Request for Proposal ClintonBFPL2026 from Bigelow Free Public Library for Category 2 Services for E-rate Funding Year 2027

1. Introduction and Statement of Purpose

Bigelow Free Public Library (Town of Clinton, MA) is seeking bids for Category 2 Services for E-rate funding year 2027. This RFP is being released coincident with E-rate Form 470 #270002370 and it is anticipated that the awarded Service Provider will be required to participate in the E-rate program. More information on the services sought is provided below in Section 4.

Please read the entire RFP carefully to understand the requirements. All RFP requirements must be complied with in order for RFP responses to be considered and evaluated. Vendors not meeting RFP requirements may have their bids disqualified at the discretion of Bigelow Free Public Library/Town of Clinton. The contact for all RFP-related inquiries and correspondence is identified in Section 6, as are conditions for making contact, asking questions, submitting bid responses, etc. Please be sure to comply with these requirements.

The goal of this RFP is to govern a fair and open competitive bid for the goods and services identified in Section 4.

Any updates, corrections, amendments, or addenda to this RFP will be attached to #270002370.

The due date for bid responses, unless otherwise noted in an update, correction, or addenda to this RFP, is Dec 23, 2026.

2. General Information

2.1 Definitions

This section provides definitions for the terminology used in this RFP.

Addendum: a clarification of the requirements of this RFP or the terms used in the RFP without substantively changing any requirements.

Amendment: an officially communicated change to a stated requirement in the scope or other parameters of this RFP including adjustments to any of the associated deadlines.

Applicant: the entity that will file E-rate forms. BFPL is the applicant.

Attachment: Documents that for all intents and purposes are an integral component to this RFP. Attachments provide detailed information pertaining to specific components of this document and

are referenced throughout. Attachments also contain templates that are to be completed and utilized as a part of bids submitted to BFPL by service providers.

Bid: the response of a Service Provider to this RFP. These responses may also be referred to as "bid response(s)," "RFP response(s)," "response(s)," and "Proposal(s)."

Bid process: term for the entire process, extending from the release of the RFP to the selection of and contracting with the awarded service provider.

Bigelow Free Public Library (BFPL): the entity requesting bids in this RFP. Bigelow Free Public Library will administer the contract. It may be identified in this document by name, as "BFPL," or "the applicant."

Billed Entity: the entity that will pay the bills associated with this contract. BFPL is the Billed Entity.

E-rate or **E-rate Program:** the "Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Mechanism," the funding support program established under the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to provide discounts on eligible services to eligible schools and libraries.

FCC: the Federal Communications Commission.

FCCRN: FCC Registration Number.

FRN: Funding Request Number.

Proposed Contract: the contract that would result from the successful selection of a winning vendor and subsequent negotiations. The Proposed contract may also be identified as the "contract" or "final contract." These terms will be used interchangeably.

RFP: Request for Proposals and is the designation for this document and the associated attachments. All the components of the RFP are available via the Form 470 filed by BFPL identified herein covering these services.

Selected Provider: the entity whose bid is selected as the winner following the bid evaluation process. They may also be identified as the "Selected Bidder", "Selected Respondent", "Selected Vendor", "Awarded Bidder", "Awarded Provider", "Awarded Respondent", or "Awarded Vendor." These terms will be used interchangeably.

Service Provider: the entity responding to this RFP. They may be identified as "Service Provider(s)," "Bidder," "Provider(s)," "Respondent," or "Vendor(s)." These terms will be used interchangeably.

Service Start Date: The anticipated service start date (also known as the start of service date) for services requested by this RFP is alternatively defined as: July 1, 2027. There may be flexible service start dates depending on delays in funding commitments or other factors. Any changes in the service start date must be memorialized by both the awarded Service Provider and BFPL.

SLD means the Schools and Libraries Division of the Universal Service Administrative Company.

SPIN means Service Provider Identification Number.

Subcontractor means a person or entity performing or proposed to perform a portion of Service Provider's contract.

