



COUSHATTA TRIBE OF LOUISIANA

Request for Proposals for Middle Mile Broadband Engineering/Design

Issued: Thursday, March 6, 2025

Due: Monday, April 21, 2025, 4pm Central Time

All proposals must be submitted electronically

Introduction

The Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana (Tribe) is a federally recognized Tribe with approximately 865 members and a comprehensive mission to serve both the enrolled tribal members and the public in Louisiana. The Tribe will construct the Coushatta Community Fiber Middle Mile Access Project (Project). This project will total approximately 22 miles of fiber along US Highway 165 in Allen Parish and Jefferson Davis Parish, Louisiana. The project will serve as an investment into much needed public infrastructure by connecting fiber directly from major telecom carriers along the I-10 Highway corridor and providing the Tribe and the two Parishes with needed reliable broadband infrastructure and rural economic development.

The Tribe is accepting proposals from consultants for engineering of 22 miles of middle mile fiber optic development. The construction of the Coushatta Community Fiber Middle Mile Access Project is funded by the Economic Development Administration, the engineering for the Project is separate and funded solely by the Tribe. This RFP is for engineering and design of the Project only. Baker Tilly will be providing support to the Tribe for RFPs and is the Owners Representative for the EDA funded middle mile project.

The Tribe expects response to be concise and complete with enough information to allow for review and scoring, but without overwhelming the reviewers with extraneous documentation and information.

All responses must be time stamped and submitted electronically by Monday April 21, 2025, no later than 4pm Central Time. Any responses received after the deadline will not be reviewed.

Questions and Inquiries

The Tribe will not hold an open forum for questions. Rather, interested parties and potential respondents should send questions to the address listed below no later than **4pm Central Time, Monday, March 17, 2025**. The questions will be collated and addressed and posted as an addendum to this RFP. Interested parties who submit questions will also receive a copy of the questions and responses.

- Email questions to [Miriam Gillow-Wiles](#)
- Subject Line of Coushatta MM Engineering RFP Questions

Responses to questions will be published on or before 4pm Central Time, Monday, March 24, 2025.

RFP Submission Requirements

All proposals must be submitted no later than **4pm, on Friday, April 21, 2025**. Document should either be in PDF or Excel formats, including the attached budget template must be labeled in the following format, Company and Document Name should be updated:

- CTL MM Eng RFP COMPANY DOCUMENT NAME

Note: any templates provided, should use the template name for the document name, ex: Budget or Attestation.

How to respond:

- Email proposal packages to [Miriam Gillow-Wiles](#)
- Subject Line: Coushatta MM Engineering RFP Response COMPANY NAME
- All documents should be in Excel or PDF format
- The Attestation must be signed and dated by an individual of the company with authority to sign.

Any proposal received after the date and time of submission will be rejected and not reviewed or scored. Responses that do not follow the other proposal submission instructions may also be rejected.

Submitted proposals will be acknowledged within 24 hours of receipt. Proposals will not be reviewed until after the RFP has closed.

Responsible Party	RFP Milestone	Date/Time
Tribe	RFP Issued	March 6, 2025
Interested Parties	RFP Questions Deadline	March 17, 2025, 4pm Central
Tribe	Response to Questions	March 24, 2025, 4pm Central
Interested Parties	RFP Closes	April 21, 2025, 4pm Central
Tribe	Award Determination	May 5, 2025

Project Information

The Tribe will construct the Coushatta Community Fiber Middle Mile Access Project (Project). This project will total approximately 22 miles of fiber US Highway 165 right-of-way (ROW) in Allen Parish and Jefferson Davis Parish, Louisiana. The State of Louisiana maintains ROW clear of dense vegetation. Please see the KMZ file for more images and generalized location of the proposed infrastructure.

Tribal Location Information

The Tribe is located in Southwest southern Louisiana, in Allen and Jefferson Davis parishes¹, and north of the municipality of Kinder. The Tribe has multiple landholdings – on reservation and off reservation. The reservation land is northwest-southeast trending and bisected by US Highway 165. Off Reservation land are the discontinuous parcels to the east of the reservation land.

