



VT Broadband Website RFP  
Released April 21, 2010 – Due May 14, 2010

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Questioners will remain anonymous. All questions asked of VCGI and the answers we provide will be made publicly available through this document.

## **Questions and Answers**

Q1. Are you looking for vendors near to your location i.e., Vermont only or are you open to outside vendors?

**A1. VCGI is not limiting consideration of proposals to only those firms in Vermont. However, VCGI will evaluate bids as stated in Section 4.5.1, Contract Award, VCGI will award only one contract. Preference shall be given to Bidders that are resident of the State, all other things being equal.**

**This means that after all Evaluation Criteria have been taken into consideration, if two competing bids are found to be completely equal in value to VCGI, then preference will be given to bidders that are resident of the state of Vermont.**

Q2. Is there an established budget?

**A2. No, there is not.**

Q.3 After the two year hosting plan what is planned?

**A.3 VCGI will decide what to do at the end of the two year period and discuss available options with the contractor at that time.**

Q.4 Can a sample of the coverage mapping data be made available for the bidders to review prior to the award?

**A.4 Yes, go to the project website to see a copy of the March 31 data delivery to NTIA. <http://www.vcqi.org/projects/bmi/>**

Q.5 You mention that you do not want a “map centric” website. What sort of non-mapping capability are you looking for?

**A.5 Look at the example websites provided in the RFP for an idea of what information we want to make available (beyond just maps). VCGI is looking for suggestions from the bidder as to what content, tools and functionality they believe would create the best public broadband information resource. We are asking the bidder to bring their broadband and web development experience,**



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**knowledge and creativity to the solution and develop a public broadband information resource for the state. Keep in mind that funding for the project is not unlimited so the successful bidder will be able to integrate the best cost/value proposition with their vision. We anticipate that the website may include, but not be limited, to one or more of the following sections**

- **Broadband Coverage Maps**
- **Broadband News Center**
- **Broadband Initiatives**
- **Publications**
- **Calendar of Events**
- **Contact**
- **Links to other resources**

Q.6 What types of data or information will be collected by the website?

**A.6 VCGI wants Feedback from users about broadband access at their homes and businesses. We want them to identify discrepancies on the broadband map. We want to get their feedback about the website in general.**

Q.7 How important are IE6 and Section 508 compliance? They are both listed as requirements.

Here is what is driving my question. IE 6 is an outdated unsupported format that is being used by less than 4% of web users at this point, and in our humble opinion can drive up the cost of a project 2-8% unnecessarily. It is not like users are getting a raw deal either--the upgrade path to IE 7 or 8 is free.

Per Section 508, if done to the letter of the law/intent of the complaint measure, it could drive up the cost of your project 3-5X. I have never seen nor heard of a truly functional map program that was Section 508 compliant (Google Maps is not). Google Earth has done some government projects that were Section 508 compliant--but if you really investigate what was done on these projects, it is a complete farce what they executed, and therefore to our minds their implementation completely contradicts the spirit of Section 508.

I am a believer in the spirit of 508, but have repeatedly come up against the reality that the cost of true compliance is prohibitive for many sites to implement. We do the software development for a 501c group [Name deleted]. We have had multiple discussions with them and Carnegie and Pew to support development for 508 compliance on their site, but it is hard to justify spending tens and tens of thousands of dollars to serve the 2-20 estimated users.



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**A.7 VCGI understands and appreciates the complexities of 508 compliance. All three browsers listed in the RFP (Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Safari) must be fully supported, however the versions requiring support will be discussed and confirmed during the site design phase (in consultation with the selected contractor).**

**It is also important to note that the BroadbandVT.org website will not be a map-centric site (as was stated in the RFP). In general the site should not present a significant 508 compliance problem, however, we understand that certain functionality will not be 508 compliant (eg: interactive map). Therefore we do not anticipate 100% compliance with 508 specifications, however, we would like to strive for a level of compliance that can be reasonably justified.**

Q.8 Would the use of the Google Maps API for geocoding user-entered addresses be acceptable?

**A.8 Yes**

Q.9 Please describe the geometries (point, line and polygon features) and the associated attributes that are being developed in the file geodatabase that will be the source for the map display and query component of the website.

**A.9 Documents describe Vermont’s Broadband Data Model are available under “Supporting Docs” at this URL**

[http://www.vcgi.org/projects/bmi/Website\\_RFP/](http://www.vcgi.org/projects/bmi/Website_RFP/)

**However it should be noted that the data model is designed for backend data management and delivery of data to the NTIA. It was not specifically designed to support the interactive map on the BroadbandVT.org website. Therefore it is anticipated that VCGI will work with the contractor to address this issue.**

Q.10 How many distinct types of service does VCGI seek to convey in the interactive availability map? (this question has implications for the user interface complexity and level of effort required).

