

Questions & Answers to RFP 26-023 Telecommunications Outside Plant Services

Questions asked in Black / Answers in Red

1. Can a newly established company use its founder's and key personnel's prior project experience to demonstrate qualifications? If so, how should that experience be documented?

Yes. A newly established entity may utilize the prior experience of its founders, executive officers, and key technical personnel to satisfy qualification requirements under Attachment 5 (Vendor Qualifications Response Form). Vendors should document this experience under Section 5.1 (Experience) and Section 5.4 (Personnel) by explicitly detailing key personnel resumes, individual industry histories, past project roles, and specific OSP infrastructure projects managed or completed by those individuals.

2. May vendors propose selected services within a zone and mark other pricing items "N/A" while remaining eligible for consideration?

Yes. As noted in Chapter 5, Section 5.3, if a vendor is unable to perform a specific line item service, they may enter "N/A" on that line item in Attachment 7 (Unit Price Sheet). Entering 'N/A' on Attachment 7 for optional specialized services (such as fiber splicing or rock sawing) will not penalize your 200-point price score, as pricing is evaluated against a standard scenario of core pathway construction items. However, entering 'N/A' for a core pathway item included in the standard evaluation scenario may prevent calculation of a complete scenario total.

3. How should proposed subcontractors for specialized work, such as directional boring or fiber splicing, be identified, and what documentation is required for their approval?

Vendors should list all currently known or anticipated subcontractors in Attachment 5, Section 5.4.9 at the time of proposal submittal.

Vendors are not required to have all future subcontractors identified at proposal submittal. New or replacement subcontractors may be added at any time during the contract term. Per RFP Section 3.2.13, any subcontractor—whether listed in the original proposal or added later—must meet the same qualification standards as the prime Vendor and must be approved in writing by the ICN OSP Project Manager prior to performing work on any project.

Once a subcontractor is approved in writing by the ICN, they may be utilized on future projects. Please note that using an unapproved subcontractor on an active job site will result in an automatic \$100 per day deduction on the final project invoice (Section 3.2.13.2).

4. Are there minimum equipment, staffing, or emergency-response requirements that must be met directly by the bidding company rather than through subcontractors?

No. There are no mandatory minimum requirements that must be met exclusively by the prime bidding company:

- Equipment: Approved subcontractors may supplement a vendor's equipment fleet. However, Attachment 5 evaluates direct prime capability and awards higher qualitative scores for equipment owned/leased and work self-performed directly by the prime contractor (Section 5.2.7).
- Staffing: Approved subcontractors may supplement a vendor's workforce, but the prime Vendor remains 100% responsible for all contract deliverables, performance standards, and subcontractor oversight (Section 3.2.13.1).
- Emergency Response: Emergency response is an optional service evaluated qualitatively under Attachment 5, Section 5.6 (Emergency Response and Availability). Vendors are not required to

provide emergency services to submit a proposal or receive a contract award; however, vendors who opt out will be scored accordingly.

5. Are any bid, performance, or payment bonds required at the master-contract level or on individual task orders/projects?

No bid bond or master-contract performance bond is required at proposal submittal. However, per RFP Section 3.2.8, Vendors may be required to secure local municipal/county permits or provide performance/payment bonds on an individual project or task-order basis as required by local authorities or project scope.

6. Are there any Iowa contractor licenses, registrations, or trade credentials that must be held by the prime contractor at proposal submission, versus before award or before task-order performance?

The RFP does not mandate specific trade license attachments or state contractor registration numbers at the time of proposal submittal. At submission, Vendors must complete Attachment 4 (Bid Proposal Submittal Form) providing corporate tax and registration details. Vendors are responsible for maintaining all applicable legal credentials required to perform work in Iowa. Any required city, county, or project-specific permits or bonds must be obtained prior to beginning performance on an assigned project.

7. Please confirm the required insurance limits applicable to the resulting agreement and whether subcontractors must independently carry the same limits.

Insurance requirements are detailed in Attachment 1 (Sample Agreement). The prime Vendor must maintain required General Liability, Auto Liability, Workers' Compensation, and Excess/Umbrella coverage. Per Section 3.2.13, subcontractors must meet the same qualification standards as the prime Vendor; prime Vendors must ensure all approved subcontractors maintain equivalent insurance coverage or are fully covered under the prime Vendor's policies.

8. For Attachment 5 / qualifications evaluation, may a prime contractor rely on the documented personnel, equipment, facilities, emergency-response capability, and experience of proposed subcontractors that will actually perform the OSP work, provided those subcontractors are identified and meet the RFP requirements?

Yes. Vendors may include subcontractor capabilities in Attachment 5 responses provided all subcontractors are explicitly identified in Section 5.4.9. However, Vendors should note that Section 5.2.7 specifically evaluates and awards higher points for self-performed work versus subcontracted work.

