



TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

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Request for Proposals Regional Digital Opportunity Planning & Technical Assistance

Invitation to Bid

The Texas Association of Regional Councils is requesting proposals from qualified third-party consultants to provide subject matter expertise and technical assistance services to the association and its members related to broadband planning and expanding digital opportunity throughout Texas.

Description of Services

Subject Matter Vendor Responsibilities. The Subject Matter Vendor will be a highly qualified third-party consultant with deep expertise in overcoming barriers to broadband adoption, enhancing digital literacy, providing access to public resources, and addressing other connectivity challenges (“Subject Matter Vendor”). The Subject Matter Vendor will have comprehensive knowledge of the Broadband Infrastructure Fund, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and other necessary knowledge regarding broadband and the above-mentioned challenges. The vendor will offer strategic insights, creative solutions, and specialized guidance to ensure project success with convening, statewide engagement, and the development and delivery of a regional digital opportunity plan for each participating COG.

Subject Matter Vendor responsibilities shall include:

Historical awareness. The Subject Matter Vendor should understand how each COG has leveraged state or federal funding to overcome barriers to broadband planning or adoption, digital literacy, access to public resources, and other connectivity gaps. The Subject Matter Vendor will be expected to leverage pre-existing assessments or strategic plans funded through the CPA’s Technical Assistance Program or otherwise to ensure that funding is being used strategically and efficiently.

Leverage Existing Needs Assessments. The Subject Matter Vendor will leverage preexisting work through the Technical Assistance Program (“TAP”). Template provided by CPA, borrowing the framework developed for the TAP.

Workshops and Engagement. The Subject Matter Vendor will facilitate a minimum of 2 (two) intensive workshops that will equip Regional Digital Access Specialists and COGs with foundational knowledge, tools, and strategies to address their COGs’ challenges related to capacity, the digital divide, barriers to broadband adoption, digital literacy, access to public

resources, and other connectivity gaps. These workshops will also focus on the professional development and education of COGs and Regional Digital Access Specialists. Such workshops will function as the initial engagement between COGs and Regional Digital Access Specialists and can include the most impacted communities, partners, and stakeholders. This will enable Regional Digital Access Specialists to collect information on issues that are most important to their community groups, residents, and other key stakeholders. With guidance from the Subject Matter Vendor, workshop participants will determine the priority needs of their communities (i.e., region) concerning the digital divide, barriers to broadband adoption, digital literacy, access to public resources, and other connectivity gaps. They will develop five to seven strategies that will provide the framework for developing and aligning with their respective regional digital opportunity plans.

Context and Support. Vendor will utilize materials, provided by CPA and TARC, from preexisting programs to offer additional context, assisting COGs and their designated Regional Digital Access Specialists in understanding the landscape of bridging the digital divide in Texas. This includes helping Texans overcome barriers to broadband adoption, enhancing digital literacy, addressing other connectivity gaps, and aiding COGs and Regional Digital Access Specialists in assessing their region's status.

Assist in Plan Development: Assist COGs and their designated Regional Digital Access Specialists in the development of Regional Broadband and Digital Opportunity Implementation Plans for each COG or COG partnership, which will include:

- strategies on how to build capacity around addressing the digital divide
- overcoming barriers to broadband adoption
- improving digital literacy
- enhancing access to public resources
- addressing other connectivity gaps, as well as strategies to overcome barriers to funding regional programs and activities.

Subject Matter Vendor Outputs.

Intensive Workshops. Subject Matter Vendor shall coordinate two (2) intensive workshops to initiate and conclude process of developing and implementing a Regional Digital Opportunity Plan.

Collaborative Planning and Development. In collaboration with Regional Digital Access Specialist, the Subject Matter Vendor shall determine three (3) to eight (8) digital opportunity and technology strategies and needs identification (to be addressed in the Regional Digital Opportunity Plans).

Technical Support. Subject Matter Vendor shall provide guidance and technical support to Regional Digital Access Specialists throughout the creation of regional plans. Technical support may include monthly office hours and virtual check-in calls to Regional Digital Access Specialists and COGs.

Analysis for Future Planning and Implementation. Subject Matter Vendor will deliver an analysis report that includes the research design, an outline of sources and samples, an explanation of data and findings, and visual representations of connections. This report will serve as an output that COGs can utilize in future planning.

Schedule of Events

- Release of RFP: December 10, 2025
- Deadline for submission: January 10, 2026
- Selection of service provider: February 2026
- Project will begin in February/March 2026 for a period of three years.

Process for Submitting Proposal

Proposals shall be sent to tarc@txregionalcouncil.org with “Regional Digital Opportunity Planning” in the subject line. This Request for Proposal does not commit TARC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of a proposal, or to contract for the goods and/or services offered. TARC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals received as a result of this request, negotiate with all qualified offerors or to cancel this Request for Proposal, if it is in the best interest of TARC to do so.

Information Required with Proposal

Each vendor must submit a proposal which includes:

- Prior experience and qualifications
- Estimated cost
- Estimated completion time
- References

Inquiries

Questions regarding this request for proposals (RFP) are to be submitted to tarc@txregionalcouncil.org with Regional Digital Opportunity Planning in the subject line. Questions regarding this RFP will only be accepted by email.