

# ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT RFP FOR INTERNET SERVICE

**Issue Date:** 02/13/2025

**Bid opening:** 03/14/2025

**Procurement Time Frame:** Request for Proposals Issued: 02/13/2025  
Request for Proposals Respond Date: Close of Business 03/14/2025  
Award and Contract Execution: 03/24/2025 (Pending ASD Board Approval)

**Requested Services:** Internet Service

**Enclosures:** 1. Purpose and Background  
2. Scope and Procurement  
3. Evaluation Criteria and Vendor Selection  
4. Proposal Format and Content

**Response Documents:** Mailing Label  
Response Cover Page  
Vendor Response Forms  
Detailed Pricing Forms  
Reference Form  
Service Invoice/Order Form  
Proposed Service Level Agreement  
Additional Documentation

**Contact for this request:** Jose O. Rivera  
Supervisor of Technology Systems  
erate@allentownsd.org

# 1. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

## 1.1. Purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP)

The Allentown School District (ASD, the District) desires to procure and execute an agreement for Internet services. ASD seeks responses from appropriately qualified and experienced vendors.

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to solicit proposals and establish a contract through fair and competitive negotiations. The services requested in these documents are part of the E-Rate filings for Funding Year 2025 for Allentown School District.

Further information can be found on the USAC's web site [www.universalservice.org](http://www.universalservice.org).

Vendor(s) must provide their E-Rate Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) as part of the proposal in order to be eligible for consideration.

Vendor(s) must agree to comply with USAC rules and regulations and be familiar USAC billing methods and timelines.

Bids and awards related to this RFP are subject to funding approval through the E-Rate process. In the event projects are not funded, the Allentown School District reserves the right to cancel the project.

ASD invites prospective vendors to submit information in fulfillment of services described in this RFP. This RFP represents a statement of desired services and will assist ASD in gathering information regarding services available, whether or not the District is currently aware of this availability, to identify vendors capable of delivering these services, and to augment information contained in ASD's 2025 E-Rate filings.

This document does not commit the District to award a contract, to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this RFP, or to make any agreements in relation to the services and/or goods described in this RFP. The Allentown School District reserves the right to request clarification, conduct discussions with vendors and/or request additional information.

## 1.2. Request Timeline and Important Dates

The anticipated timeline for this RFP is as follows:

Issue Date	02/13/2025
Vendor Selection and Contract Award (tentative)	03/24/2025 (Pending ASD Board Approval)

## 2. SCOPE OF PROCUREMENT

The Allentown School District seeks to procure Internet service(s). This section describes ASD's requirements.

### 2.1. Length of Contract

Proposals should be for an initial 3-year term, with 2, 1-year renewal options. To align with E-Rate program requirements, Internet service must begin on **July 1, 2025**.

### 2.2. Location

Currently, ASD's existing Internet circuit terminates at its Administration Center, 31 South Penn Street, Allentown, PA, 18102. The District houses core network equipment at this location and desires to maintain the existing egress point.

### 2.3. Bandwidth

The District will evaluate options for two symmetrical internet access circuits delivered via fiber at various bandwidths: 10, 20, 30 and 40 Gbps. The service must be delivered as two handoffs to the same location as cited above. At a minimum, vendors must submit a proposal with pricing for the two lowest bandwidth circuits (10 Gbps, 20 Gbps). The District prefers a solution scalable above 10 Gbps within the duration of the agreement (e.g., 2-3 years).

### 2.4. Additional Technical Specifications

ASD requires a solution which includes the following elements:

- Physical components and connections which lack a single point of failure
- One of the following handoff methods or equivalent:
  - Single-mode or multi-mode fiber using LC connectors
  - Cisco SFP+ Twinax cables
- Provision for BGP peering.

### 2.5. Service Level

Vendors must submit a proposed Service Level Agreement (SLA) as part of their response. The proposed SLA will include a description of the Internet and related services provided, and where applicable, how these services will be measured. At a minimum, the SLA should describe how the vendor will ensure 99.99% circuit availability (uptime) and related commitments for frame/packet loss, network latency and jitter.

Additionally, the SLA should describe 24x7x365 trouble-reporting procedures, time to repair outage commitments, and 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 school district.

**The District retains the right to select all, none or any selected portion of the proposed services.**

### 3. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND VENDOR SELECTION

#### 3.1. Evaluation Criteria and Process

The District's selection team will identify a preferred vendor based on a two-phase scoring process. The table below presents the evaluation criteria.

Phase	Weight	Criterion
1: Administrative Screening	Pass/Fail	Minimum Requirements
2: Proposal Evaluation	750	Cost
	100	Vendor qualifications and past relationship with vendor.
	100	Technical Architecture
	50	Vendor Preference
	1,000	Total Points

The District's evaluation team will assign vendors a score for each criterion. The District will then combine these component scores into a total score to identify a preferred vendor.

##### 3.1.1. Phase 1: Administrative Screening

During the initial phase, ASD's selection team will evaluate all proposals on a pass/fail basis. The District will review proposals for completeness, adherence to the required response format as described in **Section 4.0** of this RFP, and compliance with minimum requirements as listed in Form 2: Minimum Requirements of the Vendor Response Forms (Part 4). Only proposals that pass this administrative screening will advance to Phase 2 of the evaluation process.