9. Please confirm the intended initial contract term, renewal/option structure, and standard payment terms after an accepted project invoice.

Per Section 3. the ICN intends to establish an annual contract (typically an initial 1-year term with potential annual renewal options as defined in Attachment 1). This Agreement is effective March 2027 and will continue through March 2028. The Agreement may be extended with mutual written agreement for five additional (1) one-year periods. Per Section 2.1.2.1, projects must be fully completed and granted Final Acceptance by ICN prior to invoicing. Standard State of Iowa payment terms apply (Net 60 days following Final Acceptance and receipt of a compliant invoice, per Iowa Code Section 8A.514).

10. Are you able to provide the definitions/parameters of Rural, Residential, Urban for the unit price sheet on this project?

For unit pricing in Attachment 7, the environment classifications are defined as follows:

- Rural: Work performed outside incorporated city limits or along open road county rights-of-way (unimproved shoulders, open ditches, grass corridors).
- Residential: Work performed within incorporated city limits inside established residential subdivisions, lawn areas, or maintainable rights-of-way requiring sodding or reseeding restoration per Section 3.2.14.
- Urban: Work performed within commercial or metropolitan city limits involving high utility density, paved/concrete surfaces, traffic control, or narrow right-of-way corridors.

11. Confirmation that the eight posted files constitute the complete solicitation package

Confirmed. The complete solicitation package consists of Part I (General Requirements & Sample Agreement Attachment 1) and Part II (Actionable Attachments 2 through 7).

12. Whether a vendor may be awarded multiple zones

Yes. Per Section 3.1 and Chapter 5 (Step 5), vendors may bid on up to five (5) zones on Attachment 6. The ICN will pre-qualify up to three (3) vendors per zone, and no individual vendor will be awarded more than three (3) zones.

13. Whether historical work volume or spend by zone can be shared to support unit pricing

Historical spend varies significantly depending on network maintenance needs, highway relocations, and state agency expansion projects. Per Section 3.2.2, issuance of a pre-qualification contract does not guarantee any minimum amount of work or spend. Historical spend data is not provided, as future task order volumes will depend entirely on as-needed State requirements.

14. Could you tell me if we need to price the material or is it only labor bid?

The unit rates requested are for labor rates only. When a vendor is selected for a project, the ICN will request current material costs for any materials the vendor is expected to provide (conduit, handholes, fiber cable, etc.) and those costs are incorporated into the work order.

15. Vendor offer as a disclosed prime coordinator with named qualified Iowa outside-plant subcontractors performing the field work, subject to ICN consent?

A vendor may submit a proposal as a Prime Contractor utilizing subcontractors to perform field work, provided the following conditions are met:

- Subcontractor Identification & Approval: Currently known or anticipated subcontractors must be identified in Attachment 5, Section 5.4.9. All subcontractors must meet the same qualification standards as the Prime Vendor and receive written approval from the ICN OSP Project Manager prior to performing work on any project (Section 3.2.13)
- Prime Responsibility: The Prime Contractor remains 100% legally and contractually responsible for all contract deliverables, overall project management, quality control, safety, invoicing, and subcontractor oversight (Section 3.2.13.1).
- Evaluation Scoring: Vendors should note that Attachment 5 qualitatively evaluates direct prime capability and awards higher points for work self-performed directly by the Prime Contractor (Section 5.2.7).

16. May Attachment 5 project experience, personnel and equipment be supported by clearly attributed qualifications of those named performers? We would distinguish their experience and assets from Vendor

Yes. Vendors may include and clearly attribute the project experience, personnel qualifications, and equipment capabilities of named, proposed subcontractors in their Attachment 5 (Vendor Qualifications Response Form) submission, provided that subcontractor assets are explicitly distinguished from the Prime Vendor's direct assets.

When preparing your submission, please note the following evaluation parameters:

- Clear Attribution: Subcontractor personnel, equipment, facilities, or prior project experience must be clearly attributed to the specific subcontractor and listed in Attachment 5, Section 5.4.9.
- Evaluation Scoring: The evaluation committee will review both Prime Contractor and subcontractor capabilities. However, Attachment 5 qualitative criteria evaluate direct Prime capability and award higher points for work self-performed directly by the Prime Contractor (Section 5.2.7).
- Subcontractor Approval: All proposed subcontractors must meet the same qualification standards as the Prime Vendor and must receive written approval from the ICN OSP Project Manager prior to performing work on any assigned project (Section 3.2.13).

17. If fiber splicing is excluded from our offered civil scope, please confirm the Attachment 7 rate treatment and process for ICN-appointed splicer coordination and project-specific approval.

