

Great Falls Public Schools a.k.a. Great Falls School District 1&A

1100 4th Street South

Great Falls, MT 59405

Funding Year (FY) 2024-2025 E-rate RFP for Internal Connections

SLD Billed Entity Number: 134909

Applicant Form 470 Identifier: Great Falls Public Schools a.k.a. Great Falls School District 1&A _ 2024

_ Cat 2 _ Form 470 B

Contact Information

Nicole Jones, E-Rate Consultant

Email: njrwj@midrivers.com

Overview

Great Falls Public Schools a.k.a. Great Falls School District 1&A (hereafter collectively referred to as, "District") seeks Request for Proposals (RFP) for Internal Connections.

The objective of this RFP is to accomplish a fair, open, and competitive procurement. The RFP is accessible electronically at www.usac.org on the "Tools" webpage: <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/resources/tools/#FCC-Form-470-Tools> or by emailing Nicole Jones at njirwj@midrivers.com and requesting a copy of the RFP and related documents.

The District makes a concerted effort to be compliant with Erate program rules and be able to provide sufficient documentation to prove compliance with those rules as well as applicable local and state regulations. The information requests as part of this RFP are based upon past experiences, Erate trainings, research of program rules, past appeals, special compliance reviews, audits, etc. to try and reduce the District's risk as part of participating in the E-Rate program.

The District reserves the right to accept or reject any and/ or all bids and/ or parts of any one bid including late bids.

The District is not entertaining site visits.

Contacting District employees, board members, or other individuals outside the guidance of this RFP may be deemed as trying to circumvent the open and fair competitive bidding process and be grounds for bid dismissal.

Service providers must be capable of providing telecommunication services under the Universal Service Support Mechanism (i.e. greenlight status), be a registered vendor with USAC, and have a USAC issued 498 ID (formerly Service Provider Identification Number-SPIN) by the close of the RFP competitive bidding process.

Failure to follow the guidance of this RFP or other associated documents may be grounds for bid dismissal.

Requested Services

Internal Connections/ Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC):

The district is seeking internal connections and / or basic maintenance of internal connections for equipment only as noted below. Do not need installation or configuration.

UPS/ Battery Backups:

Requesting approximately 44 +/- UPS Battery Backups including:

- 22 +/- UPS Battery Backups - Tripp Lite SU3000RTXLCD2UN, or equivalent or better. 3000VA 2700W Double-Conversion Rack Mount UPS with an equivalent of the specifications below:
 - Input/Output Voltage – 120V AC
 - Input current – 24A
 - Output power capacity – 2.7kW / 3kVA
 - 4 post rackmount installation
 - Input connections – L5-30P, 8’ cord length
 - Output Receptacles – (6) 5-20R & (1) L5-30R
 - Hot-swappable batteries
 - Maintenance-free Lead-Acid battery
 - Network Management and Alerting via IP Ethernet Network card
 - Online, double-conversion power conditioning
 - External Battery Pack Compatibility
 - Automatic restart after extended outage
 - 3-year warranty.

- 22 +/- UPS Battery Backups - Tripp Lite Series 72V, or equivalent or better, Extended Battery Module (EBM) for SmartOnline UPS Systems, 2U Rack/Tower - UPS battery BP72RT, equivalent or better, with an equivalent of the specifications below:
 - Offers extended-run UPS operation when used in conjunction with compatible 72V DC systems
 - Daisychain connector enables the connection of additional compatible 72V external battery packs to the host UPS
 - rackmount, 4 post rackmount
 - Hot-swappable batteries
 - Valve Regulated Lead Acid (VRLA)
 - 3-year warranty.

If bids include warranty, then please bid according to program rules and the latest posted FY 2024 Eligible Services List (see page 14 of the eligible services list located at the following website - <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/before-you-begin/eligible-services-list/>), “A manufacturer’s multi-year warranty for a period up to three years that is provided as an integral part of an eligible component, without a separately identifiable cost, may be included in the cost of the component.” If bid as a stand-alone line item, then warranty is not eligible for Erate.

Other Requirements

Questions:

Responding service providers may request clarifications regarding specifications outlined in this RFP until 14 days after posting form 470. Clarifying questions should be emailed to Nicole Jones at njirwj@midrivers.com. After the last date to ask questions, the District will enter a quiet period in which the District will not accept questions.

