

**TIMBERLAND REGIONAL LIBRARY**

**E-RATE BEN 145287**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

Title	Quote Due Date
<b>2024 Internet &amp; WAN Services</b>	<b>December 1, 2023 at 4 p.m. Pacific Time</b>

Contact: Claire O’Flaherty, Consultant, E-Rate Expertise, Inc.  
Phone: (253) 320-0664  
Email: [claire@erateexpertise.com](mailto:claire@erateexpertise.com)

**SCOPE:**

*The Timberland Regional Library (TRL) seeks a new contract for hi-speed, synchronous internet connectivity and WAN service with a high Service Level Agreement (SLA) for its library system that consists of 29 branches plus its administrative Service Center. The location listing is included in the bid format spreadsheet and the addresses can be confirmed on the library’s website.*

*The Library’s current service is provided with a hub and spoke architecture, including a single 1 G internet connection at the Service Center hub, a 2 G WAN circuit at that hub, 100 Mb WAN circuits to 28 branches, and a 50 Mb circuit to the Salkum branch. TRL requests prices for up to 10 G Internet at the hub and for up to 10 G WAN circuits at all locations. The Library will use this information to determine the most cost-effective solutions to meet immediate and future needs during the term of the contract.*

*The Hawks Prairie and the West Olympia branches are operating on a trial pilot project basis with building leases that currently expire on October 1, 2024 and April 30, 2025 respectively. If the Board approves the continuation of services at these locations, the circuits will be co-terminus with the rest of the branches at the end of the term of the contract. Note that there is a possibility that the branches could be moved to a nearby location if continued service is approved. Given the possibility of closure of these two branches, the Library requests rates for different contract terms including MTM, annual, and/or co-terminus with the current building leases. Bids should also include information on early termination fees for circuits so TRL will have flexibility and a range of contracting terms and alternatives to choose from.*

*The Hawks Prairie branch is the only branch that receives non-SLA cable service with a contract that expires June 30, 2025. TRL requests quotes for synchronous service with an SLA to this location and if it is available, service would be upgraded on or before that contract expiration date.*

*The Mountain View branch that is currently located at 210 Silverbrook Road, Randle, WA 98377 will be moved to 10111 US Highway 12, Randle, WA 98377 in 2024. Relocation costs for this move are requested through this RFP. Only one building will be open for patron service at a time, but there may be an overlap in internet service to allow systems in the new building to be set up and ready for the opening.*

***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. 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 must be submitted in the format outlined in the uploaded bid format spreadsheet on the 470 form. See 2024 TRL Internet Access and WAN Bid Spreadsheet.xls for details.
2. Please provide separate bid sheets with costs for BOTH 3-year and 5-year contracts. Contract terms will also have optional annual extensions.
3. The Bid Format spreadsheet indicates the current circuit types, but 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 for 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.
8. Provide qualifications and experience of the dedicated project manager for implementation and customer service.
9. 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. Bids should 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.
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 2024 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. Indicate your current maximum speed for your circuit types. All circuits should be synchronous and have an SLA.
3. Provide a quote for each location for the speeds listed in the columns. If a cell includes an X, no price quote is required for that speed. A complete listing of available speeds and costs within the range in the scope of this RFP will be included in the contract with the selected vendor. If all prices are not available at this time, local rules all prices for higher speeds may be added via an amendment to the contract.
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. The library owns their own public IP addresses. Indicate if there are additional charges relating to Static IP and the cost/line.
9. Since the Mountain View branch will be relocated in 2024. Please provide MRC prices for both addresses, in addition to the NRC related to the move.
10. If synchronous SLA WAN circuits are available at the Hawks Prairie branch, please indicate both MRC and NRC.
11. As explained above, the Hawks Prairie and West Olympia branches may require shorter terms or early terminations. Please provide the MRC rates for 100 Mb Synchronous, SLA service for the following terms at these locations: MTM, Annual, and Co-terminus with the building lease. Describe your early termination clause and contracting recommendations for branches that might be closed.

## VENDOR CONTRACT ISSUES:

The new contract for these services will include a copy of the vendor's submitted proposal/quote, the terms outlined below and elsewhere in this RFP, and additional terms provided by the vendor and agreed upon by Library.

1. **Start Date:** Vendors should guarantee that service can start by July 1, 2024.
2. **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. Library would consider other contract periods if they resulted 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.
3. **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.
4. **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 existing contracts, new branch openings, relocations, or other circumstances. If unforeseen market forces (i.e. resulting from the pandemic) affect the price of quotes from the winning bid, amendments can be made to update the pricing. If different services are phased in over time, the original contract termination date will remain the same.
5. **Activation:** Vendors shall notify Library in writing upon completion of installation of all required circuits. 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.
6. **Service Level Agreement:** A mutually agreed upon Service Level Agreement (SLA) will be included in the contract.
7. **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.

## **BID PROCESS, EVALUATION & CONTACT INFORMATION:**

### **Bidding Process Information:**

1. 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.

### **Evaluation Criteria for Selecting the Winning Bid:**

Proposals will be judged on the following criteria:

1. 30 Points Price - Least cost for greatest capacity (most heavily weighted criteria)
2. 25 Points Prior positive experience with the vendor
3. 25 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:**

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. 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. Questions regarding the RFP should be submitted in writing to Claire O'Flaherty at [claire@erateexpertise.com](mailto:claire@erateexpertise.com) by November 10, 2023, and answers will be uploaded to the 470 form and posted on the library's website within 5 business days of the questions deadline.
2. The bid deadline is December 1, 2023, at 4 p.m. Pacific Time.
3. Bids should be submitted electronically to Claire O'Flaherty Christnacht, [claire@erateexpertise.com](mailto:claire@erateexpertise.com) and copied to Andrea Heisel [aheisel@trl.org](mailto:aheisel@trl.org) before the bid deadline.
4. Bid openings will be conducted electronically via Microsoft Teams 30 minutes after the bid deadline. [Click here to join the meeting](#) Meeting ID: 212 958 391 734 Passcode: HqzjxJ
5. All RFP documents, including instructions, bid formats, Q&A, updates, etc. will be uploaded to the original E-Rate 470 form on the E-rate EPC system and will also be posted on the Timberland Regional Library website at: <https://trl.org/rfp/>
6. For Library branch addresses, please see <https://www.trl.org/locations>