- Attachment 7 Rates: As outlined in Chapter 5, Section 5.3, if a vendor does not offer a specific service (such as fiber splicing), they should enter "N/A" on those specific line items in Attachment 7.
- Coordination & Approval: For individual task order projects that require both civil work and fiber splicing, the ICN OSP Project Manager will assign and coordinate work schedules between pre-qualified vendors. If ICN utilizes a separate vendor for splicing, ICN will manage the project schedule, issue the appropriate Notices to Proceed, and coordinate the site hand-off between the civil vendor and the splicing vendor.

18. We would identify the actual firms and supported zones before an offer, retain prime contractual responsibility, and make no claim to owned equipment, local establishment or prior prime projects that is not supported.

Yes, this approach is acceptable. You may use subcontractors as long as you identify them in your proposal, take 100% responsibility as the prime contractor, and accurately distinguish your firm's assets and experience from theirs.

19. Local Presence & Office Requirement: Section 5.5 evaluates proximity, and Section 5.6.1.1 requests crew dispatch within two (2) hours. Please confirm whether an awarded vendor is required to maintain a physical brick-and-mortar office or facility within each awarded zone, or whether documented crew-staging facilities and demonstrated ability to satisfy the 2-hour emergency response standard fulfill this requirement.

No. A physical brick-and-mortar office is not required in each awarded zone. Vendors can satisfy location (Section 5.5) and emergency response requirements (Section 5.6.1.1) through documented crew-staging facilities, equipment yards, or partner agreements, provided they can meet the 2-hour dispatch standard.

20. Emergency Response Scope: Given that each geographic zone encompasses 18 to 23 physical counties, does the 2-hour dispatch standard (Section 5.6.1.1) require physical arrival at the specific incident site, arrival at the awarded zone boundary, or initial crew dispatch from the staging facility? Additionally, how will a qualified "Yes" be scored relative to an unqualified "Yes"?

The 2-hour standard requires crews and equipment to be mobilized and en route to the site within 2 hours of ICN's call—it does not require physical arrival on site within 2 hours across the entire multi-county zone.

21. Adjacent-Base & Teaming Coverage: Under Section 5.5.5, may an out-of-state vendor rely on formal teaming agreements, verified subcontractor partnerships, or operational staging facilities located in an adjacent border state to demonstrate coverage and response capabilities for a designated zone?

Yes. An out-of-state vendor may rely on formal teaming agreements, verified subcontractor partnerships, or staging facilities in an adjacent border state to demonstrate coverage and response capabilities.

22. "N/A" Unit Price Entries: If a bidder enters "N/A" on Attachment 7 (Unit Price Sheet) for specialized line items not self-performed (e.g., specialized rock sawing or high-count ribbon splicing), does this reduce the 200-point pricing score, disqualify the vendor from a zone, or simply restrict work order assignment for those specific items?

Entering "N/A" on Attachment 7 for specialized line items:

- Bidders are explicitly permitted to enter "N/A" for services they do not perform.
- Pricing is evaluated using a standard scenario of core items, so entering "N/A" on specialized tasks will not penalize your 200-point price score.
- Your firm will simply not be assigned project work orders that require those specific "N/A" services

23. Splicing Execution Scoring: Section 3.2.3 notes that turn-key services are preferred. If a contractor proposes qualified, disclosed, and ICN-approved specialty subcontractors for fiber splicing while self-performing pathway construction, will points be deducted under Section 5.7 relative to in-house splicing?

There is no penalty for subcontracting splicing. Attachment 5 evaluates direct prime contractor capabilities. As a result, in-house staffing and self-performed work receive higher qualitative scores. Listing qualified subcontractors allows vendors to earn points under Section 5.4.9 (Subcontractor/Partner details).

24. Bid & Performance Bonding: Section 3.2.8 states bonds may be required on a project basis. Please confirm whether any bid, payment, or performance bonding is required with the initial proposal submission due November 6, 2026, or if bonding is solely required per task order post-award.

Bonding will be solely required per project order depending on type of project.

25. Can you provide 1-year historical data for each region? A breakdown of all the volume of work along with the billing codes for each.

Historical spend varies significantly depending on network maintenance needs, highway relocations, and state agency expansion projects. Per Section 3.2.2, issuance of a pre-qualification contract does not guarantee any minimum amount of work or spend. Historical spend data is not provided, as future task order volumes will depend entirely on as-needed State requirements.

26. Insurance Timing: Please confirm that the insurance coverage limits outlined in Attachment 1 (\$3M General Aggregate, \$1M Occurrence, \$1M Auto, and Iowa Statutory Workers' Compensation) and the formal Certificate of Insurance naming the State of Iowa and ICN as additional insureds are required upon contract award rather than with the initial proposal submission.

This will be required once awarded an Agreement/Contract.

27. Confidentiality of Pricing: If a vendor submits Attachment 4 claiming trade-secret protection under Iowa Code Chapter 22 for Attachment 7 (Unit Price Sheet), will this claim be honored without risking proposal disqualification or non-compliance?

- No Disqualification: Properly submitting a confidentiality request per RFP Section 1.10 will not disqualify your proposal.
- Public Records Scope: Requests are evaluated under Iowa Code Chapter 22. However, under Iowa public records law and state procurement precedents, bid unit pricing generally becomes public domain once an award decision is issued.
- Required Procedure: To maintain compliance, vendors must follow Section 1.10 procedures by submitting a cover letter with specific Chapter 22 legal grounds, marking Attachment 7 as confidential, and providing a redacted public copy. Blanket confidentiality claims across an entire proposal may result in rejection.

28. 3.2.8 Section – If the vendor is required to secure city and/or county permits will that cost be a pass through?

Yes. The actual direct fee charged by a city or county for required local permits is treated as a direct pass-through cost (reimbursed at actual cost without mark-up).

29. 3.2.12 Section – If a situation should arise where a specialized traffic control company is required will that cost be passed through?

Yes. The actual direct fee charged for specialized traffic control is treated as a direct pass-through cost (reimbursed at actual cost without mark-up).

30. 3.1 Section – Will we be required to maintain minimum stock levels on inventory?

No. Vendors are not required to maintain mandatory minimum stock levels on inventory to participate or receive a contract award.

31. 3.1 Section – Should any non-stock materials be delayed, will that be considered for waving liquidated damages?

- Approved Time Extensions: Yes. If a non-stock material delay occurs, the vendor must promptly notify the ICN Project Manager and request a schedule adjustment. Per Attachment 1, Section 13.7, liquidated damages are not assessed for time delays that are specifically approved in writing by the ICN.
- ICN Operational Option: If material delays prevent a vendor from meeting the required project schedule, ICN retains the right under Section 3.2.4.4 to reassign or rescind the project to another vendor to ensure completion.

32. 3.1 Section – Does ICN typically utilize a standard fiber count for most projects or is it varying from 12-288?

The legacy ICN network is primarily 12-strand or smaller. Most repairs or relocations are specified to have a minimum of the same as the existing strand count be placed. New construction is typically 48 strand.

33. 3.2.4.4 Section – May an awarded vendor decline an individual project before accepting the NTP if it cannot meet the required timelines?

Yes. An awarded contractor may decline an individual project before accepting a Notice to Proceed if the vendor cannot commit to or meet the required project timeline.

34. 3.2.6 Section – Could we have clarification on what the 24-hour notice on all project refers to or what action is expected of the vendor within that 24 hours?

The 24-hour notice is the minimum advance lead time ICN provides to a vendor when issuing a Notice to Proceed (NTP) for standard, non-emergency projects before work or site mobilization is scheduled to begin. Emergency work is exempt from this lead time and subject to the 2-hour dispatch standard. Vendor shall confirm receipt of Notice to Proceed and confirm schedule can be met (confirming crew/equipment availability) so that the job can be reassigned if scheduling conflicts or time constraints won't allow.

35. Attachment 6 – Are there historical volumes per zone that they can provide?

Historical spend varies significantly depending on network maintenance needs, highway relocations, and state agency expansion projects. Per Section 3.2.2, issuance of a pre-qualification contract does not guarantee any minimum amount of work or spend. Historical spend data is not provided, as future task order volumes will depend entirely on as-needed State requirements.

36. Attachment 7 pg 8 – Splicing mobilization is called out as lump sum. Is this lump sum per day or total for the whole project?

It is a single lump sum fee total for the whole project dispatch/work order, not a daily rate. A separate mobilization fee applies only if ICN specifically requests a separate, additional dispatch on a different occasion for that project.

37. Attachment 7 pg 8 – Off hour charges is called out as lump sum. Is this lump sum per day or total for the whole project?

It is a single lump sum total for the specific dispatch/work order, not a daily rate. This acts as a one-time flat surcharge applied to a project that requires the vendor to perform work outside of normal business hours or respond to an off-hours emergency.

38. Controlling package and contract schedules

Please confirm that the documents currently posted on the ICN bid-opportunities page are the controlling package and identify any issued revisions or addenda. Attachment 1 references Schedules A and B, but those schedules do not appear in the supplied sample agreement. Will they be provided before proposals are due, or are they populated when the agreement or individual project is issued? Please also confirm that the Attachment 7 heading "RFP XX-XXX" should be completed as "RFP 26-023."

All the bid documents are listed on the ICN bid-opportunities page, Attachment 1 is a sample of what the Agreement would look like with all the ICN's T's & C's, schedules A/B would be the unit pricing from the Selected/Winning Vendor. Yes Attachment 7 the Heading should read "RFP 26-023"

39. Evaluation methodology

Chapter 4.2 specifies section-level qualification points and 200 pricing points. Please provide the qualification sub criteria and pricing calculation methodology, including the quantities or weighting used for pricing, whether scoring is performed separately by zone, and how "N/A" items affect both

the mandatory compliance gate and pricing points. Are vendors permitted to use zone-specific rate sheets, or must one rate sheet apply to all selected zones?

