

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Mountain Maryland Digital Coalition

Regional Digital Opportunity Planning Consultant

1. Purpose of Request for Proposals

Allegany College of Maryland (ACM), serving as fiscal agent for the Mountain Maryland Digital Coalition, invites qualified consultants or consulting firms to submit proposals to support the development of a Regional Digital Opportunity Plan serving Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties in Western Maryland.

The purpose of this project is to advance coordinated, data-driven digital opportunity planning across the region by assessing needs, mapping existing digital inclusion assets, engaging stakeholders, and producing a comprehensive plan that identifies actionable priorities to improve digital access, adoption, and inclusion among covered populations.

Funding for this project has been secured through a digital opportunity planning initiative, and all work must comply with applicable state, federal, and institutional procurement guidelines.

2. Background

Organizations throughout Mountain Maryland are actively working to improve broadband access, device availability, and digital skills. However, these efforts are often fragmented across jurisdictions and institutions, limiting collective impact.

The Mountain Maryland Digital Coalition seeks to establish a sustainable regional framework to:

- Coordinate digital opportunity initiatives
- Align resources across sectors
- Identify service gaps
- Support future funding competitiveness
- Improve digital inclusion outcomes for rural and underserved populations

This RFP seeks a consultant to lead planning, coordination, and development of the coalition's Regional Digital Opportunity Plan.

3. Scope of Services

The selected consultant will work closely with Allegany College of Maryland and coalition partners to complete the following:

A. Coalition Coordination

- Facilitate communication among coalition partners across three counties
- Support coalition meetings and documentation
- Assist in establishing a formal coalition structure and governance model

B. Needs Assessment

- Conduct a regional digital opportunity needs assessment using demographic, socioeconomic, and broadband access data
- Identify barriers to digital access, affordability, and digital literacy
- Incorporate stakeholder perspectives through interviews and roundtables

C. Asset Mapping

- Develop an inventory of existing digital inclusion resources, including:
 - Broadband infrastructure initiatives
 - Public internet access points
 - Digital skills programs
 - Device distribution efforts
 - Workforce development initiatives

D. Stakeholder Engagement

- Facilitate structured stakeholder interviews and community roundtables
- Ensure inclusion of covered populations identified in Maryland's Digital Equity Plan and alignment with current MD State Digital Equity plan
- Document community input and recommendations

E. Digital Opportunity Plan Development

- Draft a comprehensive Regional Digital Opportunity Plan with county-specific sections
- Identify at least three implementation-ready priority objectives for each county
- Provide sustainability and funding strategy recommendations

4. Deliverables

Expected deliverables include:

- At least three convenings with program partners
- Draft Regional Digital Opportunity Plan
 - Regional digital needs assessment
 - Digital inclusion asset inventory and mapping documentation
 - Stakeholder engagement summaries
 - Development of Promotion/Marketing Strategy Framework
- Final Digital Opportunity Plan ready for adoption
- Recommendations for coalition governance and sustainability

5. Timeline

The anticipated project timeline is approximately 9–11 months:

- Project kickoff and onboarding: Early March
- Needs assessment and stakeholder engagement: March–June
- Regular Planning Meeting Check-ins (approx. every 6 weeks)
- Draft plan development: July
- Final plan completion: September
- Coalition formalization and sustainability planning: August–November

Proposals should include a detailed project timeline.

6. Budget

The total available funding for consultant services is approximately \$61,000, with additional project funds allocated for data support and coalition activities.

Proposals should include:

- Detailed cost breakdown
- Billing structure
- Deliverables tied to payment milestones

7. Qualifications

Preferred qualifications include:

- Experience in broadband or digital equity planning
- Regional economic development or community planning expertise
- Stakeholder engagement facilitation experience
- Data analysis and mapping capability
- Experience working with rural communities or multi-county collaborations
- Familiarity with federal or state digital equity initiatives

8. Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include:

- Organizational background and relevant experience
- Proposed methodology and approach
- Project timeline
- Budget and cost justification
- Qualifications of key personnel
- Examples of similar completed projects
- References

9. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevant experience and qualifications

- Understanding of digital opportunity challenges
- Strength of proposed methodology
- Cost effectiveness
- Ability to meet timeline
- Experience with collaborative regional initiatives

Allegany College of Maryland reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to select the proposal determined to be in the best interest of the project.

10. Proposal Submission Information

Proposals should be submitted electronically to:

RFP Digital Coalition Proposal

Sherry Buffenmyer, Director of Fiscal Affairs

Allegany College of Maryland

12401 Willowbrook Road

Cumberland, MD 21502

Submission deadline: March 3rd, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

Questions regarding this RFP should be submitted in writing to
sbuffenmyer@allegany.edu

11. Additional Information

- All proposal preparation costs are the responsibility of the bidder.
- Submitted proposals may be shared with coalition partners and funding agencies as required.
- ACM is committed to equitable procurement practices.