

## **Broadband Infrastructure Improvement Grant (BIIG)**

### **Bidders' Conference Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

#### **1. Will the Customer of record for services provided to the school sites in the grant?**

The contract is with the CENIC from the award date up to June 30, 2016. On July 1, 2016 the contract will be superseded to each LEA that was awarded BIIG funds.

#### **2. What are the BIIG funds for?**

The funds will prioritize last mile connectivity to schools sites that are unable to participate in the next generation computer assessments. In very limited cases, eligible school sites may receive support from the grant to assist them with internal connection enhancements for their assessment environments. For the purposes of this RFP, solutions are strictly for last mile connections to the listed sites in Exhibit D. They are not for local area network equipment (or what are commonly referred to as internal connections) or services.

#### **3. Of the 304 schools sites on the application, what percentage will we be connected?**

It is difficult to make that determination at this stage of the process, but goal is to connect as many sites as possible within the allowed budget.

#### **4. Is there a budget for what the ongoing cost should be for the sites that will be paying the ongoing costs?**

There are a lot of variables in determining ongoing costs for each school site, but the goal is to provide the lowest ongoing Monthly Recurring Cost (MRC) to the school district. Lowest MRC is an element of consideration in the decision rubric for selecting service provider bids.

#### **5. What is the time frame of doing the work or contract?**

Time is of the essence and the goal is to connect eligible school sites as quickly as possible. so as soon as contracts are awarded we would like installation to begin. The grant funds are available for immediate use.

#### **6. How do I get a listing of the hub site locations?**

In order to obtain Exhibit B which contains the list of CENIC Hub sites, every service provider will need to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) - Exhibit A of the RFP - with CENIC. If you

signed the CENIC NDA for the 2012 circuit RFP, which was a 3-year NDA, it is still valid. Please send an e-mail to [BIIGRFP@cenic.org](mailto:BIIGRFP@cenic.org) with your signed Exhibit A and you will receive Exhibit B.

## **7. How do we submit responses to the RFP?**

Proposals should be sent via electronic mail (e-mail) to the following address: [BIIGRFP@cenic.org](mailto:BIIGRFP@cenic.org). Hard copies are not required but can be sent to the following physical address:

CENIC - BIIG-RFP  
16700 Valley View, Suite 400  
La Mirada, CA 90638

## **8. Will some of the connections go to the CENIC Hub Site?**

Our preference is to maintain the existing hierarchy of school site to district office, district office to County Office (K12 Node) and from County Office to the CENIC Hub. If connecting the school site in the most efficient and cost effective manner deviates from this hierarchy we will consider all options provided.

## **9. What happens to the contract if a school district/charter closes in second year of the contract?**

The district or charter school that receives a grant award will assume risk after June 30, 2016. Note, however, that these risks are no different than the risk a service provider normally incurs when signing a multi-year agreement. We believe it is therefore best to quote actual installation costs as a Non-Recurring Cost (NRC) and not to amortize such costs over the term of a circuit.

## **10. What about dark fiber and can you explain how this might look? Who would maintain?**

A dark fiber solution will be accepted, and we understand what we will have to do in terms of equipment, support and maintenance of the fiber infrastructure.

## **11. Will there be more of the 304 sites that will drop off due to existing adequate bandwidth?**

The 304 school sites are currently under a technical review process to determine eligibility of grant funds. There is certainly a possibility that a few sites may drop of the list after the review has concluded, although we don't expect many to be affected.

## **12. How will the school sites be selected to receive the benefits of the grants?**

The criteria for the selection of sites within available funds is still in development but will include various elements such as cost, time to implement, benefit to the school, etc. The scoring criteria listed in Section 1.0 - C of the RFP will be used to select the service provider that may potentially serve the awarded school site.

**13. Will bidders have access to the bandwidth and number of students at each site?**

At least 47% of the sites still have T1 circuits, some have residential-type solutions such as Digital Subscriber Line (DSL). The student count for each site will soon be posted online at the K12 California High Speed Network website: <http://www.k12hsn.org/biig>

**14. What bandwidth are you looking for? Specifically will you be open to DS3?**

One of the expected outcomes of this process is for a school site to have broadband infrastructure that can scale accordingly to the needs of the school at the lowest cost possible. DS3 (45Mbps) is certainly a welcomed technology and we expect service providers to propose up-to-date technology solutions that currently serve in the market today.

**15. The Pricing Worksheet has an A Location and either one or two Z Locations. Do you want pricing to the first Z Location or to both?**

We are requesting quotes to connect the A Location to either Z Location, both Z Locations, one of the CENIC aggregation hub sites on the backbone, or a Z Location you may propose based on your design or solution.

