NTCA REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Small Telco Cyber Threat Info Sharing Forum Pilot Project – Partner
January 9, 2019

NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association is undertaking a feasibility study and a beta test/pilot project for a new cyber threat information sharing forum for small communications network service providers.

The association is currently accepting proposals in order to find a qualified Partner to support the development of the forum's initial operating capabilities, including creation of the secure online portal for the sharing of cyber threat information with and between small communications network providers, and also a daily cyber intelligence report to be distributed to such providers for a minimum of two months during the summer of 2019.

The Partner should be prepared to work closely with NTCA and its members to:

1. Further identify and define the unique needs of the small communications network service provider community as it relates to cyber threat information sharing.

2. Based upon the stakeholders' needs, develop the initial operating capabilities of the forum, including the underlying infrastructure required to support the pilot project. The Partner should have access to and experience with using various online platforms, including a secure web portal, conference bridge and email distribution system, and work with NTCA to refine the platforms to reflect the association's brand and meet participants' needs.

3. Define, create and administer a beta test, including the development and production of the secure online portal for the sharing of cyber threat information with and between small communications network providers through the forum, and also a daily cyber intelligence report for such providers for a minimum of two months during the summer of 2019. The Partner should be prepared to contribute substantial cyber threat research and analysis to the project on an ongoing basis, focused on the collection, exploration and reporting of current cyber threats facing small communications network service providers and, if available, recommended best practices for mitigation. A dedicated analyst is preferred.

4. Assist NTCA with the creation of an online survey to collect beta-test participant feedback as it relates to the value derived from the pilot of the information sharing forum and the related daily cyber intelligence report. NTCA will draft and administer the survey using the association's Web tool.

5. Support the development of NTCA's final research report, which will detail the lessons learned from the pilot project. The report will discuss the cyber information sharing needs of the stakeholder community and the value proposition for the new forum enabled by the online portal; various organizational and cost structures for the new forum; operational, technical and financial considerations, including any outstanding challenges; and recommendations for an implementation strategy to transition the pilot project into a long-term sustainable forum. The Partner will provide subject matter expertise and lessons learned; however, NTCA ultimately will draft the report.

6. Participate in and support the discussion of the pilot project at the 2019 NTCA Cybersecurity Summit in Salt Lake City, UT, October 27–29. The event will provide an opportunity to further socialize the importance of robust participation by small network service providers within cyber threat information sharing forums. The Partner will be responsible for travel costs.

Guidelines:

1. First and foremost, only qualified individuals or firms with prior experience on projects of this subject matter and scope should submit a proposal in response to this RFP.

    (a) Respondents must have subject matter experience with building information sharing communities, including developing trust and buy-in among stakeholders and creating initial operating capabilities that include security components for the forum.

    (b) Respondents should have existing relationships with private and/or public cyber information sharing working groups that may support NTCA's efforts, but which do not preclude participation in or support of such efforts.

    (c) Respondents also must have in-depth technical knowledge and expertise as it relates to cyber-threat research and analysis and the ability to synthesize complex cyber information for critical infrastructure providers.

    (d) Finally, respondents should have experience with and access to the underlying infrastructure required to support a cyber threat information sharing forum.

2. Respondents must be sufficiently insured against liability related to the research, analysis and dissemination of cyber threats and related best practices for mitigation, and the use of such info by third parties. Respondents also must be willing to sign a contract with NTCA that includes representations and warranties as to intellectual property and a hold harmless and indemnification clause.

3. Respondents must be willing and able to speak at the NTCA Cybersecurity Summit October 27–29 in Salt Lake City, UT.

Budget and Bidder Selection:

In an effort to provide guidance to respondents, NTCA's target budget for the project is approximately $80,000 – $90,000.

NTCA recognizes that there are many ways to approach this project, from minimal requirements with limited upfront expenditures, to more robust capabilities with higher-associated expenses. Within your proposal, please provide information about the full range of capabilities you will provide under this budget. The association will review proposals and select the bidder which provides the best overall value to NTCA and its members, as determined solely by NTCA in its absolute discretion.

Proposals:

1. Respondents should prepare a fixed-cost proposal that includes and discusses the following cost components:

   a. Subject-matter expertise and consulting related to building an information sharing community.

   b. NTCA-branded infrastructure required to support the community, including but not limited to a secure member web portal, conference bridge, and email distribution system. The proposal should include the initial operating costs associated with the development of the platform(s), and the expected ongoing expenses to maintain the platforms(s) beyond the beta test.

   c. Technical research, analysis, production and distribution of the daily cyber-threat intelligence report for a minimum of two months. The daily curated report should address the unique cyber threat environment and needs of small communications network service providers. A dedicated cyber analyst should be available to produce the report and provide additional support to NTCA's community as needed and requested.

2. In addition, proposals should include information about you or your firm's relevant experience with building information sharing communities, including developing trust and buy-in; creating initial operating capabilities for cyber information sharing forums; working with existing public and/or private information sharing organizations; and providing dedicated cyber threat intelligence research and analysis to support an information sharing forum.

3. If you have a standard set of terms and conditions, please submit them with your proposal. All terms and conditions will be subject to negotiation and must, at a minimum, correspond with the guidelines above.

4. Proposals will be accepted through **February 15, 2019**; however, after proposals have been submitted, NTCA may seek additional clarification and/or information from respondents prior to selecting the final qualified bidder.

RFP and Project Timeline:

Proposals Due	Feb 15, 2019
NTCA Selects Qualified Bidder	Mar 1, 2019
Refine Stakeholder Needs/Develop Beta Test	Mar – May 2019
Administer Beta Test	June – July 2019
Develop Survey of Beta Test Participants	Aug 2019
Assist with Final Research Report	Aug – Sep 2019
Speaking Engagement	Oct 27–29, 2019*

*Exact presentation date and time TBD.

Submission Process:

Proposals will be accepted through February 15, 2019. To submit a proposal, please send via email to:

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Questions:

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