

Uplink, LLC
Engineering

Request for Proposal
Marks – CPF WIFI Project

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CEO

INTRODUCTION, OVERVIEW, AND APPROACH

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Marks CPF WIFI Project

Issued by: Uplink, LLC — 340 Hopson Street, Lyon, Mississippi 38645

Release Date: 8/18/2026 Questions Due: 8/25/2026 Proposal Due Date: 8/28/2026 Notice to Proceed: August 30, 2026

Procurement Method: Small Purchase under the Uplink, LLC Procurement Policy, Appendix 1. Estimated value is below the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (2 CFR 200.320(a)(2)).

Funding Source: U.S. Department of the Treasury Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF), administered by the Office of Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi (BEAM).

1. Introduction and Overview

Uplink, LLC is seeking proposals from qualified engineering firms to provide field work, engineering design, environmental assessment, site surveys, project management, and inspection services for the Marks CPF WIFI Project.

The project includes approximately 3.52 miles (18,607 feet) of underground fiber and the installation (site surveys) of five (5) strategically placed WIFI access points in the City of Marks, Quitman County, Mississippi. All construction is underground. No aerial construction or pole attachments are contemplated. The selected firm must remain engaged for the entire project lifecycle, providing full documentation to satisfy Capital Projects Fund (CPF) WIFI NOFO requirements and conducting final inspections at project completion.

Development of this solicitation. A scope-of-work template circulated among CPF WIFI subrecipients in Mississippi was reviewed by Uplink in preparing this document. Uplink independently developed the final scope of work, project area data, schedule, evaluation criteria, and respondent list set forth herein. No prospective respondent participated in, or received advance access to, the final content of this solicitation.

2. Project Summary

Scope of Work

Field Work & Design

- Conduct field surveys with accuracy of +/- 0.1' (preferably LiDAR-based).
- Verify existing infrastructure meetpoints, including the existing handhole and cabinet at the west end of the route (see Project Area).
- Prepare CAD-based designs for fiber construction that reflect the CPF WIFI build requirements and integrate existing designs, ensuring that fiber counts, pathways, and splice points are engineered to support long-term scalability and capacity needs.
- Deliverables must include: plans and specifications (CAD designs), bill of materials (Excel), addresses passed with lat/long, and KMZ of final route design.
- Uplink requires all as-builts to be uploaded into its mapping system (3GIS). Uplink will provide system access.

Permitting

- Secure and manage all required permits (MDOT, City of Marks, Quitman County, ROW, environmental, etc.).
- Prepare and submit the Canadian National Railway (CN) wireline crossing application(s) for the crossing(s) identified in the Project Area, including the CN Initial Notification of Intent, the non-refundable preparation fee, plan and profile drawings conforming to CN and AREMA standards,

milepost identification, casing and bore depth details, and required insurance certificates. The crossing design shall be prioritized ahead of the balance of final design so the CN application can be filed at the earliest possible date. Respondents must address CN permitting specifically in their proposal.

Environmental Review

- Complete environmental checklist for CPF.
- Coordinate with MDAH (SHPO), FEMA, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other agencies.
- Review EPA Envirofacts, MS Oil & Gas Board, and groundwater databases.
- Provide mitigation strategies for findings.
- Conduct Environmental Justice review for impacts on low-income/minority populations.

Site Surveys & WIFI Access Point Planning

- Conduct site surveys for placement of WIFI access points.
- Recommend placement considering coverage, safety, and aesthetics.
- Confirm mounting feasibility, structural adequacy, power availability, and site access at each location.

Project Management & Compliance

- Provide monthly progress updates to Uplink and CPF funding agency.
- Track compliance, reporting.
- Manage contractor procurement with all related reporting requirements. Uplink will control the procurement process and make the award decision.
- Project management of construction.
- Attend required funding agency meetings and update portals.
- Provide inspection services during and after construction, using in-house inspectors.