**16. Can service providers arrange for a school site visit in order to obtain additional information that will assist in preparing a proposal?**

Keep in mind that school personnel may not be aware of this process nor may be able to assist with any technical information related to broadband infrastructure in the school. A school site visit should be planned with advanced notice and must be coordinated through CENIC and K12HSN. If there is interest from a service provider to make a school site visit, please contact us by e-mail at [BIIGRFP@cenic.org](mailto:BIIGRFP@cenic.org) to obtain site contact information.

**The following questions and answers were added and posted on 10/31/2014.**

**17. Would CENIC prefer a Layer 2 VPN (Metro E) or a Layer 3 VPN (IP VPN) service from the selected vendor(s)?**

We can accept either a Layer 2 or a Layer 3 as long as it appears as an Ethernet Point-to-Point from a user standpoint.

**18. Is EPL (Point-to-Point) the only topology CENIC would select?**

Yes for circuits connecting directly to an aggregation hub site on the CalREN backbone. Also see answer to question #19.

**19. Is CENIC open to other topologies? Such as EP-LAN (Multipoint-to-Multipoint)?**

We prefer a point-to-point but will consider other solutions if they are more cost-effective. Also see answer to question #18.

**20. Will CENIC be financially responsible for the non-recurring circuit costs (NRC) and the monthly recurring costs (MRC) for the circuits from 7/1/2015 to 6/30/2016?**

Yes. Please refer to Question 1 of this FAQ.

**21. Who will be responsible for the circuit MRC from the circuit installation to 6/30/2015?**

CENIC. Please refer to Question 1 of this FAQ.

**22. Will the circuits be independent of or integrated into the school district WAN at its District Office?**

We prefer a solution that can be integrated into the local district's WAN, although there will be consideration for solutions that provide improved connectivity to un-served and underserved school sites, which is in line with the purpose of this grant.

**23. Several questions were submitted asking of the schools listed are already approved for the last mile grant, if they have submitted an application to be approved, and if E-rate discounts will be accessed.**

These and similar questions are all answered in the presentation slides used at the bidders' conferences, which have been posted online. See [http://www.k12hsn.org/files/biig/bidders\\_pres.pdf](http://www.k12hsn.org/files/biig/bidders_pres.pdf).

**24. A discrepancy was found with a CDS code in Exhibit D.**

The application is for Grand Island Elementary in Grimes, CA, Pierce Joint USD, and the correct CDS code is 06616146003537.

**The following questions and answers were added and posted on 11/12/2014.**

**25. Is CENIC exempt from these taxes, fees, and surcharges? If awarded, we would need to have appropriate exemption certification on file.**

**The services likely being proposed are subject to the following taxes, fees, and surcharges (and possibly others):**

**CA Advanced Services Fund Surcharge  
CA High Cost Fund A Surcharge  
CA Relay Svc and Comm Device Fund  
California Teleconnect Fund**

No, CENIC is not exempt from regulatory taxes, fees and surcharges.

**26. Will CENIC please explain or share its circuit acceptance process referenced on page 8, section C?**

**C. Commencement of Billing. In no case is a service provider allowed to commence billing on a new service until a CENIC representative confirms successful completion of CENIC's acceptance testing procedure.**

Keep in mind that when dealing with CENIC, you are dealing with a network operator as opposed to a new single new customer or end-user. As such, CENIC has steps and processes that differ from delivering a circuit to a regular customer in that CENIC needs time for remote hands to install cross-connections and/or jumpers and there may or may not be equipment readiness issues when you are ready to deliver a circuit. CENIC generally expects expedited installations but there will be times when we will have to ask a service provider to move out a due date until we are ready to move forward with our test & turn-up process. That said, the following summarizes our general acceptance testing process.

"To ensure the stability and functionality of each new circuit delivered, CENIC engineers perform a 48-hour testing process in which 9000-byte ICMP packets are transmitted across both ends of the circuit to verify basic point-to-point connectivity and latency statistics. CENIC's expectation is that the average RTT latency is less than 10ms for all ping tests performed. CENIC engineers will then gather interface statistics from each interface along the circuit path. These interface statistics include but are not limited to: input errors, CRC errors, frame errors, and carrier transitions. Lastly, CENIC will configure an Interior Gateway Protocol utilizing the circuit and will verify that the IGP neighbor relationship remains stable over the 48-hour testing period. If all of these tests pass, CENIC will consider the circuit 'production-ready.' "

**27. We have received requests for site contacts in order to schedule school site visits.**

We are requesting service providers submit quotes based on internal documentation, industry standard formulae or algorithms, and drive-by visits, if necessary. Most of the site contacts are administrators and other personnel who are educators who would unlikely be able to answer facilities questions about conduit, fiber path options, or points of entry. Moreover, such site visits could become disruptive to both students and school personnel. Thank you in advance for your understanding.