and Network Routing Maintenance:** The Network Operator will be responsible for coordinating locates, physical maintenance, and Ciena equipment maintenance and upgrades of the Network. The Network Operator must:

- a. Immediately communicate problems and work to resolve emergency issues;
- b. Scheduled maintenance;

c. Provide notification to Network users of maintenance and emergency issues in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Network Operator Agreement;

d. Keep a regular weekday schedule and provide a plan for off-hours 24-hour service as needed for network support and emergencies.

**4. Technical Network Provisioning:** The Network Operator should have capabilities, either directly or through the Network Operator, to connect Meet Me Center users on the Network, have capabilities to troubleshoot network connectivity issues, and provision network electronics. The Network Operator should specify relevant certifications, qualifications, and awards.

A. Maintain an inventory of fiber and Network assets and fiber that may be available to be leased or IRU'd;

B. Network Mapping. The Network Operator will work with NWCCOG to ensure that the Network map and inventory of all assets is accurate at all times.

C. Strategic Planning: The Network Operator will assist NWCCOG with long-term strategic planning of network expansion and regional coordination.

**D. Reporting**

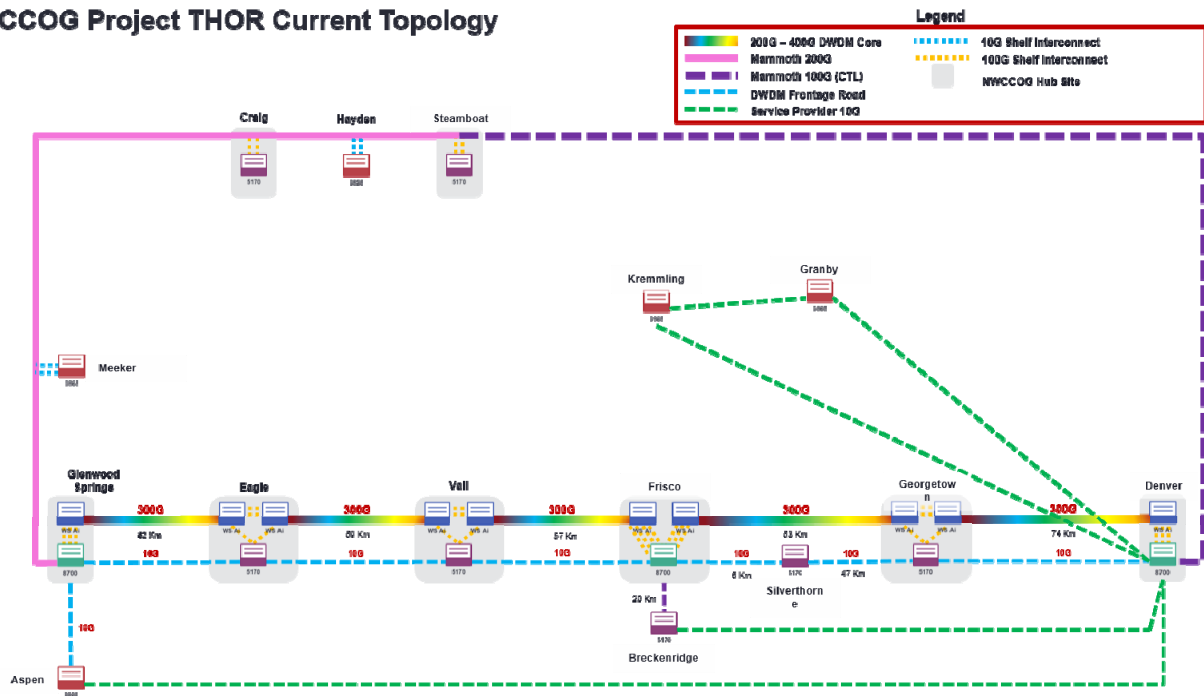
NWCCOG will work with the Network Operator to specify appropriate required reports and reporting intervals.

5. **Innovation and Communication:** The Network Operator will be available to strategize network design with NWCCOG (Network Owner). They will also be available to meet and participate with Project THOR Stakeholder group reporting during meetings and helping with innovation and future planning of the network. The Network Operator will partner with NWCCOG to communicate network challenges, outages, and opportunities.

# EXHIBIT A

## PROJECT THOR NETWORK ARCHITECTURE

### NWCCOG Project THOR Current Topology



## Response Requirements

Respondent must provide the following information along with their response:

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 network operator services?

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

Are you a single source provider, or will subcontractors also be used to support Project THOR?

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

**2. Project approach:** Network Operators 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 Operators 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 Operators 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 Operators must include certifications.

**5. Subcontractor plan:** Network Operators 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 an annual price for services. NWCCOG is open to considering optional services proposed in addition the services described in this RFP.

## INNOVATION & COMMENT

Network Operator 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. Network Operator may provide suggestions of other products or services available that may assist the Region.

## **LOCAL PREFERENCE**

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

## **CONTRACT**

NWCCOG anticipates awarding a 3-year contract, subject to performance reviews, with possible additional option years.

## **KEY TARGET DATES**

Written questions will be addressed until 8/20/2021 at 5 PM MT

Written responses due via email 8/27/2021 by 5 PM MT

## **NETWORK OPERATOR QUALIFICATIONS**

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

## **WRITTEN AGREEMENT**

The selected Network Operator 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 Operator is willing to enter into an agreement with the NWCCOG if their proposal is accepted.

## **EVALUATION AND CONTRACT AWARD**

The NWCCOG shall evaluate and select a Network Operator 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 Operator contractually. Failure to read the RFP and these instructions will be at the Network Operator'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.

## **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 Operator. 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 Operator.

**ADDITIONAL GENERAL INFORMATION & CLARIFICATION**

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.

Only one copy of the proposal should be submitted.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Late Proposals will not be accepted or considered. It is the responsibility of the Network Operator 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 Operator 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 Operator 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).

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

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

Company Overview - 5 Points

Capabilities and NWCCOG Requirements - 30 Points

Qualifications/Professional – 20 Points

Competence/Training 20 Points

References 5 Points

Total Cost for Services 20 Points

TOTAL 100 Points

## **AWARD CRITERIA**

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