Project Area

The project includes approximately 3.52 miles (18,607 feet) of underground fiber and five (5) strategically placed WIFI access points in the City of Marks, Quitman County, Mississippi. Access point locations, the fiber route, and existing infrastructure are provided in Exhibit A (KMZ), issued with this RFP. Respondents are responsible for reviewing Exhibit A in full.

Five (5) WIFI Access Points

#	Access Point Location	Latitude	Longitude
1	Marks Community House	34.257733	-90.270628
2	Quitman County Courthouse	34.258751	-90.270442
3	Quitman County Welcome Center	34.257551	-90.271984
4	Train Station (Amtrak)	34.258203	-90.272300
5	Family Market	34.246916	-90.275251

Route Segments

Segment	Length	From	To
Mainline	14,721 ft	Existing handhole, 34.264903 / -90.313620	Courthouse area, 34.258853 / -90.271078

Segment	Length	From	To
Family Market spur	3,886 ft	34.246989 / -90.275773	34.256675 / -90.275322
Total	18,607 ft (3.52 mi)		

Known Site Conditions

Item	Location	Note to Respondents
Canadian National Railway crossing	34.257710 / -90.272623	On the mainline route, approximately 200 feet from both the Welcome Center and Train Station access points. Four of the five access points lie east of this crossing. A CN wireline crossing license is required. Respondents must state their approach, CN experience, and expected timeline.
Railroad permitting – area of concern	34.263962 / -90.309663	Second location flagged for railroad permitting on the mainline near the west end of the route. Respondents should field-verify during survey and confirm whether a second CN crossing license is required.
Existing handhole	34.264903 / -90.313620	Route origin. Existing Uplink plant; cabinet located approximately 220 feet east.
Existing cabinet – CPF Quitman	34.251478 / -90.360475	Existing facility west of the project area, shown for reference.

3. RFP Administration

Project Schedule

This project is governed by a federal deadline. CPF funds must be expended and the project substantially complete by December 31, 2026. This project is not covered by a period-of-performance extension. The following milestones will be established in the resulting contract.

#	Milestone
1	Notice to Proceed
2	Railroad crossing design package complete; CN application(s) submitted
3	Field survey complete; preliminary route and access point siting delivered
4	MDOT right-of-way, City of Marks, and Quitman County permit applications submitted
5	Environmental review complete; CPF environmental checklist delivered
6	Final CAD design, bill of materials, and KMZ delivered
7	Construction start — segments not dependent on the CN crossing
8	CN crossing license executed; crossing construction complete
9	Substantial completion — all five access points delivering service
10	As-builts uploaded to 3GIS; final inspection complete
11	Final invoice submitted

The CN crossing license is the controlling constraint on this project. CN will not review an incomplete application, and industry guidance indicates four to eight weeks of review for a complete traverse crossing application. Respondents should

describe recent turnaround times they have achieved on Class I railroad crossings and state how they would sequence construction so that segments not dependent on the crossing proceed in parallel.

Submission Instructions

- Proposals must be submitted in PDF format by email to Brian Smith, brian@uplinkinternet.net.

Deadline

- All proposals must be received by August 28, 2026, 5pm central. Late submissions will not be considered.

Questions & Inquiries

- All questions must be submitted via email to Brian Smith, brian@uplinkinternet.net, by the questions deadline.
- Uplink will distribute all questions and answers in writing to every firm that received this RFP. No oral guidance is binding.

General Conditions

Uplink reserves the right to:

- Conduct discussions with vendors for clarification.
- Waive minor irregularities.
- Accept, reject, or negotiate proposals.
- Cancel or amend this RFP at any time.
- Select one, multiple, or no proposals.
- Award all, part, or none of the scope.
- Cancel an award if good faith negotiations are not completed within 15 days of award.

Contractor Requirements

- Must be properly licensed and registered in Mississippi.
- Payments will be made monthly against completed milestone deliverables, with 10% retainage released upon acceptance of as-builts and completion of final inspection. Final payment within 30 days of project completion and acceptance.
- Cost-plus-a-percentage-of-cost and percentage-of-construction-cost pricing will not be accepted.
- Uplink may terminate for cause upon written notice and opportunity to cure, or for convenience upon 15 days' written notice, with payment for work satisfactorily performed through the termination date.

