

Sno-Isle Libraries

E-RATE BEN 145230

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Title	Bid Due Date
2025 Internet & WAN Services for Whidbey Area Branches	Friday, January 31, 2025 at 5 p.m. Pacific Time

Contact: Claire Christnacht, Consultant, E-Rate Expertise, Inc.
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SCOPE:

Sno-Isle Libraries seeks a contract for synchronous Internet and WAN connections at 3 branches in the Whidbey Island Area: Clinton, Freeland and Langley. The current contract includes 1 Gb speed over a single fiber circuit without a Service Level Agreement (SLA) at each branch. The Library will evaluate both SLA and Non-SLA service and will make the most cost-effective decision based on the bids submitted and the Library's needs. Depending on the speeds available and required at the different branch locations, the potential speed range over the term of the contract could be from 1 Gb to 10 Gb. The addresses for these branches can be found on the library's website noted at the bottom of the RFP.

Disqualifying Factors: Bidders must be active participants in the E-rate program and have an E-rate Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN). Bidders must use the uploaded bid spreadsheet and/or a copy of a current bill plus prices for the higher speeds listed on the bid spreadsheet. Generic/auto-generated bids that are not specifically created as a response to this RFP will be disqualified and will not be evaluated.

BID FORMAT & REQUIREMENTS:

1. Bids should be submitted in the format outlined in the uploaded bid format spreadsheet on the 470 form. A copy of an existing bill plus prices for the higher speeds listed on the bid spreadsheet can be used as a bid. See 2025 SIL Cat 1 Whidbey Internet and WAN Bid Spreadsheet.xls for details.

2. Please provide separate bid sheets with costs for BOTH 3-year and 5-year contracts and the Library will select the most cost-effective term that meets its needs after the winning proposal has been selected. Contract terms will also have optional annual extensions.
3. The bid format spreadsheet indicates the current circuit types and bids with other proposed equivalent circuit types will also be evaluated for affordability and cost-effective solutions to meet Library system demands.
4. Submit a copy of your standard contract with terms of service, including a Service Order. This RFP and the bid format spreadsheet with vendor's costs will become addendums to the contract. If all terms and conditions of the standard contract and service order are acceptable to the Library, the contract may be signed by the Library for E-rate submittal purposes.
5. Bids should include an example of the monthly billing statement that includes all estimated costs, taxes, and fees for different levels of service at each location. Billing shall be monthly, net 30 days.
6. Non-recurring charges, set-up/installation fees (if any) on the library's property should be included.
7. If your bid requires construction, please provide a description of the scope of the project, the required timeline, and the guaranteed start date. Include your financial compensation policy for any late service starts. If applicable, the selected vendor shall pay prevailing wages and shall comply with chapter RCW 39.12 and chapter 49.28 RCW, as applicable. Prevailing Wages for the county in which the Project is located can be found at: <https://secure.lni.wa.gov/wagelookup/>
8. Provide qualifications and experience of the dedicated project manager for implementation and customer service.
9. If an SLA is available, proposals should include a Service Level Agreement (SLA) that contains a description of the services provided and how these services will be measured. At a minimum, the SLA should describe that the vendor will make all reasonable efforts to ensure 99.9% network availability of each circuit, and it should provide frame/packet loss, network latency, and network jitter commitments. Additionally, each SLA should describe 24x7x365 trouble-reporting procedures, offer commitments regarding the time to repair outages, and describe provisions offered in the event of chronic trouble. The services described in the SLA shall be maintained to the specifications of these commitments throughout the term of the contract, and the selected vendor shall remediate any deficiencies at no cost to the Library. Additional features, such as DDoS protection, should also be described.
10. Bidders have the option to include up to three (3) reference sites where your company has performed a similar service, including business name, contact name and contact information. It is preferable that at least one reference should be for a library/school district of similar size within 200 miles of Library. The Library reserves the right to be used as a reference.
11. All bidders must have a current SPIN number and be eligible and certified by USAC to deliver telecommunications services and/or Internet Access during the life of the contract. Failure to maintain this status could result in contract termination. Vendors must be willing to do either E-Rate SPI or BEAR methods of reimbursement.

Instructions for filling out the bid format spreadsheet:

1. List your company name and SPIN number. Enter the Contract Term length. Are you current on your 2025 SPAC/473 requirements? How many years of experience do you have working with the E-rate program?
2. Fill in the circuit type you are proposing. Note that circuits with synchronous upload and download speeds are desired. Indicate if your service includes a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and fill in your current maximum speed for your circuit types.
3. Provide a quote for each location for the speeds listed in the columns of the bid spreadsheet. The submitted bid will be included in the contract with the selected vendor so that prices for upgrades will be documented.
4. Itemize any nonrecurring set-up and/or installation fees.
5. List any applicable taxes and fees (including network access fees, regulatory fees, surcharges, etc.) for these services (% of MRC estimate is acceptable).
6. Indicate if the lines have already been built and give the GUARANTEED service availability date. If your bid requires construction, please provide a description of the scope of the project and the required timeline. Include your financial compensation policy for any late service starts.
7. Indicate if your company owns the lines for the service you are proposing. If not, then provide the name of the company that owns the lines and the length of time you have worked with this other company.
8. Indicate if Static IP is available and the cost/line.