**A.10 By “distinct types of service” we assume you mean “broadband service types”. We anticipate distinguishing the following types as defined by the NTIA. The list may be modified as needed to meet the final goals/objectives of the website, however, we don’t anticipate significant changes to this list.**

- **Asymmetric xDSL**



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- **Symmetric xDSL**
- **Other Copper Wireline**
- **Cable Modem - DOCSIS 3.0**
- **Cable Modem - Other**
- **Optical Carrier/Fiber to the End User**
- **Satellite**
- **Terrestrial Fixed Wireless - Unlicensed**
- **Terrestrial Fixed Wireless - Licensed**
- **Terrestrial Mobile Wireless**

Q.11 The technical requirements mention “list available broadband services” at an address, Census Block, or Town. Is it correct to assume that the interactive map will both list the available services, and show them on the map in some manner (perhaps following the general pattern of the Sprint or ATT examples)?

**A.11 Yes, however the level of detail will vary depending on confidentiality limitations established under Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) with certain broadband providers.**

Q.12 The requirements mention “Click feature on map and get more info”. What specific layers or features must have this capability?

**A.12 All broadband features/layers on the map. Also includes the ability to click on an address, Census Block, or Town and get more broadband information. Additional layers may be added during the website design phase, however, we don’t anticipate significant changes.**

Q.13 Are there problems foreseen using Google Maps as the base framework of the mapping component for the site?

**A.13 We have not evaluated any specific 3<sup>rd</sup> party mapping solutions (such as Google Maps), so we are not in a position to foresee “problems”. We are looking for the Bidder to identify the best solution for this project.**

Q.14 Is Open Source software seen as an asset or liability in the implementation of this project?

**A.14 As noted in our response above (A13), we have not evaluated, and therefore have not prejudged any particular mapping solution. Open Source software is certainly an option we are willing to consider side-by-side proprietary solutions. The Bidder should evaluate and outline the pros/cons as they see it.**



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Q.15 Have broadband providers been approached and asked to provide coverage maps in easily usable formats?

**A.15 Yes. Some have. Some haven't. VCGI is responsible for all broadband data integration and management. The Bidder for the BroadbandVT.org website will not be responsible for data maintenance. Instead they will be responsible for the items defined in the RFP, including loading of the broadband data provided by VCGI into the BroadbandVT.org interactive mapping application.**

Q.16 What data is or will be held in the ESRI File Geodatabase?

**A.16 All of Vermont's broadband data is held in ESRI File Geodatabase format. Please refer to section 3.2.1.3 for additional details.**

Q.17 Has an attempt been made to export ESRI data into Google Maps or Google Earth?

**A.17 No**

Q.18 Much of the data on upload and download speed is already held by Speedtest.net, one of the most popular URLs for general speedtests in the US. They would have one of the deepest datasets for broadband speeds in VT. Is there a problem with using them as the central data source for this information?

**A.18 We have not done the research or analysis to indicate whether or not Speedtest.net would be a "problem" as a central data source. We leave it to the Bidder to make the argument in their proposal as to why Speedtest.net would address the specific requirements outlined in the RFP.**

Q.19 Questions regarding the page count total:  
a. Can we print front and back on 20 pages?

b. Do cover pages (separate of cover letter) and a Table of Contents count towards the 20 page total?

**A.19**

**a. Pages printed on both front and back will be considered as two (2) pages. Pages printed on only one side will be considered as one (1) page.**

**b. Cover pages (separate of cover letter) and a Table of Contents will not be counted towards the 20 page total.**



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Q.20 Should the cost proposals be bound separately or designated within a separate section of the qualifications/ technical response binding?

**A.20 The Cost Proposal may either be bound separately or designated as a separate Cost section of the proposal, either way is acceptable as long as cost information is not mixed within the Technical Response section.**

Q.21 As the response to questions are due to be released on Tuesday May 11 and the proposal is due on May 14 the possibility exists that not enough time exists to properly adjust our response given the answers to questions. Is it possible to extend the due date to 1 week after question responses are due, to May 18?

**A.21 There is no plan to extend the due date for submissions beyond 4:00 PM EDT, May 14, 2010.**

Q.22 Section 3.2.2 requests a proposal for a hosting solution for the site which includes all costs. Since the VCGI site will have a site testing tool, there is a potential that a large amount of bandwidth is required to service the site's traffic needs. Since bandwidth costs can be variable and in order to provide a hosting cost estimate, does VCGI have an estimate or assumptions for how much traffic the site will require on a monthly basis?

**A.22 No estimates have been done. Keep in mind that BroadbandVT.org will have statewide application, but VT is not a heavily populated state. A separate marketing campaign will be driving traffic toward the site, however, we haven't estimated how much traffic it will generate.**

Q.23 Section 3.2.4 requests a plan for transferring website maintenance responsibilities to VCGI after the first six months. Will these transferred responsibilities include tasks related to maintaining the server including operating system, server software and web application upgrades and security patches? Or will the contractor be responsible for these tasks for the two years of hosting?

**A.23. Section 3.2.4 addresses maintenance of website "content" only, such as web pages. It does not address maintenance related to website hosting such as operating system, server software, web app upgrades, etc. The contractor is responsible for all website hosting per section 3.2.2.**