Federal Award Provisions

- Any resulting contract will incorporate the applicable provisions of Appendix II to 2 CFR Part 200, including equal employment opportunity; Clean Air Act and Federal Water Pollution Control Act compliance; debarment and suspension; procurement of recovered materials; Build America, Buy America; and the prohibition on covered telecommunications equipment (Section 889).
- The firm shall retain all records relating to this contract for the period required by the CPF award and shall provide access to Uplink, BEAM, the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the Treasury Office of Inspector General, the Comptroller General, and their authorized representatives.
- All deliverables — CAD files, KMZ, bill of materials, survey data, environmental record, permits, and as-builts — are the exclusive property of Uplink upon payment. The firm retains ownership of its pre-existing tools, templates, and methodologies.
- Consistent with 2 CFR 200.321, Uplink encourages participation by small businesses, minority business enterprises, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms. Respondents using subcontractors are asked to describe affirmative steps taken to solicit such firms.

4. Proposal Requirements

1. Complete all sections of the RFP response and include required attachments.
2. Demonstrate ability to satisfy CPF WIFI NOFO compliance requirements.
3. Provide detailed pricing by task (see pricing table below), plus an hourly rate schedule by labor category and reimbursable expense policy.
4. Demonstrate qualifications per the scoring rubric.
5. Provide three (3) references for comparable projects, with owner contact information.
6. Identify key personnel — project manager, lead designer, environmental lead, and inspector — with résumés and percentage of time committed to this project.
7. Provide a proposed project schedule showing the milestones above against the December 31, 2026 completion deadline, and state the approach to the railroad crossing and MDOT right-of-way permits.
8. Provide a signed debarment certification and disclose any relationship, financial or otherwise, between the respondent (or its principals) and Uplink, its members, officers, or employees.

5. Scoring Rubric (100 Points)

Each criterion is scored 1–5 by each evaluator and weighted as shown. Price is not scored; consistent with 2 CFR 200.320(b)(2)(iv), engineering services are ranked on qualifications, with compensation negotiated with the highest-ranked firm.

Category	Points	Requirement
Environmental assessment experience	20	Demonstrated MDAH (SHPO), USFWS, and USACE coordination on completed projects
Underground design and survey capability	20	Directional bore and underground route design; LiDAR-based survey; CAD and KMZ deliverables
In-house inspectors on staff	20	Must provide inspection services; staffing available for this schedule
Federal grant compliance experience	15	CPF, ReConnect, BIP, BEAD or comparable; environmental, reporting, and reimbursement documentation
Railroad crossing and MDOT permitting experience	15	Demonstrated crossing agreements and right-of-way permits; turnaround times achieved
Experience with WIFI site surveys	5	Prior project examples
Mississippi licensure and regional capacity	5	Licensed and registered in Mississippi; crew and inspector availability

Evaluators: [names and titles — each evaluator signs a scoresheet retained in the procurement file].

6. Pricing Table

Provide a firm fixed price for each base task. Optional tasks are priced separately; Uplink may award them, retain them in-house, or omit them.

Base Scope

Task Description	Price
Fieldwork and Design	

Task Description	Price
Permitting (including railroad crossing and MDOT ROW)	
Environmental Assessment	
Site Surveys for Access Point Placement	
Inspections	
As-Builts	
Base Scope Total	

Optional Scope

Task Description	Price
Construction Project Management	
Contractor Selection Process	
Network Testing	

7. Proposal Submission Page

By signing below, the respondent certifies that the information submitted is accurate, that it can perform the scope of work described herein, and that it is not debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from participation in federal programs.

Firm Name and Address: _____

Mississippi License No.: _____ UEI: _____

Officer Name: _____

Signature of Officer: _____

Date: _____

Exhibit A — Marks CPF WIFI Project KMZ (access point locations, fiber route, existing infrastructure)