

Q&A for Department of Public Service RFP regarding the Spectrum Northeast, LLC d/b/a Charter Communications CPG Renewal in Case No. 23-3732-PET

The Department received the following questions during the question period for this RFP ending on October 8, 2024, at 4:30pm EST. The unedited questions are listed below with the Department's responses to each in italics.

Question: Is there a maximum budget number for this project?

Department Response: *The Department has not established a specific budget. We will review all reasonable proposals and look for cost effectiveness and efficiency.*

Question: Has PSD conducted similar surveys on this topic in the past that would serve as a basis for the survey questionnaires?

Department Response: *The Department has instruments that were used in previous proceedings that will be shared with the selected contractor. We expect the selected contractor to update the questions for use in this case.*

Question: Page 2 of the RFP states the project is to conduct a statistically valid survey and 2 focus groups. The Statement of Work on Page 17 talks about 2 surveys (one of residents, one of various orgs in the region) and two or more focus groups. Could you confirm that the Statement of Work is the description of the project we should be working towards?

Department Response: *The Statement of Work provides the most detailed summary of the requested services. There will be two surveys, one non-scientific and one statistically valid, as well as two or more focus groups, in accordance with the Vermont Public Utility Commission's Rule 8.231, copied below:*

"Discussions with representative educational, governmental, and non-profit organizational sectors of the PEG AMO service territory, including any PEG AMO, access advisory committee, or other non-profit entity that provides communication services to the general community. These discussions will generally take the form of a series of focus group sessions, sector meetings, and public hearings. . . ."

"A non-scientific survey of the educational, governmental, and non-profit organizational sectors in the PEG AMO service territory that measures the organizations' communication needs, and other needs that may have reasonable cable-related communication solutions.

A statistically valid survey of randomly selected households that measures, with regard to PEG access, attitudes and behaviors such as, but not limited to, subscriber satisfaction, awareness, and use of PEG access. If the survey is conducted for more than one PEG AMO

service territory, the methodology shall be such that a minimum of useful data interpretation and analysis may be provided for each such service territory.”

Question: The Statement of Work mentions surveying two PEG AMO territories, but then lists several cities and toward as being in “the territory”, singular. Can you confirm that these towns are the only territory to be surveyed?

Department Response: *The PEG Access Management Organizations (“AMOs”) provide public access services to multiple towns in the cable operator’s service territory. The selected contractor should survey all towns in an AMO territory as well as residents in towns in the service territory that are not represented by an AMO. The Statement of Work in the RFP lists all of the towns that will need to be surveyed in the service territory.*

Question: Can PSD provide data on how many households in the survey region have cable service, so that we can calculate an incidence rate for subscribers within the general population?

Department Response: *We estimate that the sample size will be approximately 350 people.*

Question: What criteria is PSD looking to measure to determine if the survey is “statistically valid”? Is there a desired sample size or margin of error PSD is looking to achieve?

Department Response: *Please refer to the answer provided for the previous question.*

Question: Regarding the non-scientific survey, does PSD have a list of qualifying educational, governmental, and non-profit organizations to be surveyed, or would the vendor need to develop that list?

Department Response: *The AMOs should provide a list and contacts for organizations in their service area.*

Question: The Statement of Work mentions “two or more in-person or hybrid focus groups”. Does this mean that two hybrid groups would suffice? What is the ideal number and mix of groups PSD is looking for here?

Department Response: *The Department requirement would be one focus group per AMO territory with an option for additional groups if needed.*

Question: The Statement of Work mentions interim reports for each survey and a final report. Are there guidelines or requirements for those reports (format, word or page counts, etc).

Department Response: *There are no formal guidelines for word or page counts. Best practices for accessibility of communication can be found at <https://statics.teams.cdn.office.net/evergreen-assets/safelinks/1/atp-safelinks.html>. The Department will negotiate the content and timing of reports in the contract.*

Question: The Statement of Work says that the final report is “for the Department to use as testimony”. Is the testimony in mentioned in Task VI in addition to the final report, or just a presentation of the final report?

Department Response: *The selected consultant may need to provide testimony in addition to the final report, depending on the needs of the case. The selected consultant should be prepared to make a representative available for an evidentiary hearing, as it is possible that the Public Utility Commission or other parties in the case will have questions about the final report.*

Question: We understand that all bidders are asked to have a Contractor's Business account number issued by your Department of Taxes. However, we would like to inquire if there is any flexibility regarding the eligibility of businesses incorporated outside of Vermont to participate in the bidding process

Department Response: *The requirement to obtain a business account number from the Department of Taxes does not preclude bidders incorporated outside of Vermont from participating in the RFP.*

Question: How much is budgeted for this project?

Department Response: *The Department has not established a specific budget. We will review all reasonable proposals and look for cost effectiveness and efficiency.*

Question: What is the anticipated timeline of PUC Case No. 23-3732-PET?

Department Response: *The Department expects that work on the surveys could begin as soon as a contract is signed. There is no official schedule in the case yet, but we estimate that the work would be complete around the spring of 2025.*

Question: Is there a more specific reporting deadline for this project than "Spring 2025"?

Department Response: *We will not have a specific date until a case schedule is established. We will work with the contractor on due dates as part of the contract.*

Question: Will the State provide contacts for Charter Business (educational, nonprofit, and government organizations) and/or Residential customers for the surveys and focus groups outreach? If yes, will the contact information provided include phone numbers, email addresses, and/or physical addresses?

Department Response: *The AMOs should provide contact information for educational, government and nonprofit organizations. The Department is working with Charter to determine the method of outreach to customers.*

Question: What is the level of survey instrument and focus group questionnaire development now? Are there templates from past Certifications to be replicated or is this development from scratch?

Department Response: *The Department has instruments that were used in previous proceedings that will be shared with the selected contractor. We expect the selected contractor to update the questions for this case.*