##### 3.1.2. Response Evaluation

The District will subsequently evaluate all responses using the criteria described below.

- **Cost (750 Points)**

The District seeks the best value solution. The District will first identify the most advantageous bandwidth and contract term. ASD will then use information provided by vendors in Detailed Pricing Forms (Part 5) to assign a Cost score based on total cost of ownership. See the example below.

**EXAMPLE**

Vendor A: 3-year agreement @ 10 Gbps for \$50,000/year = \$150,000
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Vendor B: 3-year agreement @ 20 Gbps for \$42,000/year = \$132,000
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The vendor with the lowest total cost will receive the total number of points allotted for Cost (750 points). Vendors with a higher total cost will receive a proportional percentage of the total possible points for Cost, based on their deviation from the lowest total cost. See the example continued below.

## EXAMPLE

### VENDOR A

$$\frac{\$132,000 \text{ (lowest total cost)}}{\$150,000 \text{ (Vendor A's total cost)}} \times 750 \text{ (total possible points)} = 660 \text{ points}$$

### VENDOR B

$$\frac{\$132,000 \text{ (lowest total cost)}}{\$132,000 \text{ (Vendor B's total cost)}} \times 750 \text{ (total possible points)} = 750 \text{ points}$$

- **Vendor Qualifications (100 Points)**

The District seeks relationships with vendors that are viable, stable, and committed to the proposed line of service. ASD's selection team will evaluate the vendor's revenue and operating history, changes in ownership, available resources, client base, terminations for default, and current or recent experience with similar organizations.

Scores for this evaluation category will consider Vendor's service approach, including basic and value-added features (e.g., 24x7x365 support, proactive monitoring, threat mitigation, bursting), additional related services (e.g., offsite data backup, server hosting/colocation) and standard contract terms and conditions.

This District will also base a portion of this criterion's score on vendor references. ASD's selection team will consider the similarity of reference clients' demographics, size, scope of services and support history as well as overall client satisfaction. The District may conduct in-depth phone interviews to gather additional information. ASD prefers references from similarly situated clients (e.g., large scale, K-12 educational organizations).

ASD will use information provided in Forms 3 - 7 of the Vendor Response Forms (Part 4) to assign scores for this criterion.

- **Technical Architecture (100 Points)**

ASD prefers high performing, highly reliable Internet service. Vendor responses should describe why the physical, geographic, and technological elements of their service represent a best-fit solution. The District will use information provided in Form 8 of Part 4 Vendor Response Forms to assign scores for this criterion.

- **Vendor Preference (50 Points)**

ASD prefers vendors with a headquarters and/or satellite office within **100** miles of Allentown, PA and vendors that have an existing positive relationship with the District. ASD's selection team will use information provided in Form 9 of Part 4 Vendor Response Forms to assign scores for this criterion.

## 3.2. Competitive Negotiation

The Allentown School District reserves the right to request clarification, conduct discussions with vendors, to request revisions and/or waive minor informalities. The District also retains the right to negotiate the final contract terms and conditions with one or more of the most responsive vendors as solely determined by the District. Finally, ASD may discard all vendor responses if none meet the stated minimum requirements or if none are deemed in the best interests of the District.

## 4. PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

### 4.1. General Directions

This RFP contains all the information and forms necessary to complete and submit a formal proposal. All responses and accompanying documentation submitted will become the property of the Allentown School District at the time responses are opened.

### 4.2. Required Response Format

Vendors must submit one original and one electronic copy of the proposal by the due date indicated on the cover page of this RFP.

- Electronic copy – Email to [erate@allentownsd.org](mailto:erate@allentownsd.org)
- Original copy – Mail or deliver to **Allentown School District** c/o Jose O. Rivera 31 South Penn Street Allentown, PA 18102

To assist in the evaluation process, all responses must follow the format outlined below. Proposals in any other format may be considered non-responsive and may be rejected.

#### 4.2.1. Response Cover Page

This form must be completed and signed by a person authorized to make a binding offer for the vendor. Proposals that fail to include an originally signed Proposal Cover Page may be deemed non-responsive and may be rejected from further evaluation.

#### 4.2.2. Vendor Response Forms

Vendors must complete the vendor response forms in their entirety and submit them in their native electronic format (Microsoft Word). Instructions for completing these forms are included within the document.

#### 4.2.3. Detailed Pricing Forms

Vendors must complete the detailed pricing proposal forms in their entirety and submit them in their native electronic format (Microsoft Excel). Instructions for completing these forms are included within the document.

#### 4.2.4. Reference Form

Vendors must complete and submit reference form in its native electronic format (Microsoft Word). Vendors must provide references from at least three (3) organizations for which they have provided similar services.

#### 4.2.5. Service Invoice/Order Form

Vendors must submit a completed sample service invoice/order form.

#### 4.2.6. Proposed Services Agreement

Vendors must provide a copy of their proposed services agreement. However, vendors do not need to submit a separate document if their service invoice/order form contains a complete list of relevant terms and conditions.

#### 4.2.7. Proposed Service Level Agreement

Vendors must submit a proposed service level agreement. However, vendors do not need to submit a separate document if their service invoice/order form or the proposed services agreement contains a complete list of service level commitments.