Contacting District employees, board members, or other individuals outside of this RFP contact list may be deemed as trying to circumvent the open and fair competitive bidding process and be grounds for bid dismissal.

Relevant questions not addressed in the RFP or Form 470 and are not considered a cardinal rule change of the existing RFP, will be posted as an amendment to the Form 470 or a newly posted Form 470.

It is the responsibility of service providers to monitor RFP amendments and/ or newly posted Form 470s.

The District reserves the right not to respond to inquiries that are not relevant to the requested equipment and/ or services on the posted Form 470 or are already addressed in the posted documents.

No customized service provider forms will be completed during the competitive bidding period.

It is the responsibility of the service providers to adhere to all applicable laws, licensing, permits, insurances, etc. (District, local, state, and/ or federal) as may be required for such a project and may be required to readily verify documentation at request of District.

The winning bidder may be required to adhere additional policies and/ or procedures, rules, regulations, etc. as required by District (i.e., installation after school hours or during vacation months, background checks, etc.) that may or may not be listed in this RFP document.

Bidding:

Bids will be accepted until the Allowable Contract Date as stated on the associated Form 470 or 28 days after the latest posted RFP Amendment, whichever is later. If there are no RFP amendments, then the bid due date is 28 days after the certification date or the Allowable Contract Date (ACD) as noted on the latest certified Form 470.

Please note that the District considers any document uploaded to the Form 470 (i.e. a map or picture for example) to be considered an RFP amendment regardless of whether or not it is labeled, "RFP Amendment."

If there is a newly posted Form 470 that replaces, extends, or amends an existing Form 470, for service providers that have already submitted a bid, it is the responsibility of the service provider(s) to submit a new bid within the scope and competitive bidding period of the latest posted Form 470.

Bids may be emailed as an attachment to Brian Patrick at brian_patrick@gfps.k12.mt.us, Tom Hering at tom_hering@gfps.k12.mt.us, and Nicole Jones at njirwj@midrivers.com.

Bids may also be mailed to the ATTN: Tom Hering at the Great Falls Public Schools a.k.a. Great Falls School District 1&A at 1100 4th Street South; Great Falls, MT 59405. The district assumes no responsibility for delays caused by the U.S. Postal Service or any other delivery service.

Bids will be opened publicly at 10:30am MST at the GFPS District Office Building located at 1100 4th Street South, Great Falls, MT, 59405 two calendar days following bid due date.

Bids submitted by other means including but not limited to texting, links embedded in an email, etc. may not be considered. No customized service provider forms will be completed during the competitive bidding period.

Failure to follow this RFP guidance may be deemed as trying to circumvent the open and fair competitive bidding process and may be grounds for bid dismissal.

The District reserves the right to cancel the procurement or accept or reject any or all bids in whole or part including late bids in accordance with MCA 18-4-303.

Bids from service providers without an E-Rate Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) at the close of the competitive bidding period will be disqualified.

Actual quantities may vary from initial estimates. It is anticipated the District will only be billed for services and/ or equipment actually provided. Preference may be given to bids that specify acceptance of this condition.

Bids are expected to be all inclusive. Service providers that impose additional costs after bid submittal and/ or acceptance may be grounds for bid dismissal.

Quantities are estimates and looking for service provider recommendations. If the service provider is uncertain, please make a recommendation based upon the information provided, expertise, industry standard, or bid all applicable recommended options and let the District decide the most cost-effective solution.

If applicable, proposed solutions should provide options for make and models of equipment that are scalable for future proofing as well as a minimum life expectancy of 5 years.

The District is not entertaining demos, test packs, webinars, SPAM, marketing inquiries, etc.

The District is not responsible for late bids. The District reserves the right to accept or reject any and/ or all bids and/ or parts of any one bid including late bids.

The District reserves the right to dismiss bids that present equipment or services that may be deemed a “cardinal rule change” according to the eligible services list, erate program rules, or other regulatory sources.

Preference may be given to bids that include at least 3 references from similar sized schools in Montana.

Equipment must be from an E-rate eligible manufacturer. Bids that include equipment from companies listed on the FCC's National Security Threat List may be dismissed in whole or in part. Bids should include a statement confirming equipment is not from a company that is listed as a National Security Threat. Failure to make note of the manufacturing company may be grounds for bid dismissal.

If installation is required, facilities must be returned to pre-installation condition once installation and/ or any work is complete. Bids should acknowledge this requirement.