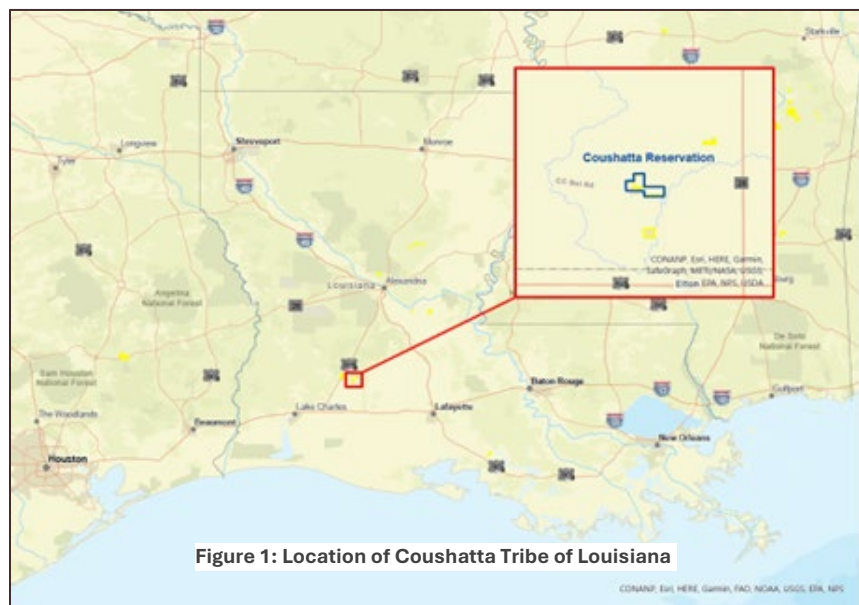


Figure 1: Location of Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana

¹ Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, [2020 Census Tribal Tract](#)

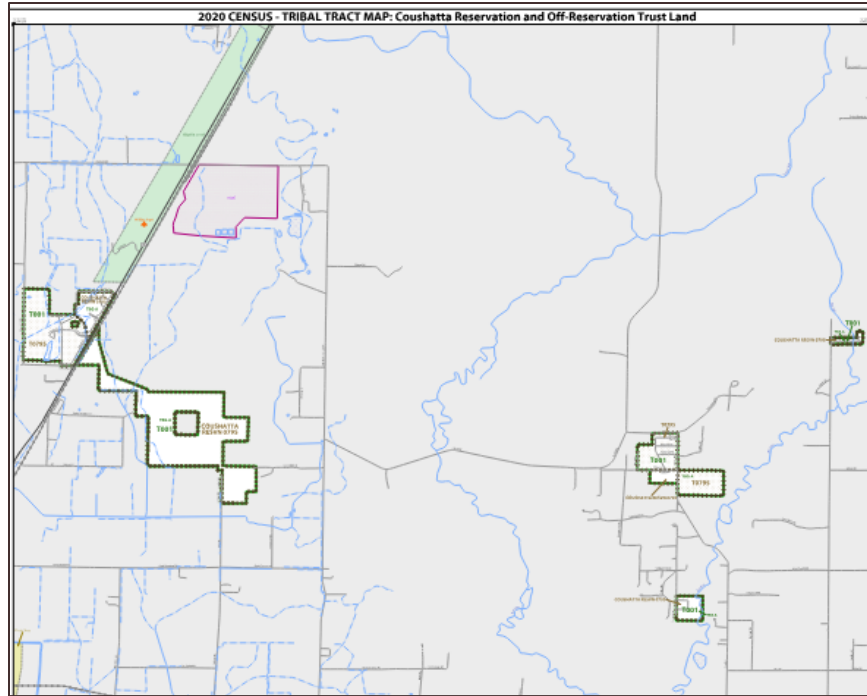


Figure 2: Detail location of Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana

Project Location Information

The project is located along US Highway 165, in southwestern central Louisiana in Allen and Jefferson Davis Parishes. There are several municipalities, including the Town of Kinder. Engineering will allow the project to be built from the interchange of US Highway 165 and Interstate 10 to south of the Tribal reservation where this build will tie into another grant awarded broadband project.



Figure 3: Generalized Middle Mile Fiber Route

Basic Information

- Fiber placement will be on the west side of US Highway 165.
- Distance: ~22 miles or roughly 116,000 linear feet
- Construction will entail trenching in US Highway 165 ROW
 - Louisiana State Department of Transportation and Development manages the ROW
 - Trench is expected to be 5' deep
 - Construction and staging will be entirely in the highway ROW

Historic and Tribal Preservation

There are no known historic buildings or structures in the area due to the project location in the US Highway 165 ROW. There is a Tribal cemetery on the east side of the highway south, southwest of the Tribal casino. It is not expected there will be any Tribal preservation challenges for this design, engaging with the Tribe's THPO Officer may be a useful option for the winning applicant.