USAC or **Administrator** means the Universal Service Administrative Company, which oversees the E-rate program**.**

2.2 Submission Costs

Neither BFPL, or any entities associated with it, including any consultants retained by BFPL, shall be responsible for any costs incurred by any Service Provider or subcontractor receiving or responding to this RFP.

2.3 Confidentiality of Bids

RFP responses will be kept confidential by BFPL and will not be revealed to or discussed with third parties except as required by applicable local, state and federal law or regulations, including all relevant state or federal grant programs. RFP responses may be reviewed or evaluated by independent agents of the members, none of whom shall be affiliated with any provider, and all of whom shall be bound by these confidentiality provisions.

Any and all ideas presented in any RFP proposal may be used by BFPL, whether or not BFPL selects or rejects the RFP proposal. Any financial information that is considered proprietary or confidential by the provider must be clearly marked CONFIDENTIAL FINANCIAL INFORMATION. All other material submitted with an RFP proposal will become the property of BFPL and will be retained at the discretion of the staff of BFPL.

Upon completion of the RFP evaluation process and award of contract(s) to a vendor or vendors, all information submitted to the BFPL may be subject to disclosure pursuant to Massachusetts law and FCC regulations.

2.4 Validity of Proposals

The response deadline for this RFP is Dec 23, 2026. Contracts are expected to be finalized shortly after that date. All responses to the RFP may not be withdrawn and must remain valid from the time of submission until the close of the FY2027 Form 471 filing window

2.5 News Releases

All news releases regarding this project may not be released without the prior written approval of the BFPL.

2.6 Selected Provider Responsibilities

The selected provider(s) will be required to assume full responsibility for all products, services and warranties offered in its RFP proposal, whether or not the services will be provided by the provider or its subcontractors. Further, BFPL will consider the selected provider to be the sole point of contact with regard to all contractual matters.

2.7 Vendor Conference Information

At Bigelow Free Public Library, 54 Walnut St. Clinton, MA, 3pm

3. Important Dates

All proposals must be received not later than December 23, 2026 at 4pm to be considered, in full compliance with the instructions in Section 6. All proposals received after the deadline will not be opened or evaluated and will be discarded. Representative(s) of BFPL will determine the timeliness of all submissions. The timeline is as follows:

October 30, 2026	RFP Release Date
November 5, 2026 @ 3pm or November 7, 2026 @ 11am	Mandatory Vendor Walkthrough
November 13, 2026	Final written questions due by 2pm
November 23, 2026	Written responses to questions anticipated release date.
December 23, 2026	RFP proposals due by 4pm (see Section 6 for submission instructions).
January 8, 2027	Anticipated contract award date.*
July 1, 2027	Anticipated Service Start Date. See Section 4.

* The contract award date will occur no later than the deadline for filing a completed E-Rate Form 471. BFPL reserves the right to modify this schedule in its entirety.

4. Scope of Work

BFPL is seeking the following goods and services (or equivalent):

Updating (& replacing) current Cat 5 cabling with Cat6E, Cat6A, or Cat7 ethernet cabling, plus additional cable runs for Wireless APs and future Voip phones. The project should include installation, testing, and validation for 1 Gpbs (for runs 50m and up) and 10 Gbps speeds (for runs under 50m). Chosen bidder should expect to work with library network provider, CW MARS, for full integration with current equipment.

DATA cabling services, structured cabling. Installation of same.

- Cat6/6A/7 wiring across the building (46 cable runs) so that every device has a dedicated line
    - New cable runs for all desktops, patron computers, peripherals, wireless access points, and staff computers
    - Wiring for current and future printers
    - Cable runs for future Voip Phones (invoiced separately)
    - Run each cable from the switch in the community room data closet to the designated termination point. PC and associated peripherals
    - We would prefer to be able to configure part of the current storage area into a data closet rather than create a new one; this may require moving the cable entry point from the street or adding an additional door and lock
- Wiring back to new rack location, all wires tested & labeled

- Provide & install new rack 12U & patch panels, with room for the security camera server
- Refer to diagram for locations of current and anticipated terminations
- All runs must start from the patch panels, and current location of cable input to the library may be moved to the data closet.
- Runs will primarily be surface mounted.

Everything must be completed by September 15, 2027 or 90 days after the receipt of a funding commitment decision letter, whichever is later

Bid must include price in the included Attachment B. All costs must be included in Attachment B. Any costs not included in Attachment B will not be considered.

Vendor Walkthrough is mandatory. See dates on above schedule

5. Terms and Conditions

The terms and conditions outlined herein may be waived at the sole discretion of BFPL. Service Providers may take exception to terms and conditions through the process outlined in Section 6.

5.1 E-rate Terms and Conditions

It is the intention of BFPL to apply for discounts under the E-rate program for some or all of the services sought in this RFP. Service Providers are required to comply with the requirements of the program, including (but not limited to) those specified herein.

5.1.1 Compliance with Program Rules

All Service Providers responding to this RFP must participate in the E-rate program and must comply with all applicable FCC rules and E-rate requirements. FCC rules and E-rate requirements are accessible via the Administrator's website (http://www.universalservice.org/sl) and/or from the Federal Communications Commission website (http://www.fcc.gov). Providers must be familiar and compliant with all applicable FCC rules and E-rate requirements, including but not limited to: timely filing of all required service provider forms, including Form 498, Form 499-A (annual and quarterly filings to the extent they are applicable); Form 473 (Annual Service Provider Certification, or SPAC); Form 474, Service Provider Invoice Form, which invoices SLD for the E-Rate discount amount; and provision of discounted bills (net of the E-Rate discounts) to BFPL if requested. Service Provider must also comply with all FCC requirements regarding the ban of devices which pose a national security threat.

Service provider must agree that the parties' contract and any subcontracts, amendments, extensions, or other modifications of the contract shall be executed in compliance with all E-rate program requirements (including, but not limited to, those cited herein). Should the Service Provider use subcontractors, the Service Provider is responsible for its subcontractors' compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements associated with the E-rate program and applicable federal, state, and local laws. In addition, the service provider must designate a single point of contact within the service provider's organization to assist in the timely compliance with all E-rate program requirements.

5.1.2 Document Retention, Production of Records, and Audits

The Service Provider must, in compliance with E-rate program rules, retain all documentation associated with their bid and service provided pursuant to this contract for a minimum period of 10 years after the last date to receive service (or whatever retention period is required by the rules at that time). Any and all documents that demonstrate compliance with statutory or regulatory requirements associated with the E-rate program must be retained for this period as well.

Service Provider shall, upon request from either a representative of an authorized state agency, the Federal Communications Commission, the Administrator, their subcontractors, or BFPL, produce those records.

In the event of an audit or other review, Service Provider must receive written consent from BFPL prior to producing or submitting any documents that contain confidential information, such as library records which reveal the identity and/or intellectual pursuits of a library user (see MGL Ch. 78 *§* 7).

5.1.3 Lowest Corresponding Price Rule

Pursuant to federal regulations, Service Providers shall not charge entities participating in the E-rate program a price above the lowest corresponding price for supported services, unless the FCC (with respect to interstate services) or the state commission (with respect to intrastate services) finds that the lowest corresponding price is not compensatory.

5.1.4 Eligible Services

It is the responsibility of the service provider to identify those services that are eligible and those that are ineligible in their response. Eligible and ineligible services (and related equipment) must also be explicitly identified in the RFP response. The Cost Worksheet found in "Attachment B," contains a mechanism for separating eligible and ineligible costs. If a provider is unsure about eligibility, the provider should seek a response from the Schools and Libraries Division of USAC regarding the eligibility of the component of the service; if the provider is still unable to determine the eligibility, the service provider must call this to the attention of BFPL in the RFP response and allow us to jointly research the issue, if necessary. *If any services are incorrectly identified as eligible in the bid response, the service provider must honor the discounted price generated in the Cost Proposal Worksheet for the item(s) which were incorrectly identified as eligible*. BFPL will not pay prices above those generated in the Cost Proposal Worksheet.

5.1.5 SPIN, FCCRN, SAM.gov UEI, and "Red Light" Requirements

Service Providers must have an up-to-date Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN), FCC Registration Number (FCCRN), SAM.gov UEI, and must maintain eligibility to provide services under the E-rate program. The provision and use of multiple SPINs is discouraged. Providers that have multiple SPINs should select a single corporate entity with a single SPIN as the prime contractor submitting the proposal to this RFP. The provider should agree that all E-rate eligible service billing resulting from a contract awarded pursuant to this RFP will be provided under this single SPIN. The provider's SPIN should be included where requested throughout the bid document templates.

Any Service Provider submitting a response must have a valid Federal Communications Commission Registration Number (FCCRN). The FCCRN should be included in the bid proposal. Providers may obtain an FCCRN via the Federal Communications Commission website at https://www.fcc.gov.

Any Service Provider submitting a response must have a valid SAM.gov Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). This UEI must be valid at the time of bid submission and the Service Provider, by submitting a bid response, commits to keeping the UEI valid for the duration of any agreement and subsequent E-rate invoicing window.

Any Service Provider submitting a response must provide documentation of their current "Red Light" status. Documentation of the "Red Light" status can be obtained by the FCC website. The Service Provider will have a continuing obligation to notify BFPL of any change in "Red Light" status and failure to maintain good standing with the FCC and to be classified as on "Red Light" status may constitute grounds for terminating the parties' contract for cause. If a service provider that is currently on "Red Light" status wishes their bid to be considered, the provider must include with their bid response a written explanation of the circumstances that led to being placed on "Red Light" status, indicate what steps have been or are being taken to rectify the situation, and indicate how "Red Light" status would affect the service provider's ability to provide discounts under the E-rate program. Such service providers may have their proposals rejected at the sole discretion of BFPL.

The SPIN, FCCRN, and UEI must be provided as part of the Bid Cover Sheet (see Attachment A). Documentation of the "Red Light" status should be attached to this document as part of the bid response.

5.1.6 Invoicing

The Service Provider must agree to invoice via the method (either via the Service Provider Invoice, Form 472, or the Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement, Form 474) specified by the applicant. Unless the applicant specifies otherwise, the invoicing method to be used for any agreements resulting from this RFP is SPI.

The Service Provider will also clearly identify which charges are E-rate eligible or ineligible either on their bills to the applicant or provide documentation to the applicant specifically identifying which charges on the bill are eligible for E-rate and which charges are ineligible for E-rate.

5.2 Subcontracting

The Service Provider must identify the subcontractors to be used on the project and the work they will perform. Subcontractors are subject to the same general conditions as the prime service provider. BFPL reserves the right to reject any subcontractor based on legitimate business concerns, in their discretion.

The responding Service Provider shall remain responsible for providing the services proposed in their response and shall not assign or divert this responsibility to others. The contracted Service Provider shall bear complete responsibility for all activities of all subcontractors engaged by it. BFPL shall have no obligation to purchase services from or pay for services rendered by subcontractors.

5.3 Security Clearance and Safety Procedures

All personnel (including contractors and subcontractors) that work on this project or provide services in the locations identified herein observe all security and safety procedures for those locations, and must obtain and clear all background and record checks required by law or local rule.

5.4 Funding Contingency

The proposed contract is contingent upon the appropriation of sufficient funds BFPL to pay its portion of the costs as well as receiving funding from appropriate federal, state, and other sources (including, but not necessarily limited to, the E-rate program). If funds are not appropriated, Service Provider agrees to take back any goods furnished, terminate any services, and relieve BFPL of any future obligations under the Proposed Contract upon notice of same.

5.5 Issuer Rights

BFPL reserves the right to:

- Amend, modify, or cancel this RFP or not award any contract;
- Modify or add to the requirements contained in this RFP at any time after the issuance of this RFP, such changes to be complied with by all providers;
- Award a contract for any part of or all parts of the RFP to one or more service providers and negotiate specific terms and conditions to meet requirements consistent with this RFP;
- Utilize any and all ideas submitted in the RFP proposals received;
- Request that providers clarify their RFP proposals;
- Purchase the most cost-effective proposal(s) but not necessarily the lowest-priced proposal(s) in accordance with Massachusetts law and E-Rate rules where price of E-rate eligible services is the factor given the most points in the evaluation of the various factors considered in the evaluation.

5.6 Cancellation Penalties

BFPL shall not pay any penalty or early termination fee, however captioned, in the event of termination for cause or convenience

5.7 Tax Exemption

BFPL is a public entity or private non-profit entity that enjoys certain exemptions from taxes and fees. They are not exempt from all telecommunications taxes and fees, such as the universal service contribution fee. Providers must ensure that their cost worksheets include all applicable taxes and surcharges from which BFPL is not exempt. If a provider needs specific information from BFPL regarding their tax status, please request that information as part of the Q&A process identified herein.

5.8 Requirements for SLA

6. Communications and Bid Submission Information

The requirements of the E-rate program to ensure a fair and open competitive bid process mean that the methods through which Service Providers can communicate with BFPL before and during the bid evaluation process are highly constrained. Therefore, Service Providers who fail to comply with the requirements outlined herein may have their bids disqualified from being evaluated. More information on the E-rate requirements related to the bid process are available from the program administrator's website at https://www.usac.org/sl/.

6.1 How to Submit Questions and Other Communications re: the RFP Process

As outlined in Section 3, there is a formal process for Questions and Answers. Under this process, any and all questions from Service Providers must be submitted via email to mletarte@cwmars.org by November 13, 2026 @ 3pm. Service Providers can submit multiple questions in a single communication and can submit multiple communications should that be necessary. Any questions received outside of this process will be disregarded and may be cause for a Service Provider's bid to be disqualified. Bidding Vendors must attend the Vendor Conference on November 5 @ 3pm or November 7 @ 11am.

BFPL will collect all of the questions received and release a single consolidated Questions and Answers document. This document may combine multiple questions together if deemed appropriate by representatives of BFPL. The consolidated Questions and Answers document will be released once all of the answers are available. It is anticipated that this document will be released no later than November 23, 2026. This questions and answers document will be posted as outlined in Section 1. If no questions are asked, or all of the questions asked are already answered in this RFP, then, at the discretion of BFPL, no questions and answers document will be posted.

6.2 How to Submit a Bid Response

Bid responses must be submitted by the time and in the manner specified herein. Bids which are not submitted in the manner and format specified may be disqualified.

Bids must be submitted by email to mletarte@cwmars.org by December 23, 2026 @ 4pm. All submissions must be complete and cannot incorporate outside documents by reference; any documents which the Service Providers wishes to include with the bid response (including, for example, sample contracts, terms of use, other documents) must be submitted with the bid.

6.3 Requirements for Bid Response

6.3.1 Required Structure of Bid Response

The Service Provider's response must include (at a minimum) the following five components:

1) A completed bid cover sheet (the bid cover sheet template is attached to this document as attachment A)

2) A completed cost worksheet (the cost worksheet is attached to this document as attachment B)

3) A completed list of RFP exceptions document (the exceptions template is attached to this document as attachment C). Note that the acceptance of exceptions is at the sole discretion of BFPL, and if exceptions are taken in this document which are not acceptable to BFPL then the vendor bid may be rejected as non-responsive.

4) Information about the Service Provider, including, at a minimum, a summary of the equipment being included in the bid response, a plan for implementation (if applicable), information on the Service Provider's past experience with E-rate, information on the Service Provider's past experience with providing similar services, and information on the Service Provider's customer service plan. This document can also include an additional description of the services or equipment they are providing, including any technical specifications. If the Service Provider is offering items in their bid that are different from those specified in Section 4, information explicitly indicating why the equipment bid is equivalent to or superior to the equipment specified in Section 4 is strongly encouraged. In addition, this document should include information on how the equipment included in the bid response meets the requirements outlined in Section 4, such as interoperability, specific protocols identified, etc.