If installation is required, it is the responsibility of the service providers to have all required equipment including any type of lift/ ladders, garbage disposal, clean-up, that may be required for a full-service bid.

Bid Security:

Bid security will not be required as part of the bid submittal process for this project.

Service provider E-Rate Compliance:

It is the responsibility of the service provider/ bidder to know, understand, and act within the guidance of this RFP and the E-Rate program rules.

Responses not in compliance with the RFP, RFP Amendments, and/ or Form 470, incomplete responses, and/ or responses received after the allowable contract date may be deemed non-compliant with this RFP and at the District's discretion may be accepted or rejected.

Preference may be given to service providers submitting proposals under this RFP that provide a written statement that they agree to meet the following conditions relating to the E-rate program:

Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) and FCC Registration Number (FCCRN)

The service provider shall provide a valid E-rate SPIN number (Service Provider Identification Number), in the Proposal submitted in response to this bid opportunity. The SPIN must be recognized by the SLD and FCC as an eligible telecommunications provider and therefore qualified to receive discounts under the Telecommunications Services bucket of the program. The Service provider also shall provide the company's FCC Registration Number.

Green Light Status

Service providers should provide proof of "Green Light Status." The service provider should provide proof as a printout from the FCC website of status as an addendum to the Proposal submitted in response to this bid opportunity.

Service Provider Annual Certification Form

The Service provider agrees to timely submit to the SLD a completed Form 473, Service Provider Annual Certification form, which provides updated contact information to the SLD for the Service provider.

The Method of Invoicing

The District has the option to choose which method of invoicing best meets the District's technology goals (i.e., BEAR – Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement versus SPI – Service Provider Invoicing). If the SPI of invoicing is chosen, the service provider agrees to provide reimbursements to the District for discounts on eligible services received on or after the effective date of discounts and already paid for by the District. If not, no late charges may be billed.

Cooperation with District's Preparation of E-rate Applications

The service provider agrees to provide information on a timely basis that the District requests for the District to timely apply for E-rate applications.

The service provider must agree to respond in a timely manner (within assigned deadlines) to any requests for information from District, USAC, FCC, State Agencies, or other agencies as needed and related to the E-Rate Program.

Separate Itemization of E-rate Eligible and Ineligible Products and Services The service provider shall separately itemize the cost of E-rate eligible and ineligible products and separate installation costs, if any. To determine what items are eligible, visit the E-rate Eligible Services List at <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/before-you-begin/eligible-services-list/> or call the SLD at 888-203-8100.

Compliance with E-rate Contract Signing Rules

The service provider must acknowledge in its proposal that the service provider will make every effort to have any contract addendums that may arise from this RFP signed in accordance with the E-rate contract signing rules. Further, the Service provider must acknowledge in its proposal that if the contract or addendum is signed outside of the E-Rate contract signing window, the service provider will disclose to the District, before soliciting the District's execution of the contract, that the contract is not eligible for E-rate funding.

Non-Collusion Affidavit

At the District's discretion, the service provider may be required to execute an Affidavit of Non-Collusion to confirm that the service provider is not in violation of the anti-bid rigging state law provisions of the state procurement law, or in violation of the Federal Communication Commission's Fifth Report and Order, as codified in 47 C.F.R.

Guarantee to Meet Service Start Date

The service provider should be prepared to provide service starting July 1, 2024, or as soon as feasible after receipt of Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL). If Service provider does not meet the agreed upon service start date due to the service provider's negligence,

the service provider should provide guarantees to cover the loss of E-rate funding for the total discount that would have otherwise been received from the current provider during the interim period until Service provider is able to provide service. This statement does not apply to circumstances beyond the service provider's control such as manufacturer delays.

Required Notice to Proceed and Funding Availability

Acceptance of winning bid is contingent on E-Rate, District Approval, and/ or Board's Approval. The District reserves the right to allow the contract to expire without implementation.

The District will follow the purchasing policies of the Great Falls Public Schools a.k.a. Great Falls School District 1&A Board requirements and procedures of the FCC's E-rate program as administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) to be eligible for all available funding.

The implementation of any associated contracts resulting from this competitive bid process will be dependent on the District's issuance of a written Notice to Proceed. E-rate funding notification alone will not signify Notice to Proceed. It is expected that the service provider will only move forward once received written notification from District to proceed with the project.