Environmental Information

For the information below, please ensure to include relevant information when developing the RFP response. Please include mitigation, potential challenges to the development of the middle mile, solutions, agencies required for permitting, as well as typical time frames for permits with said agency.

- Public Lands
 - There are no Wilderness Areas, Scenic Rivers, National or State Parks, Wildlife Refuges, or Game Preserves in the vicinity of the project area.
- Soil Types
 - There are three locations on the route which highlight the soil types in the area², they are briefly discussed below, please see the KMZ file for additional details. The defined soil types in the build area are sedimentary in nature and include loam and clay. Most of the soils in the three data points are somewhat poorly to poorly draining with a small percentage of moderately well-draining soils.
 - Data Point 1:
 - Soils are 85% Guyton formation which includes silt loam, generally poorly draining to seasonally wet. This area includes 0-1% slope and is occasionally flooded.
 - Data Point 2:
 - Soils are part of the Crowley-Vidrine complex, which includes 55% Crowley formation, a loamy terrace ridge and 35% Vidrine formation, a loamy terrace prairie. The other 15% loamy terrace, clay, and lowland soil types. Generally, this location is somewhat poorly to poorly draining.

² University of California, Davis, Department of Land, Air, and Water Resources, [California Soil Resource Lab](#)

- Data Point 3:
 - This is located in the vicinity of the intersection of US Highway 165 and Interstate 10. The Crowley-Vidrine complex continues with the same loamy somewhat poorly to poorly draining soils.
- Wetlands
 - There are no wetlands within the US Highway 165 ROW. There are 2.34 acres of Freshwater Forested/Shrub wetland and 3.22 acres of freshwater emergent wetland near the start of the project site on the Coushatta Reservation but not immediately adjacent.
- Floodplains
 - The project will take place in or near areas of 100-year floodplains (per FEMA floodplain maps effective in 2010 and 2011³). This should be considered based on any updated mapping due to climate change.
- Water Crossings
 - There are no major water crossings in the project area. However, there are drainages and seasonal creeks in the vicinity of the build. These should be taken into consideration as necessary.
- Endangered Species
 - There are nine (9) endangered, candidate for endangered, proposed endangered, threatened, and/or proposed threatened species on and around the Coushatta Reservation in Allen Parish. As the project will take place in highway rights-of-way on previously disturbed land and will not occur near any bodies of freshwater or forested areas. As a result, the area is already cleared, there are no native species or wildlife located directly in the project area.
 - *Alligator Snapping Turtle (proposed threatened):*
This species of snapping turtle is native to freshwater habitats, typically bodies of water that flow into the Gulf of Mexico and not isolated wetlands or ponds.
 - *American Chaffseed (endangered):*
This hemiparasitic herb requires a high fire-return interval, or fire surrogate to persist and continues to decline due to the persistent threat of fire suppression that results in vegetative succession or woody encroachment.
 - *Louisiana Pearlshell (threatened):*
This mussel lives in freshwater in Louisiana, specifically in fast-flowing small streams.
 - *Louisiana Pigtoe (proposed threatened):*
This mussel lives in freshwater rivers in Louisiana.
 - *Louisiana Pinesnake (threatened):*

³ FEMA Floodplain maps: #22003C0400D, #22003C0530D, #22053C0075C, #22053C0200C, #22053C0200C, #22053C0200C, and #22053C0200C

The pinesnake is native to longleaf pine savannas, but is rarely seen in the wild, as it is one of the rarest snakes in north America.

- *Monarch Butterfly (candidate):*
Monarch habitat requires milkweed and flowering plants, whether they be in a field, roadside, wet area, or urban garden.
- *Northern Long-Eared Bat (threatened):*
This bat lives in 37 states, typically in forested habitats like boreal forests with hardwood trees.
- *Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (endangered):* This woodpecker's native habitat is fire-dependent longleaf pine savannas.
- *Tricolored Bat (proposed endangered):*
These bats primarily live in forested areas and caves.