VENDOR CONTRACT ISSUES:

1. **Contract Documents:** This RFP, the winning bid, the final quote, and any additional terms provided by the vendor and agreed upon by the Library will be considered part of the contract and are applicable unless specifically negated in the contract.
2. **Start Date:** Vendors should guarantee that service can start by July 1, 2025.
3. **Term:** Library seeks either a 3-year or a 5-year contract with optional annual contract extensions at the same rate. The contract would revert to a Month-to-Month arrangement at the same prices after the completion of the original term and extension. The Library will consider other contract periods if they result in lower pricing. If the market supports a price reduction after the initial term, the Library will exercise price reduction options, if any are available, as an amendment to the original contract.
4. **Non-Appropriation of Funds:** The contract may be canceled or not renewed in the event of loss of federal E-rate, State or Library funds.
5. **Service Changes as Amendments:** Within the scope of this RFP and the signed contract, the Library may seek to increase speeds, change circuit types, add lines, or add service to an existing or new branch through change orders/contract amendments with the selected vendor to meet future system needs and to ensure cost effectiveness of the service. These changes may be the result of the need for greater capacity, greater cost effectiveness, expiration of other existing contracts, new branch

openings, relocations, or other circumstances. If different services are phased in over time, the original contract termination date will remain the same.

6. **Activation:** Vendors shall notify Library in writing upon completion of installation of all required circuits. The library shall have up to two weeks to reconfigure their systems and to test that the services are functioning properly and will notify vendor in writing of their acceptance of the service. Billing may commence upon the Library's acceptance of the service.
7. **Service Level Agreement:** A mutually agreed upon Service Level Agreement (SLA) if available and selected will be included in the contract.
8. **Secure Networks Act:** Library will not accept any equipment or services produced, provided by, or containing parts, from any company, including parents, affiliates, or subsidiaries thereof, that the FCC has designated as a national security threat to the integrity of communications networks or the communications supply chain pursuant to 47 CFR 54.9(a). A list of covered communications equipment and services can be found on the FCC's website at <https://www.fcc.gov/supplychain/coveredlist>. The list will be updated as necessary, and proposers have the responsibility to check for updates and ensuring that all products and services in quotes and final contracts are compliant.
9. **Hold Harmless & Indemnification Clause:** The Vendor shall protect, indemnify and save harmless the Library, its officers, employees, and agents from any and all costs, claims, judgments, or awards of damages, to the extent arising out of the negligent acts or omissions of the Vendor. The Library shall protect, defend, indemnify and save harmless the Vendor, its officers, employees, and agents from any and all costs, claims, judgments, or awards of damages, arising out of or in any way resulting from the negligent acts or omissions of the Library.

BID PROCESS, EVALUATION & CONTACT INFORMATION:

Bidding Process Information:

1. The bid due date and time are listed at the top of this RFP. The bidding period may be extended at the library's discretion if necessary to conduct a competitive bidding process.
2. The Library reserves the right to request additional information and/or a Best And Final Offer (BAFO) during this bidding process as responses are compared and evaluated.
3. The Library reserves the right to reject all proposals and to not pursue this project at this time.
4. Responders are required to read and understand all information contained within this entire RFP package. Submitting a bid constitutes complete understanding and compliance with the terms and conditions in this RFP.
5. Protests may be made only by bidders who submitted a response to this RFQ. The bidder must submit a written protest as directed in this paragraph within two (2) business days of the bidder's receipt of award notification. Protests received after this deadline will not be considered. Bidders submitting a protest shall follow the procedures described below. Protests that do not follow these procedures shall not be considered.
 - a. Protests must be in writing, addressed to the procurement coordinator named in this solicitation, and signed by the protesting party.

- b. Protests must contain the bid solicitation name, grounds for the protest with specific facts and complete statements of the action(s) being protested, and a description of the relief or corrective action being requested.
- c. Protests must stipulate an issue of fact concerning bias, discrimination, conflict of interest, errors computing scores, non-compliance with procedures as described in solicitation documents or Sno-Isle Libraries' policies.
- d. Protests will be rejected as without merit if the protest is based on an evaluator's professional judgment or Sno-Isle Libraries' assessment of its own and/or other agencies' needs or requirements.
- e. Upon receipt of a protest, Sno-Isle Libraries' Executive Director or designee who was not involved in the procurement will hold a protest review. In the protest review, the Executive Director or designee will consider the record and all available facts and issue a decision within five (5) business days of receipt of the protest. If additional time is required, the protesting party will be notified of the delay.

Evaluation Criteria for Selecting the Winning Bid:

Proposals will be evaluated by a committee to select the most suitable vendor based on the following criteria:

- 1. 40 Points Price - Least cost for greatest capacity (most heavily weighted criteria)
- 2. 25 Points Positive References
- 3. 15 Points Completeness, quality, and reliability of the proposal
- 4. 10 Points Local, in-state, or regional vendor
- 5. 10 Points E-Rate experience

Disqualifying Factors:

- 1. Bidders must be active participants in the E-rate program and have an E-rate Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN).
- 2. Bidders must use the uploaded bid spreadsheet and/or a copy of a current bill with prices for increased speeds if available.
- 3. Generic/auto-generated bids that are not specifically created as a response to this RFP will be disqualified and will not be evaluated.

Contact, Submittal & Misc. Information:

- 1. **The bid due date and time are listed at the top of this RFP.** Any responses received after this time on the due date of this solicitation will be considered non-responsive and will not be included in the scoring process.
- 2. Questions regarding the RFP should be submitted in writing to Claire Christnacht at claire@erateexpertise.com within 14 days of posting this RFP and answers will be uploaded to the 470 form and posted on the library's website within 5 business days after the questions deadline.
- 3. Bids should be submitted by the above noted deadline to Claire Christnacht, claire@erateexpertise.com and to vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org

4. All RFP documents, including instructions, bid formats, Q&A, updates, etc. will be uploaded to the original E-Rate 470 form and will also be posted on the Library's website at <https://www.sno-isle.org/vendors/>
5. For library branch addresses, please see <https://www.sno-isle.org/locations>