Document Retention Requirements

The service provider agrees to retain documents as required by the E-Rate Program Rules, for 10 years from the last date of services for each FRN for each funding year.

Contracts/ Service Agreements:

Any required contracts, including any addendums, master service agreements, etc., for services are required by E-Rate rules to be signed prior to certification of Form 471. Thus, preference may be given to bids that include - a letter of intent or service agreement, including all terms and conditions associated with acceptance of bid, and that is signed by the service provider, ready to be accepted and signed by the District. Failure to include with the bid may result in bid dismissal. It is anticipated that by requesting this, the service agreement/ contract will be included in the bid submission to appropriately meet all deadlines.

Service providers that add/ change terms and conditions after bid submittal and/ or bid acceptance may be grounds for bid dismissal.

Bids are expected to be all inclusive. Service providers that impose additional costs after bid submittal and/ or acceptance may be grounds for bid dismissal.

It is the responsibility of the service providers to adhere to all applicable laws, licensing, permits, insurances, etc. (District, local, state, and/ or federal) as may be required for such a project and may be required to readily verify documentation at request of District.

This request for proposal (RFP) does not commit the District to enter into any agreement, or to pay any expenses incurred in the preparation of any response to this request, or to ultimately procure any contract for the provision of these services.

An approved E-Rate funding notification letter alone is not grounds for moving forward with the project. Acceptance of winning bid is contingent on E-Rate, Board Approval, and/ or District's Approval. At the District's discretion, it may choose not to move forward with the project in whole or in part and/ or may allow agreement to expire. It is expected that vendor will only move forward once receive written notification from District to proceed with the project.

Preference may be given to providers that offer flexible invoicing, including SPI where the discounts are applied to the bills with no restrictions. Bids should include whether or not a vendor will honor a flexible invoicing arrangement.

Invoicing specifically for MIBS services is expected to be monthly in which the District receives monthly invoicing. The District may or may not at it's discretion entertain solutions in which the full cost for the entire year of MIBS services is billed up front.

Preference may be given to bidders that can honor their pricing until receipt of a funding commitment decision letter.

Evaluation of Bids:

The board and/ or District is overall responsible for the process of evaluating bids and selecting the service provider that can provide the most cost-effective solution to meet the District's needs and intent regarding services. The mandatory factors listed below will be considered as well as a combination of Optional Factors.

Responses not in compliance with the RFP, RFP Amendments, and/ or Form 470, incomplete responses, and/ or responses received after the allowable contract date may be deemed non-compliant with this RFP and at the District's discretion may be accepted or rejected.

The District reserves the right to waive any formalities without cause and without explanation to any bidders. As Erate Program rules allow, the District reserves the right to solicit bids if one or no bids are received during the bidding window.

The District reserves the right to award on a service-by-service basis, or as a whole, to the best advantage of the District, to the responsive and responsible vendor in accordance with the specifications set forth in this request for quote.

The following evaluation criteria will be used to evaluate bids:

Weighted Factors:

The contract will be awarded based on best-value to the District and its constituent Districts, as well as evaluation criteria set forth in this document. Weighted factors contributing to the award are included in the following breakdown:

Weighted Factor Breakdown:

Mandatory Factors:	Points Available
Price of the eligible products and services	30
Positive Prior experience with service provider	10-20
Ability to Meet Requirements of RFP	10-20
Terms & Conditions including flexible invoicing	10-20
Optional Factors:	
Contingent on E-Rate Funding	5-20
Clear and Complete Bid	5-20
Risk for the District	5-20
Scalable Solution	5-20
Service Reliability	5-20
Ability to meet District's services start date	5-20
Compatibility with existing systems	5-20
References	5-20
Meeting Technical Specifications	5-20
GFPS Vendor Familiarity	5-20
Ineligible Costs (higher points = lower percentage of ineligible cost)	5-20

Points awarded for Cost of Services will not be subjective but will be based on a fixed formula. The formula for awarding points for the factor of cost will be:

Lowest priced service

provider = LPV Each

Responding service

provider = RV

Each Service provider's Cost of Services points awarded = 30 * LPV / RV

Therefore, the lowest priced service provider will be awarded 30 points for the Cost of Services factor. All other service providers will be awarded points based on their proximity in price to the lowest priced service provider. Example: A service provider with a bid twice as expensive as the lowest priced service provider will mathematically receive 15 points.