- Land Use and Zoning

- The project spans the Coushatta Reservation and the municipalities of Kinder, Edna, Fenton, and Woodlawn.
- The project is located strictly in US Highway 165 right of way.
- The land along the ROW is designated as
 - General Business District
 - Rural Residential District
 - Single Family Residential
 - Agricultural District
 - No land parcels are designated as Prime/Unique Agricultural Lands

- Waste Management

- Solid waste will primarily consist of soil and rock from boring and trenching and will be reused during backfill.
- Recycling of any other construction and demolition materials is preferred if material cannot be recycled the contractors are required to manage waste disposal.

- Water Resources

- The Chico Aquifer System is located near the project site, in EPA Region 6
 - Please note that wells draw from the aquifer, but not impacted is expected
- It is expected there will be minor run off changes during construction but there will be no permanent changes post construction.

- Air Quality

- There is an expected increase in construction related emissions. Mitigation is expected to include detailed planning for construction to ensure the shortest construction time possible.

- Permitting

- There are no environmental related permits.

- Construction permits include the identified jurisdictions below. Other permits may include Parish, Federal, Tribal, and/or Public Utility Companies.
 - Louisiana Department of Transportation – Fiber Optic Permit
 - Union Pacific RR – License agreement
 - Town of Kinder, LA – Utility permit

Response Requirements

Design and Engineering Components

The engineering design of the project must follow the EDA Construction Standards and include the following. Responses that do not include these specifications and EDA Standards will not be considered.

- The engineering design will follow all requirements listed in permits/agreements to maintain compliance with the permitting agencies.
 - Including the Economic Development Administration Construction Standards⁴.
- Identify any environmental, historical, or other barriers to construction
- The total distance for the middle mile build is approximately 22 miles or 116,000 linear feet
- Design should include trenching location, and any specifications based on known soil and rock types along US Highway 165
 - The infrastructure is expected to be at a depth to create resiliency in the case of fire, flood, or other natural disaster.
- The engineering design must include bore profiles for Railroad, streams, creeks, and locations requiring boring.
- The design must include the placement of the following infrastructure, access points, markers, and other related fiber optic construction materials.
 - 2, 1.25” Poly HDPE single wall smooth SDR 13.5 conduits
 - 288 count fiber optic ribbon, dry, dielectric cable
 - Identify splice points necessary for butt splicing the fiber optics
 - 36” x 36” Tier 22 Polymer concrete handholds, roughly 2000 feet apart
 - These should be placed for potential handoff points with other service providers, including intersection corners, populated areas, or locations near service providers’ existing fiber optic infrastructure.
 - Design and placement of two (2) Tier 2 handholes, Large 30”X48”X36” in size
 - Design and placement of two (2) Tier 2 Handholes XL, ~ 36”x60”x48” in size at the Data Shelter
 - Identify placements of marker posts every mile, not in the vicinity of handholds.
 - Identify placements of marker posts and locate posts at each handhold location
 - Locate posts should have copper conductors and lugs for locating

⁴ [EDA Construction Grant Post Approval Process Tool \(version 5.2\)](#)

- Provide final engineering plans with red-lines.

Non-Engineering Components

While engineering is the significant component of any response, the non-engineering requirements are just as important and should not be overlooked or minimized in the bid submission. Proposals must include:

- Applicant Name, Address (mailing and physical), phone, and email
- Identification of key personnel, including names, titles, and resumes identifying similar projects or work experience.
- A short description of the approach the applicant will take to develop the design and interaction with the Tribe and other consultants, including attending weekly project meeting coordinated by the Construction Manager.
- An estimated time frame for completion of the engineering.
- A Gantt Chart or similar timeline identifying when permits are expected to be received along with completion date(s).
- Detailed Budget (using the template provided, and submitted in MS Excel format, the budget should include any travel expenses and rates of identified staff or similar qualified staff member(s).
- Please provide the expected cost for permitting in the provided template.
- A minimum of three references with similar projects, location, and/or Tribal engagement.
- Signed attestation template by a member of the organization with the authority to sign such a document.

Budget

The budget for this middle mile design/engineering project should not exceed \$110,000, not including the costs of permitting/agreements required for construction. Please include the estimated cost of permitting in a separate budget (template provided).

Applications that exceed the \$110,000 threshold may or may not be considered but will only be reviewed after applications that stay within the budget have been scored and, if all applications within budget are found to be incomplete.

