

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
PANGAEA Internet – Middle Mile Fiber Construction

Issuing Agency: PANGAEA Internet (a nonprofit fiber ISP)

Project Location: Rutherford County, North Carolina

Project Sites: Highway 221 Extension from Chase High School, and Harris Elementary to Riverstone Business Park

Funding Source: ARC AREA DEVELOPMENT (Appalachian Regional Commission)

RFP Issue Date: *May 5th, 2026*

RFP Number: ARC-AREA-1-2026

Revised 1: May 27, 2026

1. RFP Purpose

PANGAEA is soliciting proposals from qualified contractors to design, procure, and construct a middle-mile aerial fiber-optic cable linking the following sites:

Site	County	Current Address	Planned Fiber Route
Harris Elementary School	Rutherford	3330 US-221, Forest City, NC 28043	Origin
Chase High School	Rutherford	1603 Chase High Road, Forest City, NC 28043	1-mile to connect to US-221 (existing poles)
Riverstone Business Park	Rutherford	160 Ash Dr, Forest City, NC 28043	6.4-mile aerial path (existing poles)

The ARC Area Development grant will cover all construction, engineering, and material costs. No operation, maintenance, or service speed requirements are imposed on the contractor. The objective is to deliver a reliable, cost-effective fiber route that meets ARC Area Development’s compliance standards and provides PANGAEA with a turnkey asset for future service delivery.

2. Project Overview

- **Funding:** The ARC Area Development Grant (Appalachian Regional Commission) provides the full cost for this project.
- **Scope:** The contractor will (a) provide a detailed cost estimate, (b) develop a construction schedule, (c) demonstrate qualifications, and (d) maintain the insurance and regulatory requirements mandated by the ARC Area Development

grant and 2 CFR Part 200.

- **Ownership:** All fiber, pole attachments, conduit, and ancillary infrastructure constructed under the ARC Area Development grant shall be owned by PANGAEA upon project completion.
- **Deliverables:**
 1. Completed cost estimate (itemized, including labor, materials, permits, and contingencies).
 2. Detailed construction schedule (start date, milestones, completion date).
 3. Evidence of all required registrations and certifications (SAM, UEI, 2 CFR Part 200).
 4. Proof of insurance coverage (see Section X).
 5. Documentation of compliance with ARC Area Development special provisions (suspension, conflict of interest, etc.).

3. Goals of the Procurement

Goal	Description
Financial	Deliver the fiber construction at the lowest cost while meeting all regulatory and quality standards.
Quality & Safety	Construction must comply with state and federal safety regulations, including OSHA and NC DOT guidelines for aerial and underground installations.
Compliance	All contractor activities must comply with 2 CFR Part 200, ARC Area Development grant terms, and applicable NC statutes.
Transparency	Proposals must provide clear, itemized cost breakdowns and a transparent timeline to facilitate auditability.
Professionalism	The contractor must demonstrate proven experience with aerial fiber installations of similar scale.

4. Scope of Services

The selected contractor will perform the following tasks:

Task	Description	Deliverable
Engineering & Design	Review PANGAEA's engineering plans; provide engineering	Final design package (CAD, BMS, permit drawings).

Task	Description	Deliverable
	drawings, cable specifications, pole and conduit sizing, and construction methodology.	
Permit Acquisition	Secure all necessary permits (DOT, environmental, local, state) for pole attachments, trenching (if required), and utility relocation.	Copies of all permits, approvals, and correspondence.
Procurement	Source all materials (fiber cable, conduits, splice enclosures, handholes, vaults, poles, fasteners) and equipment (trucks, rigging, hand tools).	Purchase orders, vendor agreements.
Construction	Execute the aerial and underground fiber installation, including pole attachment, cable splicing, conduit installation, handhole/vault construction, and testing.	Progress reports, daily logs, final completion certificate.
Testing & Documentation	Perform fiber tests (OTDR, power, attenuation) per industry standards; provide final test report and certification.	Test report, cable certification.
Project Management	Manage schedule, safety, quality, cost, and communications with PANGAEA.	Monthly status reports, final project close-out report.
Insurance & Compliance	Maintain all required insurance and meet ARC Area Development and 2 CFR Part 200 compliance obligations.	Insurance certificates, compliance declarations.
Record Retention	Retain all project documents for at least three years after final expenditure report submission.	Archived file set (digital & hard copies).

Note: No O&M, maintenance, or service speed responsibilities are assigned to the contractor.

5. Proposal Organization

All proposals must be organized in the following format (maximum of **12 pages** excluding attachments):

Section	Content Requirements
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Section	Content Requirements
Cover Letter	Statement of intent, proposal deadline acknowledgement, contact information.
Executive Summary	Brief overview of the contractor's understanding of the project, key strengths, and unique value proposition.
Company Overview	Legal name, entity type, years in business, corporate structure, relevant experience.
Project Team	Names, titles, resumes of all personnel who will work on this project; specify roles.
Technical Approach	Detailed methodology for each scope item, risk mitigation plan, quality assurance process.
Schedule & Milestones	Detailed Gantt-chart style schedule with key milestones (permits, procurement, construction phases).
Cost Proposal	Itemized cost estimates (labor, equipment, materials, indirect costs, contingency). Include pricing assumptions and currency.
Insurance & Compliance	Copies of certificates for all required policies; declaration of SAM/UEI registration and 2 CFR Part 200 compliance.
References	Minimum three (3) references for similar projects, including contact information and project description.
Attachments	Include any relevant drawings, tables, or supplementary documents.

All proposals must be signed by an authorized representative of the contractor.

6. Submission Requirements

Item	Delivery Method	Deadline	Address
Hard Copies (5)	In-person or mail	<i>June 9th, 2026</i>	In-person: 37 W Mills St. Columbus, NC 28722 Mail: P.O. Box 1369, Columbus, NC 28722
Electronic Copy (PDF)	Email	<i>June 9th, 2026</i>	rfp@e-polk.org
Questions &	Email	<i>May 26th, 2026</i>	rfp@e-polk.org

Item	Delivery Method	Deadline	Address
Clarifications			
Pre-Meeting Request	Email	May 19th, 2026	rfp@e-polk.org

Late submissions will not be considered.

7. Proposal Acceptance & Evaluation Criteria

Criterion	Weight	Notes
Compliance with RFP Requirements	25 %	Full adherence to scope, format, and regulatory obligations.
Technical Merit & Approach	30 %	Demonstrated engineering capability, risk mitigation, and schedule feasibility.
Cost Competitiveness	25 %	Reasonable pricing structure, transparency of costs, contingency justification.
Experience & Qualifications	15 %	Prior similar projects, team credentials, references.
Insurance & Regulatory Compliance	5 %	Proof of required policies, SAM/UEI registration, 2 CFR Part 200 compliance.

The final decision will be made by the PANGAEA Project Steering Committee and will incorporate both quantitative scores and qualitative judgment.

8. Project Schedule

Milestone	Target Date
RFP Issue	May 5st, 2026
Proposal Due	June 9th, 2026
Contractor Selection	June 16th, 2026
Contract Award & Notice to Proceed	July 1st, 2026
Permit Approval	September 1st, 2026

Milestone	Target Date
Construction Start	<i>September 1st, 2026</i>
Mid-Project Review	<i>November 2nd, 2026</i>
Construction Completion	<i>January 29th, 2027</i>
Final Acceptance & Close-Out	<i>February 26th, 2027</i>

9. Administrative & Procurement Requirements

Requirement	Detail
SAM Registration & UEI	Contractor must be registered in SAM.gov and possess a valid UEI.
2 CFR Part 200 Compliance	All cost accounting, procurement, and financial management must follow uniform administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements.
Record Retention	Keep all project documentation (contracts, invoices, change orders, reports) for at least 3 years after final expenditure report.
Equal Opportunity	Contractor must comply with Executive Order 11246; no discrimination on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability.
Suspension & Debarment	Contractor must not be under any suspension, debarment, or exclusion from federal funds.
Conflict of Interest	Contractor must disclose any potential conflicts related to the grant.
Insurance	Contractor must provide insurance certificates (see Section X).
Contractual Compliance	All terms of this RFP and any subsequent subaward must be incorporated into the contract.

10. Insurance & Risk Management

Contractor must maintain the following coverages, **named PANGAEA, Inc. as an Additional Insured** (where applicable):

Insurance	Minimum Limit	Notes
Commercial General Liability (CGL)	\$1,000,000 per occurrence	Covers bodily injury and property damage.
Workers' Compensation	As required by NC law	Must meet or exceed state minimums.
Automobile Liability	\$1,000,000 per vehicle	Covers owned, hired, and non-owned vehicles.
Builder's Risk / Property Insurance	\$1,000,000	Covers damage to materials and the structure under construction.
Professional Liability (E&O)	\$2,000,000	Covers professional services.
Cyber & Data Breach	\$2,000,000	Covers breach of electronic data.

All certificates must be issued by a reputable insurer (e.g., AIA, Nationwide, Travelers) and show no policy exclusions that would affect coverage of construction activities.

11. Special Provisions for ARC AREA DEVELOPMENT Grants

Provisions	Contractor Action
Subcontractor Compliance	The contractor must ensure all subcontractors also meet 2 CFR Part 200, SAM/UEI, and insurance requirements.
Suspension & Debarment	Contractor must not be under any suspension, debarment, or exclusion from federal funds.
Conflict of Interest	Full disclosure of any relationship or interest that could influence performance.
Change Orders	Any changes to scope, cost, or schedule must be documented and approved in writing.

Provisions	Contractor Action
Reporting	Provide monthly progress reports to PANGAEA and ARC as required by the grant agreement.

12. Attachments

1. **Site Map** – Map of the proposed fiber route.
2. **Permit Checklist** – Required permits and approvals.
3. **Insurance Declaration Form** – For submission of insurance certificates.
4. **Sample Contract** – Basic terms and conditions for contractor.
5. **Specifications** – Part and specification requirements.

All attachments are integral to the RFP and must be referenced in the proposal.

13. Contact Information

Contact	Title	Phone	Email
PANGAEA RFP Coordinator	Senior Planner	(828) 429-6812	Jelliott@frcnc.gov
PANGAEA Project Lead	Ken Griffin		rfp@e-polk.org
PANGAEA Legal	Counsel		rfp@e-polk.org

PANGAEA reserves the right to:

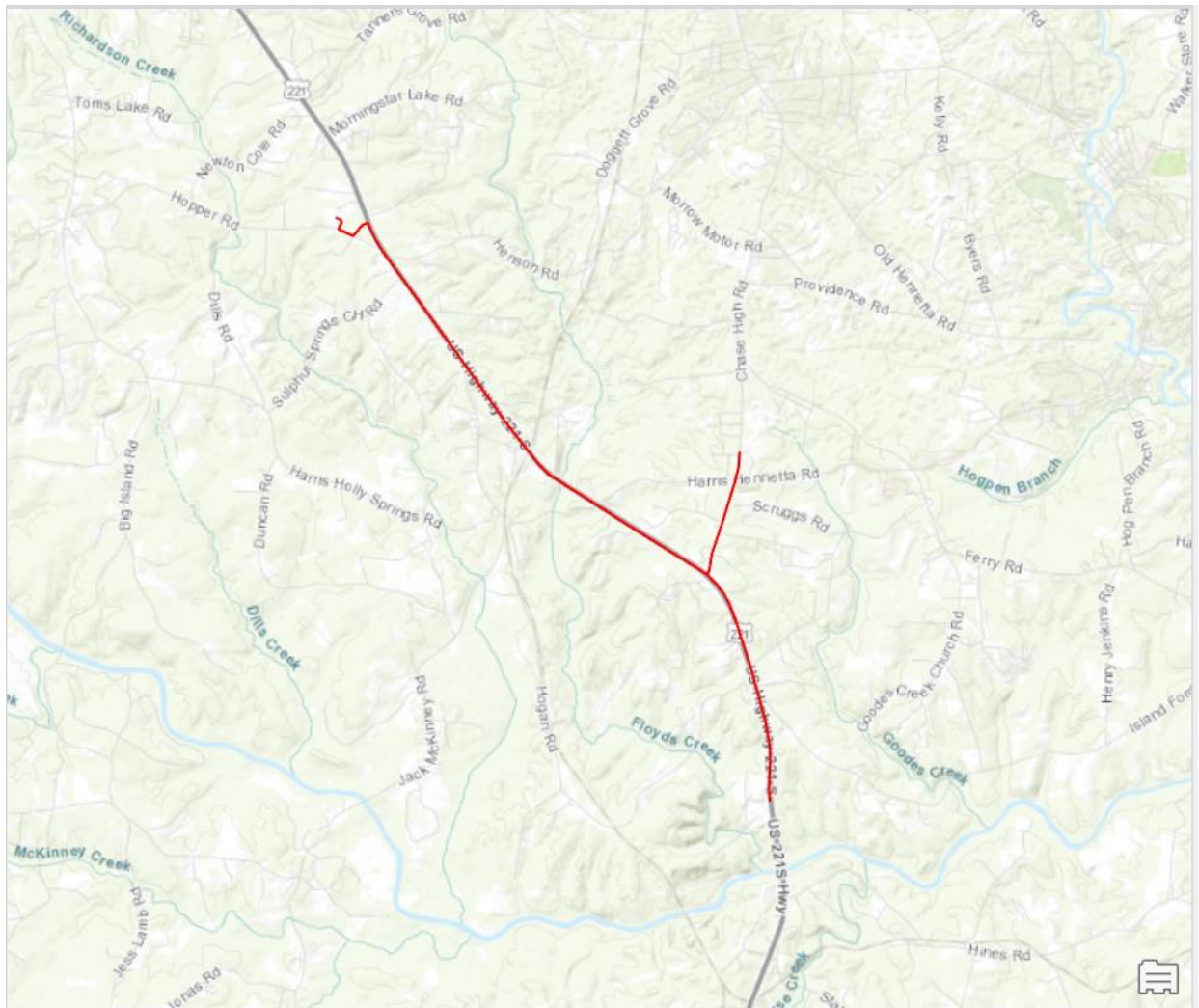
- Reject or accept any proposal in whole or in part.
- Request clarification or amendments.
- Delay or cancel the procurement.
- Request additional information or documentation.

By submitting a proposal, the contractor acknowledges understanding of and agreement to comply with all requirements herein.

End of RFP

Attachments:

Site Map



Permit Checklist

Right of Way Encroachment Agreement – NC DOT

All necessary permits for utility pole attachment – Duke Energy

Insurance Declaration Form

Certificate of Liability Insurance

Sample Contract

1 PANGAEA WAIVER AND RELEASE AGREEMENT THIS PANGAEA WAIVER AND RELEASE AGREEMENT (this “Release”) is made this __ day of _____, **20__**, by the undersigned (“Contractor”) in favor of e-Polk, Inc., d/b/a PANGAEA Internet (“PANGAEA”), and sets

forth certain terms and conditions under which Contractor has provided and/or will provide certain services to PANGAEA. WHEREAS, PANGAEA has engaged Contractor to provide customer installations, fiber optic repairs and other services on behalf of PANGAEA (collectively, the "Services"); and WHEREAS, PANGAEA desires Contractor to provide the Services on behalf of PANGAEA, and Contractor desires to provide the Services on behalf of PANGAEA. NOW, THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the mutual covenants contained herein, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and legal sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, Contractor agrees as follows: 1.Services. Contractor shall provide the Services in accordance with PANGAEA's directions, at such times and at such locations (the "Locations") as may be designated by PANGAEA from time-to-time. In performing the Services hereunder, Contractor shall be responsible for any and all cost associated with Contractor's employees' services, if any, including employee benefits and employee business expenses. Contractor shall perform the Services diligently, competently, and in a professional manner. Contractor (and not PANGAEA) shall be solely and exclusively responsible and liable for complying with all applicable requirements of the Underground Utility Safety and Damage Prevention Act (N.C.G.S. § 87-115, et seq.) and NC811 and the NC811 program (as set forth and described at www.nc811.org), including, without limitation, calling 811 with all required locate request information and all other notification requirements of an "excavator" (as such term is defined in the Underground Utility Safety and Damage Prevention Act).

2.Representations and Warranties. Contractor represents and warrants that: (a) Contractor has the right and authority to enter into this Release without violating the rights of any third party; (b) Contractor will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, orders and ordinances in rendering the Services provided for herein; (c) if Contractor is a business entity, Contractor represents and warrants that it is validly existing in good standing under the laws of its state of incorporation, with its principal place of business at the address provided below, and that the person executing this Release on its behalf has been duly authorized by Contractor to execute this Release; and (d) Contractor understands all of the provisions of this Release and agrees to be bound by its terms.

3. Insurance. Contractor agrees throughout the term of this Release and at all times during the performance of the Services to maintain in full force and effect (at its own expense) insurance policies providing: (a) commercial general liability insurance protecting Contractor with respect to its provision of the Services in an amount not less than one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) per occurrence; and (b) workers compensation and employers' liability insurance in the statutory amounts required by the State of North Carolina. Upon PANGAEA's request, Contractor shall furnish PANGAEA with a current copy of the certificates of insurance for such coverage. Such insurance policies shall not be terminated, cancelled or materially modified by Contractor without ten (10) days prior written notice to PANGAEA. Contractor waives any and all rights of subrogation Contractor may have against PANGAEA and at the request of PANGAEA, will obtain a waiver of subrogation in favor of PANGAEA on said policies

4. Indemnification. Contractor hereby voluntarily assumes all responsibility for, and agrees to hold harmless, defend and indemnify PANGAEA from and against, any and all claims,

actions, causes of action, liabilities, suits, damages, property damage, physical injury of any kind or death, costs, losses and expenses of any kind (including, without limitation, reasonable attorneys' fees and medical costs) arising out of or in connection with: (i) the provision of Services to PANGAEA; (ii) the failure to comply with any applicable laws, regulations, orders or ordinances (including, without limitation, the Underground Utility Safety and Damage Prevention Act); (iii) the work, activities and/or presence of Contractor and/or Contractor's employees, agents or contractors at the Locations; and (iii) the acts or omissions of Contractor and Contractor's employees, agents and contractors.

5. Release. Contractor, on behalf of Contractor and Contractor's affiliates, agents, employees, successors, and assigns, does hereby release, waive and discharge, any and all rights, claims, demands, lawsuits and causes of action whatsoever, whether known, unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, Contractor may have against PANGAEA for any matter, cause or things whatsoever arising out of Contractor's provision of Services to PANGAEA. Contractor accepts each Location "as is," and hereby agrees that PANGAEA has neither made nor is in any manner responsible or liable for any warranty, representation, or guarantee, expressed or implied, in fact or in law, relative to the Locations or their conditions.

6. Independent Contractors; Taxes; Expenses. Contractor is an independent contractor, and nothing in this Release or in the activities contemplated hereunder shall be deemed to create any agency, partnership, employment or joint venture relationship between PANGAEA and Contractor. Contractor acknowledges that Contractor is solely responsible for all federal, state and local taxes due as a result of performing the Services for PANGAEA, and for obtaining and paying for any life, accident, property or other insurance related to the provision of Services at the Locations.

7. General Provisions. No amendments, supplements or waivers of any provision of this Release shall be valid unless by an instrument in writing, signed by PANGAEA. This Release shall be governed and construed under the internal laws (and not the laws regarding conflicts of laws) of the State of North Carolina. All disputes arising in connection with this Release shall be brought exclusively in the State Courts of North Carolina in, or the United States Federal Courts for, Polk County, North Carolina. Each party consents to the personal and subject matter jurisdiction of such courts for said purposes. No delay, failure or waiver of PANGAEA's exercise or partial exercise of any right or remedy under this Release shall operate to limit, impair, preclude, cancel, waive or otherwise affect such right or remedy. If any provision of this Release is held invalid, illegal or unenforceable, the validity, legality or enforceability of the remaining provisions shall in no way be affected or impaired thereby, and PANGAEA and Contractor agree to replace such invalid, illegal or unenforceable provision with a new provision which preserves the original intent hereunder. The remedies set forth in this Release are not exclusive, and the election of one remedy shall not preclude the use of other remedies.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, Contractor has caused this Release to be duly executed as of the Effective Date.

CONTRACTOR: _____

Authorized Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Specifications

- Fiber: ITU-T G.652.D or G.657.A with Mfg date no older than 2024; 144ct with twelve color-coded buffer tubes each hold twelve color-coded fibers; loose-tube; gel-free, water-blocked; corrugated steel tape armor; Polyethylene UV-resistant outer jacket for Outdoor use; dual ripcords for jacket and armor removal; Tensile Strength: not less than 2500 N (short-term), 750 N (long-term)
- Strand: ¼" EHS galvanized steel; ASTM A-475 Class A zinc coating; Breaking Strength (MBS): not less than 6500 lbs
- Anchors: ANCHOR, SCREW, 6 IN HELIX, 3/4 X 66 IN SHAFT, TRIPLEYE
- Bolts 12,14,16,20: BOLT, MACHINE, 5/8 IN X approp lengths
- Nuts: NUT, SQUARE, 5/8 IN
- Bug nuts: CLAMP, D CABLE LASHING, FOR 1/4IN 7/16IN STRAND
- Straight clamps: CLAMP, SUSPENSION, 3 BOLT
- Curved clamps: Clamp, 3 Bolt, Curved Suspension, 1/4 inch
- Guy bolts: BOLT, THIMBLEYE, STRAIGHT, 5/8 X appropriate lengths
- Screw eyes: NUT, 5/8 IN THIMBLE EYE
- Slip eyes: 5/8" STRAIGHT SINGLE STRAND EYELET, 5 3/4" long
- Preforms: DEADEND, 1/4 IN, GALVANIZED, CLASS A, COATING
- Lashing wire: Lashing Wire - .038" T 302 (1600 Feet per Coil, 6 coils per box)
- Straps and spacers
- Washers: WASHER, SQUARE, 2" X 2", 11/16" DIAMETER HOLE
- Pig ears: ATTACHMENT, GUY, 5/8 IN, length is 4.25 inches

- Handholes- not sure how to specify size of handhole.
- Conduit w/ mule tape: conduit not less than 1.25" with mule-tape
- U-guards: 2" x 10' U-Guard
- Guy wire covers/guards
- Splice cans: Commscope FOSC 450 w/ D trays; spliced with 48 splices per tray

Questions and Answers from Pre-Bid Meeting:

Question: Is there a bond requirement?

Answer: No.

Question: Does the contractor need to supply the listed materials, or will they be provided by Pangaea Internet?

Answer: The contractor must supply the listed materials.

Question: Does the contractor need to acquire the permits for right-of-way and pole attachment?

Answer: Pangaea Internet will be the listed applicant. The contractor will be expected to provide assistance in obtaining the permits for rights-of-way and pole attachments as Pangaea Internet does not have the capacity to complete the application process.

Question: Does Duke Energy own all the poles in the corridor?

Answer: Most of the poles are owned by Duke Energy, but there are poles owned by AT&T in the corridor as well. Pangaea Internet would prefer the contractor to use Duke Energy poles wherever possible.