- Pricing Calculation: Pricing (200 pts max) is evaluated using a standard test scenario of core items (500' conduit, 2 vaults, 700' duct, mobilization, etc.). The lowest total scenario cost gets 200 points, and other vendors receive points proportionally based on how close their total is to the lowest.
- Rate Sheets & Zone Scoring: Bidders must submit one single rate sheet that applies to all selected zones (zone-specific rate sheets are not allowed). Bids are scored once overall, and final contract awards are made zone by zone.
- Impact of "N/A": Entering "N/A" for specialized items (like splicing or rock sawing) will not disqualify your bid and will not lower your pricing score. It simply means your firm will not be assigned work orders for those specific services.

40. Coverage established after award, may a vendor qualify based on a documented plan to establish crews, equipment, and a staging location in an awarded zone after award, rather than an existing Iowa location at proposal submission? If permitted, when must that coverage become operational, and what evidence should be included in Attachment 5?

- Yes. Vendors may qualify based on a documented expansion plan to establish local crews, equipment, and staging locations after contract award.
- Full coverage must be operational prior to contract start.
- Target staging cities/counties in the zone must be identified.
- A clear mobilization timeline from award notice to operational readiness.
- Local subcontractor/partner agreements or MOUs
- Dedicated equipment and staffing allocation plans

41. Two-hour emergency requirement

Attachment 5.6.1.1 asks whether equipment and crews can be dispatched "to any area within a Zone within 2 hours. " Does the two-hour period measure commencement of dispatch, arrival at the incident, or commencement of excavation/repair? When does the clock begin, what minimum crew/equipment combination is required, and may an ICN-approved local subcontractor satisfy the requirement?

- The 2-hour clock starts when ICN issues the emergency call-out. It measures the time to dispatch crews and equipment en route to the site.
- Standard equipment required for the emergency (excavator, e.g.)
- Subcontractors: Yes. Pre-approved local subcontractors listed in Attachment 5 can fulfill the 2-hour requirement.

42. Chapter 3 acknowledgement

Chapter 3.2 directs vendors to acknowledge compliance where indicated in Attachment 4, but Attachment 4 contains corporate and contact fields without individual Chapter 3 acknowledgement blocks. Should vendors include a separate signed Chapter 3 compliance statement or matrix, and is there a required format?

- No Extra Forms Needed: You do not need to create a separate Chapter 3 compliance statement or matrix.
- How to Acknowledge: Simply complete and sign Attachment 2 (Bid Proposal Compliance Form), where you certify total Chapter 3 compliance (or list any exceptions).
- Submittal Requirement: Submitting signed Attachment 2 and Attachment 4 fully satisfies this requirement.

43. Material supply and price inclusions

Chapter 3.1 and 3.2.4.4 contemplate project-specific material pricing, and Attachment 7 A9 states labor rates only unless contractor-provided materials are specifically stated. However, A303–A304 requires the contractor to supply all other required materials, including HDPE, duct splices, grounding/tracer wire, rock, and mesh. Please clarify which materials are separately quoted for each project and which must be included in Attachment 7 rates. Specifically, please address conduit/couplers, fiber cable, handhole bodies/lids, bedding/mesh, tracer wire, warning tape/markers, closure hardware, aerial hardware, pavement restoration materials, bridge attachments, and interior duct.

Included in Attachment 7 Rates (Contractor-Supplied):

- Conduit Couplers: Standard HDPE conduit couplers / duct splices.
- Bedding & Backfill: Rock, bedding, and wire mesh.
- Locating & Marking: Grounding wire, tracer wire, warning tape, and warning markers/peds.

Separately Quoted or ICN-Provided (Project-by-Project):

- Fiber Optic Cable: Attachment 7 covers placement/splicing labor; the cable itself is quoted or supplied per project based on required strand count.
- Handhole Bodies & Lids: Attachment 7 covers installation labor; vault materials are quoted or provided per project.
- Splice Closures: Splicing/prep labor is included in Attachment 7; specialized closure bodies are quoted or supplied per project.

44. Mobilization and overlapping charges

Please confirm how A225–A237 tiered mobilization, round-trip mileage, and emergency call-out charges interact with A250 aerial crew mobilization, A263 splicing mobilization, and A274 off-hours charges. May applicable charges be combined on one project, and is tiered mobilization charged once per project, once per crew/equipment deployment, or again for an authorized remobilization? Is mileage measured from the vendor's actual dispatch/staging location? Please confirm these listed contract charges remain payable notwithstanding Attachment 1 §7.3's prohibition on separate reimbursable expenses.

- Combining Charges: Base mobilization covers general OSP work; do not stack general, aerial, and splicing mobilizations for the same deployment. However, Emergency Call-Out and Off-Hours fees are additive surcharges and can be combined with base rates when applicable.
- Billing Frequency: Mobilization is charged once per continuous project deployment. A separate mobilization fee applies only if ICN authorizes a separate dispatch/remobilization on a different date.
- Mileage Measurement: Measured round-trip from the vendor's actual local dispatch/staging facility servicing the zone to the jobsite.
- Reimbursable Expenses (§7.3): Yes, all Attachment 7 rates remain fully payable. They are agreed-upon contract unit prices, not unlisted reimbursable expenses.

45. Environmental classifications

Please define “Rural,” “Residential,” and “Urban” for Attachment 7 pricing and identify how borderline locations are classified. Is the classification determined before project assignment, and can a project use multiple classifications?

For unit pricing in Attachment 7, the environment classifications are defined as follows:

- Rural: Work performed outside incorporated city limits or along open road county rights-of-way (unimproved shoulders, open ditches, grass corridors).
- Residential: Work performed within incorporated city limits inside established residential subdivisions, lawn areas, or maintainable rights-of-way requiring sodding or reseeding restoration per Section 3.2.14.

- Urban: Work performed within commercial or metropolitan city limits involving high utility density, paved/concrete surfaces, traffic control, or narrow right-of-way corridors.

46. Cobble, boulders, and rock authorization

Please define the field criteria and documentation for payment under the two rock-boring sections. How are heavy cobble/boulder conditions classified if a conventional dirt drill cannot maintain the required depth but the material is not solid rock? May a separate cobble/differing-condition rate be proposed, and who must authorize the change before work proceeds?

- Classification: Cobble/boulder conditions are classified by the equipment needed—using Row 111 (dirt drill w/ rock attachment) or Row 138 (dual-rod rock drill) if standard drilling fails.
- No Custom Rates: Vendors cannot propose a separate "cobble" rate or alter Attachment 7.
- Approval Required: The ICN Construction Manager must inspect field conditions and give written authorization before work proceeds at a rock rate.

47. Dual-rod ownership and subcontracting

Attachment 7 A139 states that ICN expects the bidder to own and operate dual-rod rock equipment. Would dedicated leased equipment or an advance-approved rock-drilling subcontractor satisfy this requirement? If a vendor does not own dual-rod equipment and enters "N/A" on those lines, does it remain eligible for other OSP work in the selected zones?

While using an approved subcontractor is fully compliant, a vendor who directly owns or leases All-Terrain dual-rod equipment and self-performs the work can earn higher qualitative points during evaluation. Answer N/A does not disqualify a vendor.

48. Extra depth and crossing requirements

Boring unit descriptions include 42 inches "or greater" as determined by the ICN Construction Manager, without a separate extra-depth line. How will materially deeper bores and railroad, roadway, or waterway crossings be priced? Will casing/sleeves, specialized drilling, permit requirements, railroad flagging, and special environmental controls be separately authorized and priced when not covered by the listed unit descriptions? Please also reconcile the rock-sawing rows labeled "36–42 inches" with that section's description requiring 42 inches or greater.

- Materially deeper bores, complex waterway/roadway/railroad crossings, steel casing/sleeves, railroad flagging, and special environmental controls fall outside standard unit rate descriptions will be separately itemized, quoted, and authorized on a project-by-project basis.
- The specific line items reconcile this by offering two depth tiers: 36–42 inches (Rows 167, 169, 171) for shallow rock trenching where solid bedrock prevents deeper cut, and depth over 42 inches (Rows 168, 170, 172) for standard/deeper rock sawing. Vendors should price each row according to its stated depth range.

49. Locates and extraordinary utility verification

The construction units include locating existing utilities. Please distinguish included ordinary locating/potholing from private/non-member utility locating, extensive vacuum excavation, and utility-owner attendance or standby requirements. How will unlocatable or incorrectly marked facilities be addressed, and what written authorization is required for additional verification work?

- One Call Responsibility: The vendor is solely responsible for strictly following Iowa One Call (811) laws and policies, securing all locate tickets, and verifying utility markings before digging.
- Included Scope: Standard 811 ticket coordination, locate verification, and routine potholing at marked utility crossings are included in Attachment 7 unit rates.
- Private Locates & Extra Work: Private/non-811 utility locates, extensive vacuum excavation, or utility owner standby are not covered by standard One Call. If required, the vendor must receive written authorization from the ICN Construction Manager before performing additional work.

- **Unlocatable / Incorrect Marks:** If utilities are unmarked, incorrectly marked, or unlocatable, digging in that area must stop immediately and the ICN Construction Manager must be notified for written direction.