- Note: This RFP is for design and engineering only. A construction RFP will be issued after design and engineering is complete.

Response Requirements

All responses must be submitted in PDF format, unless it is a provided budget template which should be maintained in an MS Excel format.

No hard copies will be accepted, do not mail or deliver hard copies to the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana or any Baker Tilly office.

Responses, not including required attachments or provided templates, should not be more than 10 pages in length.

Attachments are limited to:

- Resumes of key personnel expected to work on the project, limited to 1 page each
- References – a minimum of three including project information, up to date contact information for an individual at the organization. Limit 1 page each.
- Completed Budget Template
- Signed Attestation Template
- Certificate of Insurance

Qualifications and Expectations

All respondents are expected to demonstrate a strong working knowledge of telecommunications, telecommunications construction standards and best practices, as well as specifics of working in underground fiber optic development. The applicants should also demonstrate experience in permitting across a variety of organizations including, City, State, Tribal, Federal agencies, railroads, and/or utility agencies. In addition, the following is expected:

- The engineering firm or entity will acquire and provide the permits, licenses, and agreements to the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana.
 - Note: depending on the agency, the design may be required to be stamped by an engineer licensed in the State of Louisiana.
- The Respondent is responsible for submitting the design for any approved traffic control plans to the appropriate agencies.
- The engineering firm or entity will be responsible for providing final engineering plans with all red lines updated that adheres to the Economic Development Administration Construction Standards⁵.
- An organization or entity with knowledge of Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development permitting, permitting or agreements railroads – specifically Union Pacific, and familiarity working with Native American Tribes is preferred.

Insurance Requirements

Prior to commencing work, the selected Bidder will be required a certificate of insurance that covers the work throughout the duration of the contract. It is not recommended the bidders purchase insurance prior to award announcement. Please do not provide Certificates of Insurance with the RFP.

⁵ [EDA Construction Grant Post Approval Process Tool \(version 5.2\)](#)

Coverage Type	Per Occurrence	General Aggregate	Per Employee	Policy Limit
Commercial General Liability	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 2,000,000	N/A	N/A
Automobile	\$ 1,000,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
Employer's Liability	\$ 1,000,000	N/A	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
Professional Liability (see below)	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	N/A	N/A
Aircraft (includes drones)	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	N/A	N/A
Umbrella	\$20,000,000 in excess of these primary Liability limits with a drop-down provision for reduced or exhausted aggregates			
Professional Liability	In the event their umbrella does not include the underlying Professional Liability a \$10,000,000 limit project specific policy is required			
Additional Insured	On all policy lines except for Professional Liability, Workers Compensation, and Employers Liability. Noted insureds are to include Owner and their employees; subconsultants and their employees; Owner consultants and their employees.			
Waiver of Subrogation	Included on all policies			

Review and Evaluation

Responses will review be reviewed after the RFP has closed on April 21, 2025. No responses will be reviewed prior to the closing date. After proposals have been received, they will be reviewed and evaluated on completeness, applicant qualifications, responsiveness, and budget. The Tribe expects to award to the lowest cost qualified bidder. This may or may not be the lowest cost response.

The responses will be scored in the following manner:

Scored Component	Total Points Possible	Percentage of Overall Score
Completion	5	10%
References	5	10%
Minority/Women Owned Business	5	10%
Qualifications	12	24%
Time Frame	10	20%
Cost	13	26%
Total Points	50	100%

Reviewers may request clarification or a meeting with any or all of the applicants on an as needed basis. Any engagement after the RFP closes does not imply any award and should not be construed as such.

Right to Reject Proposals

The Tribe reserves the right to reject any or all proposals based on its sole discretion, or to waive any minor defects or minor irregularities in any proposal or in the proposal process, or to solicit new proposals for the same project a modified project which may include portions of the original proposed project as in the best interest of the Tribe.

Awards and Agreement

Upon review and evaluation of the submitted proposals, all applicants will be notified no later than **Monday, May 5, 2025**, of the status of their response. Failure to respond in a timely fashion may lead to rejection of the proposal and selection of a different consultant. It is expected the consultant will negotiate in good faith. Proposals are non-binding; the negotiated and signed agreement will dictate the terms of the work. The selected applicant should be aware that contracting will be solely with the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana.