



CATEGORY 2 EQUIPMENT SERVICE SPECIFICATIONS

Applicant: Madison County Public Library
BEN: 127095
Form 470 #: 270001128
Form 470 Contacts: Kim Bellofatto - kbellofatto@madisoncountync.gov
Melissa Zaruba - mzaruba@e-ratecentral.com

Procurement Timeline

Task	Due Date
Issue Date	October 6, 2026
Deadline to Submit Questions	October 20, 2026, 10:00 AM ET
Posting of Questions/Clarifications	October 23, 2026
Proposal Submission Deadline	November 20, 2026, 10:00 AM ET

Communications and Questions

All communication with the Applicant regarding this solicitation **must** be emailed and received by the “Deadline to Submit Questions” noted in the “Procurement Timeline.” Questions should be directed to all “Form 470 Contacts” listed above, with the Form 470 Number included in the subject line. Failure to include all “Form 470 Contacts” could result in questions going unanswered. Verbal inquiries are not allowed. Clarifications, when applicable, will be posted as an attachment/addendum to the Form 470. Each Offeror is responsible for downloading the current version of the Form 470 and attachments, including any addenda. Applicant reserves the right to ask vendors clarifying questions during the proposal review process.

Contact initiated by an Offeror concerning this solicitation with any other Applicant representative other than those listed as Form 470 contacts is prohibited. Unauthorized contact may result in the offeror's disqualification from this solicitation.

Product demonstration meetings will not be granted during the competitive bidding period – requests for such will be ignored.

For this solicitation, a site visit is: ☐ Required ☐ Optional ☒ Not Offered

Proposal Instructions

Proposals **must** be submitted by the Proposal Submission Deadline in the Procurement Timeline.

Proposals should be emailed to ALL Form 470 Contacts listed above and include the following:

- Applicant name
- Form 470 number
- SPIN (Service Provider Identification Number)
- Service provider's terms and conditions
- Completed Pricing Attachment

Proposals **must** include all costs associated with providing the requested products/services to the applicant including but not limited to shipping fees, licenses, and any component needed for the proposed equipment to function properly.

In addition to or in place of a service provider's standard quote format, proposal pricing should be included in the Pricing Attachment provided and be submitted in Excel format.

Proposed service fees for each piece of equipment should:

- be shown as unit pricing with separate line-item charges for each SKU,
- identify the percentage of each SKU that is eligible for E-Rate support as agreed upon by USAC and the manufacturer; and
- be categorized as Internal Connections (IC), Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (BMIC), and/or Managed Internal Broadband Services (MIBS).

Proposals **must** be in response to the specific requirements of this solicitation. Offers including a generic listing of services beyond the scope of this solicitation and/or encyclopedic price lists will be disqualified. SPAM and/or robotic responses will not be considered valid responses and will be disqualified from consideration.

Existing Network Environment

The Applicant intends to procure network infrastructure that integrates effectively with its existing environment while supporting future growth and modernization.

The Applicant's current network environment includes, but is not limited to:

- FortiGate 50G
- FortiGate 90G
- FortiSwitch 148F FPOE
- FortiSwitch 124G FPOE
- FortiSwitch 110G FPOE
- FortiSwitch 108F FPOE

Equipment/Service Request

The applicant requests proposals for new E-Rate eligible Category 2 switching equipment and licensing. Neither stacking cables nor transceivers are required.

Proposed solutions must meet or exceed the following technical requirements:

Minimum Requirement	24-Port PoE Switch	48-Port PoE Switch
Access ports	24 × 1GbE RJ45	48 × 1GbE RJ45
PoE ports	All 24 PoE+ (802.3at)	All 48 PoE+ (802.3at)
Uplink ports	4 × 10GbE SFP+	4 × 10GbE SFP+
PoE budget	370 W	740 W
Switching capacity (duplex)	128 Gbps	176 Gbps
Forwarding rate	190 Mpps	260 Mpps
Power supply	Internal	Internal
Licensing/support	5-year manufacturer support: 24x7 technical support, software/firmware updates, and advance hardware replacement shipped the next business day	5-year manufacturer support: 24x7 technical support, software/firmware updates, and advance hardware replacement shipped the next business day

Equipment Scope of Work

Proposals are requested for the makes/models specified in the Pricing Attachment, or equivalent. Proposals offering alternative makes/models **must** include product specifications and documentation showing that the proposed equipment meets or exceeds the technical specifications of the requested makes/models. Alternative makes/models will be disqualified if they are submitted without that documentation or do not meet or exceed the minimum required specifications. The applicant will be the sole arbiter of whether a proposed alternative is functionally and technically equivalent.

The quantities requested are the applicant's best estimate and may be adjusted based on the offeror's recommendations. The applicant reserves the right to increase or reduce quantities and buy some, all, or none of the listed equipment.

Proposals featuring equipment that is used, open box, refurbished, or categorized in any way other than new will be disqualified.

Partial offers **will not** be considered. Offers must contain all required elements for the Applicant to be able to successfully activate, configure, and install the proposed hardware. Partial offers will be disqualified.