50. OTDR measurement and acceptance criteria

Please confirm whether the OTDR "EA" rate is per fiber tested or per cable/test package, how its bands are selected, and whether each rate must include one-way or bidirectional testing, which wavelengths, launch/receive leads, loss thresholds, and final trace/report formats. Is OLTS/insertion-loss testing required in addition to OTDR, and how is it compensated?

- **Rate Basis (Per Strand):** "EA" represents the unit price for each individual strand tested.
- **Tiered Volume Pricing:** Bidders must quote per-strand rates based on the total strand count being tested in the cable/project (1–12, 13–24, 25–36, 37–48, 49–144, 145+ fibers). The per-strand unit rate is expected to decrease as the total volume of tested strands increases.
- **Test Standards:** Dual-wavelength (1310 / 1550 nm), bidirectional testing using launch and receive leads.
- **Deliverables:** Native .SOR trace files and PDF reports.
- **OLTS Testing:** Insertion-loss testing is included in standard test rates and closeout requirements.

51. Fiber wavelength specification

Attachment 7 A297 specifies attenuation at "[1310/1440 nm](#)." Please confirm whether 1440 nm is intentional or should read 1550 nm, and provide the applicable fiber and acceptance-testing specification.

- **Typo Correction:** 1440 nm is a clerical typo in Attachment 7 (Row 297). The specification should read 1550 nm.
- **Fiber Specification:** Single-mode OSP fiber optic cable (ITU-T G.652.D compliant), single-armor, gel-free, loose-tube. Maximum allowable attenuation is 0.35 dB/km at 1310 nm and 0.25 dB/km at 1550 nm.
- **Acceptance-Testing Specification:** Acceptance testing (OTDR and OLTS) must be performed bidirectionally at 1310 nm and 1550 nm using pulse-suppression launch and receive leads. Final deliverables must include native .SOR trace files and PDF summary reports demonstrating compliance with attenuation and splice loss limits.

52. Permits, traffic control, and environmental conditions

Please confirm responsibility for city/county and other non-IDOT permits, easements, traffic-control plans and permits, flaggers, railroad approvals, and waterway/environmental controls. Which costs are included in labor unit rates, covered by the permitting/easements line, or separately authorized? Will unusual requirements be disclosed before project assignment?

- **Permits:** ICN typically secures IDOT permits. Vendors typically secure city/county permits using Attachment 7 Row 219 (Permitting/Easements), with actual third-party permit fees passed through on project quotes.
- **Traffic Control:** Basic safety setups (cones, signs) are included in labor rates. Dedicated flaggers, law enforcement, or engineered traffic plans are separately quoted.
- **Railroad & Environmental:** Railroad permits/flaggers and extraordinary environmental controls (SWPPP, silt fencing) are separately authorized and quoted.
- **Pre-Assignment Disclosure:** Yes. ICN discloses all known permit, traffic, and environmental requirements prior to project assignment.

53. Payment, acceptance, and invoice deadlines

Chapter 2.1.2.1 allows invoicing only after completion and acceptance unless partial payments are approved, and Attachment 1 §7.1.1.1 holds 100% through acceptance and approval of as-builts. Section 7.7 also bars invoices later than 60 days after goods/services and fiscal-year invoices

received after July 15. Please reconcile these deadlines when ICN acceptance or as-built review is pending, identify the review/acceptance turnaround, and clarify whether the invoice clock starts at physical completion or final acceptance. Under what circumstances are progress or stored-material payments approved?

Invoicing would start once ICN has accepted the completion of the Project. Section 7.7 means that ICN needs to have all invoices for completed projects prior to the end of the Fiscal year which is June 30th and the last date to receive those completed project invoices need to be in by July 15th. Progress payments are considered on a case by case basis after the work is performed and accepted.

54. Bond amount, form, and due date

Attachment 1 §15 allows project-specific performance bonds for jobs valued at \$5,000 or more. Please provide the required form, typical amount or percentage, delivery deadline, release conditions, and whether any bid bond, surety letter, or proof of bonding capacity is required with this prequalification proposal.

No bid bond is required with the pre-qualified bid response.

As identified in Section 15.1 in the Attachment 1 Contractual Terms and Conditions Sample Agreement – the need for a bond will be determined on a project by project basis. If a bond is required then a form will be presented at that time.

55. Rate validity and price changes

Please confirm the intended initial contract dates and the period for which Attachment 7 labor and bundled-material rates must remain fixed. What process applies to annual renewals, wage changes, fuel changes, and volatility in materials specifically included in unit rates? Please also clarify the quote-validity and approval rules for separately quoted project materials.