5) A minimum of two references for similar projects (preferably projects where the customer participated in the E-rate program).

These components can be submitted as separate documents (numbered accordingly) or can be consolidated and submitted as a single document, where each section is clearly identified. If submitting as separate documents, the documents (with the exception of the cost worksheet) should be submitted in PDF format; the cost worksheet should be submitted in its original format. If the documents are submitted as a consolidated PDF document, we do require that the cost worksheet also be submitted as a separate document in its original format. *Any responses which do not include the cost worksheet in its original format may be disqualified.* All PDF documents submitted must be OCR'd for character recognition.

Any bid response which is missing one or more of these components may be considered non-responsive and be disqualified.

7. Bid Evaluation Overview

The E-rate program has strict requirements for the bid evaluation process. BFPL has designed the following bid evaluation process to meet the requirements of the E-rate program and to meet the requirements of this project. Questions about the evaluation process should be submitted as part of the process outlined in Section 6.1.

7.1 Bid Evaluation Process

The bid evaluation process will be a multi-step process. First, BFPL will review each bid to confirm that it was submitted on time, includes all of the components outlined in Section 6.3, and meets the other requirements (including the terms and conditions) outlined in this document. Any bid

responses failing to meet any requirement outlined herein may be considered non-responsive and rejected or disqualified at this stage at the sole discretion of BFPL.

Second, those bids which were found to be responsive to the RFP will be evaluated. The evaluation process will have each bid scored based on a series of bid evaluation criteria (see Section 7.2). The scoring will be done by one or more representatives of BFPL. The winning bid will be the bid with the highest score based on the criteria. Once a winning bid has been determined, BFPL will reach out to the winning Service Provider to put in place a contract. If BFPL and the winning Service Provider are unable to reach a contract in a reasonable amount of time, BFPL will reach out to the second highest scoring vendor to negotiate a contract. This process will continue until a contract is executed.

7.2 Bid Evaluation Criteria

The criteria used to evaluate the various bids will include (but not necessarily be limited to) the following:

- Price of E-rate Eligible Goods and Services
- Price of E-rate Ineligible Goods and Services
- Exceptions Taken to RFP and Contract Conditions
- Technical Quality of the Goods and Services Bid
- Reputation/Past Performance of the Service Provider
- References

Evaluation Criteria out of 10 points	
Price of e-rate eligible goods & services	6
References and Past performance of service provider	2
Price of e-rate ineligible goods & services	1
Exceptions taken to the RFP & Contract conditions	1

The Price of E-rate Eligible Goods and Services will be weighted most heavily out of the criteria included in the bid evaluation.

Attachment A: Bid Response Cover

By signing below, the Service Provider's representative certifies on behalf of the Service Provider that:

- Signatory has the legal authority to bind the Service Provider responding to the RFP; to provide the services subject to the RFP, and to provide those services under the name of the holder of the Service Provider Information Number ("SPIN") listed below; and
- Signatory has read and agrees to the RFP requirements, terms and conditions set forth in the RFP (with the exception of anything specifically noted as an exception); and
- The prices in the Service Provider's Proposal have been arrived at independently, and have not been divulged, discussed, or compared with the Proposals of other respondents. No attempt has been made or will be made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not submit a Proposal for the purpose of restricting competition; and
- Service Provider certifies that neither the Service Provider or its principals; its subcontractors or their principals are or have been suspended or debarred from the E-rate program; and
- Service Provider certifies that there are no free products or services offered in conjunction with this proposal; and
- Service Provider confirms that <insert entity name> will not be responsible for any costs expressly included in the Cost Worksheet; and
- That the information included below regarding the Service Provider is accurate and complete:

Service Provider Identification Number:	
Entity Name Associated with SPIN: (available at http://www.sl.universalservice.org/Forms/SPIN_Contact_Search.asp)	
FCC Registration Number (from FCC.gov):	
Unique Entity Identifier (from SAM.gov):	

On behalf of _____

Signatory name	Signatory title
Signature of signatory	Date