Installation Scope of Work

For this solicitation, vendor installation services are: ☐ Required ☐ Optional ☒ Not Requested

Delivery

All equipment and/or materials under this solicitation shall be delivered to the following location:

- Marshall Branch Library - 1335 N Main St, Marshall, NC 28753

Contract Requirements

The applicant prefers a multi-year agreement (term dates April 1, 2027 – September 30, 2029). An initial award term of April 1, 2027 – September 30, 2028, with one optional renewal to align with an extended E-Rate service delivery deadline, if needed, is also acceptable.

The quoted pricing must not assume the applicant will purchase the full quantities listed in the proposal.

The applicant reserves the right to place orders as needed and is not obligated to order all products or services.

Substitutions for alternative equipment must be agreed upon in writing by both parties before finalization of any changes/deviations from the original agreed-upon equipment list.

Offerors proposing equipment whose prices may increase depending upon new U.S. government tariffs imposed on imports are encouraged to (a) identify such products in their offers, and (b) propose an acceptable methodology for limiting price adjustments over the contract term.

E-Rate Specific Considerations

FCC rules require vendors to offer discounted SPI billing. The applicant **requires** SPI discount method for these services. Vendors that do not offer SPI billing will be disqualified.

Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections and Managed Internal Broadband Services were included on the Form 470 out of an abundance of caution. The Applicant is not requesting time-and-materials basic maintenance services and is not requesting managed internal broadband services. These checkboxes were selected solely to ensure E-Rate compliance in the unlikely event that USAC determines that any element of the proposed solution should be treated or supported as such under Category 2 eligibility rules.

Per USAC E-Rate rules, “cost of eligible services” will be the highest valued criterion in the evaluation process; however, other criteria with a lesser value may also be considered.

Service providers proposing a temporary equipment loan for product demonstration and/or evaluation purposes are **required** to clearly state that such loans are of limited duration. Product demos extending beyond thirty (30) days must be explicitly authorized by both parties and provided at a fair market rate.

By submitting a proposal on the requested services herein, the vendor certifies its proposed services and/or products comply with Parts 47 Section 54.9 and 54.10 of the FCC rules which prohibits the sale, provision, maintenance, modification, or other support of equipment or services provided or

manufactured by Huawei, ZTE, or any other covered company posing a national security threat to the integrity of communications networks or the communications supply chain. See <https://www.usac.org/about/reports-orders/supply-chain/> for more details.

As required by Section 54.500(f) of Part 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations all offers in response to this solicitation **must** offer the lowest corresponding price (LCP) which is defined as the lowest price that a service provider charges to nonresidential customers who are similarly situated to a particular E-Rate applicant (school, library, or consortium) for similar services. See <https://www.usac.org/E-Rate/service-providers/step-2-responding-to-bids/lowest-corresponding-price/> for more details.

Additional Considerations/Information

The language in this solicitation has been standardized: "must," "shall," "mandatory," and "required" indicate mandatory specifications that the Applicant expects in the proposed solution. Proposals failing to meet these will be disqualified. "Should" and "may" indicate desirable specifications. A mandatory requirement may be waived if all respondents fail to meet a mandatory requirement.

Applicant reserves the right to waive any irregularities or informalities in the proposals received.

Offerors must accept that Applicant obligations are contingent on appropriation and availability of funds and may be reduced or terminated without penalty if funds are unavailable.

Applicant reserves the right to award all, part, or none of the services set forth in this procurement. This procurement does not obligate the Applicant until a valid agreement and/or valid Purchase Order are executed.

Applicant reserves the right, subject to applicable procurement requirements and E-Rate rules, to make non-material modifications to the awarded contract and to add or remove eligible locations, quantities, equipment, or services when such changes remain within the general scope of the original procurement.

Applicant may, at its sole discretion, extend the due date for the submission of proposals and any extensions shall be made via an addendum posted in the E-Rate Productivity Center (EPC).

The vendor submission is subject to open records requests and, as such, the records will be released in accordance with those policies. Vendors are encouraged to mark pages as "Proprietary" or "Confidential" as appropriate, but the entire submission may not be marked as such. Identifying information as "Proprietary" or "Confidential" does not guarantee that the information will not be released but will be considered in determining whether the information is required to be released in accordance with the open records policies. Generally, pricing is not exempt from being publicly released.

By submitting a proposal, the Offeror certifies that no relationship exists between the Offeror and Applicant that would interfere with fair and open competition or create a conflict of interest.

Evaluation Criteria

These criteria are to be utilized in the evaluation of offers to be considered. Individual criteria have been assigned a weight to reflect relative importance. Vendors are encouraged to provide details in their proposals that address the following criteria.

Criteria	Description	Weight
E-Rate Eligible Costs	Total cost of E-Rate eligible components, including equipment, licenses, installation, shipping, and any associated eligible services, as applicable.	45%
E-Rate Ineligible Costs	Total cost of E-Rate ineligible components, including equipment, licenses, installation, shipping, and any associated eligible services, as applicable.	5%
Technical Compliance and Functionality	Degree to which the proposed solution meets or exceeds the Applicant's functional requirements, performance needs, and technical specifications.	20%
Compatibility with Existing Network Infrastructure	The extent to which the proposed equipment and associated software can integrate with, interoperate with, and be managed alongside the Applicant's existing network environment without requiring significant replacement of existing infrastructure, additional licensing, or substantial operational changes.	20%
Prior Experience	Applicant's/Madison County IT's own experience with this vendor's performance and service quality, if any.	10%