- Initial Term & Fixed Rate Period: The initial contract term is one (1) year from execution, with options to extend for up to five (5) additional one-year periods. All Attachment 7 unit rates must remain fixed and firm for the entire initial 1-year term.
- Rate adjustments for labor, fuel, materials, etc will be considered at the time of annual renewal.
- Quote Validity: Material pricing quoted on a project-by-project basis must reflect current market rates and remain valid for the timeframe specified in the project quote request (typically 30 to 60 days).
- Approval Rules: All project-specific material quotes require written approval and a Notice to Proceed from the ICN OSP Project Manager prior to material procurement or construction.

56. Project-specific funding and compliance obligations

Attachment 1 §14.2.1 references prevailing-wage laws. Will any projects assigned through this agreement require Davis–Bacon or another wage determination, certified payroll, Build America Buy America documentation, or grant-specific reporting? If so, will the applicable requirements be disclosed before assignment, and how are incremental compliance costs reflected in the contract rates?

If a project has grant funding or federal funding with special requirements, Terms and Conditions they will be discussed with the Vendor prior to project assignment.

57. Workforce and subcontractor classification

For Attachments 5.4 and 5.7, please confirm how dedicated 1099 personnel and subcontractor-employed crews should be reported versus W-2 employees and “in-house/self-performed” splicing. Is there any minimum self-performance percentage under this ICN RFP, and what information and approval timing are required for a project-specific subcontractor?

There is no minimum requirement of self-performing vs subcontracting.

If vendor is awarded pre-qualified contract, ICN will consult with awarded vendor to determine if the vendor is performing the work or will be subcontracting the work out. If vendor is subcontracting the work ICN retains the right to approve or decline the subcontractor(s).

58. Underground versus aerial work mix

Can ICN provide the anticipated percentage of underground (UG) versus aerial work under this contract, particularly for the Southeast, Central, and Northeast zones? If available, please provide a breakdown by zone and indicate whether the percentages are based on route footage, project count, or project value.

- **Data Availability:** ICN does not track or publish fixed percentage breakdowns of underground versus aerial work by zone.
- **General Network Mix:** While exact percentages vary by specific project needs, ICN's outside plant network is predominantly underground construction (directional boring, plowing, trenching). Aerial work primarily consists of maintenance, pole transfers, and localized cable attachments where underground placement is unfeasible.
- **Work Allocation:** Projects are assigned strictly on an as-needed basis driven by highway relocations, network expansion, and emergency repairs. Contract pre-qualification does not guarantee any minimum volume, footage, or dollar value for either underground or aerial work.

59. KMZ files and plans for planned work

Can ICN provide KMZ/KML files and available route maps or preliminary plans for work currently planned in the Southeast, Central, and Northeast zones? If these are not available during prequalification, when will project-specific mapping and plans be provided to qualified vendors?

- **Availability During Prequalification:** No. ICN does not provide KMZ/KML files, route maps, or preliminary plans during the prequalification proposal stage. This solicitation is strictly to pre-qualify vendors and establish fixed unit pricing per zone.
- **Project-Specific Mapping Delivery:** Complete project-specific engineering plans, route drawings, and mapping/KMZ files will be provided to pre-qualified zone vendors when individual project work orders arise during cost evaluation and job assignment (Sections 3.1 & 3.2.4). Scope details and final prints are formally issued with the project Notice to Proceed prior to starting construction.

60. Is there a number of miles per year that is anticipated for this work?

- **Anticipated Mileage:** No. ICN does not provide an anticipated or guaranteed number of miles per year for this contract.
- **As-Needed Basis:** Work is assigned strictly on an as-needed basis for individual projects (typically costing less than \$50,000 each) driven by highway relocations, network maintenance, and customer connections.
- **No Volume Guarantee:** Pre-qualification under this RFP establishes an approved vendor pool per zone but does not guarantee any minimum annual footage, mileage, or work volume

61. What is the anticipated schedule for the work to be completed?

- **Contract Structure:** Work is performed on a continuous, as-needed project-by-project basis throughout the master contract term (1-year initial term with up to 5 one-year renewals).
- **Individual Project Timelines:** There is no single overall completion schedule. Specific start dates, milestones, and completion deadlines are established individually on each project work order issued by ICN.
- **Schedule Compliance:** Vendors must complete each project within the specific timeframe set in the project work order unless agreed upon in advance, as failure to meet agreed-upon completion dates is subject to contractual liquidated damages.

62. Is pricing able to be adjusted year to year, or is pricing fixed once awarded?

- Fixed Initial Term: Attachment 7 unit rates are fixed and firm for the entire initial 1-year contract term. No mid-term price increases or surcharges are permitted.
- Year-to-Year Adjustments: Pricing can be adjusted year-to-year prior to an annual contract renewal.
- Adjustment Process: Rate adjustments are not automatic. The vendor must request the change in writing prior to the renewal period with cost justification, and any rate change requires a mutual written contract amendment (Section 7.2).
- Separately Quoted Materials: Material costs quoted on an individual project basis are priced at current market rates at the time of each project request.