SERVICE SPECIFICATIONS FOR DEDICATED INTERNET ACCESS

Applicant: **Hardin Independent School District**
BEN: **141340**
Form 470 #: **270002749**
Form 470 Contacts: **Rod Drake - rdrake@hardinisd.net**
Patty Hollingsworth – phollingsworth@e-ratecentral.com
E-Rate Central – txerate@e-ratecentral.com

Procurement Timeline

Task	Due Date
Issue Date	See Form 470 Certification Date
Deadline to Submit Questions	Thursday, November 12, 2026, by noon 12:00 PM*
Posting of Questions/Clarifications	Thursday, November 12, 2026
Proposal Submission Deadline	Thursday, December 10, 2026, by 2:00 PM*

** All times are Central Time*

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.

Proposal Instructions

Proposals **must** be submitted via email 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 in xlsx format / Vendor pricing

Proposals **must** include **all** costs associated with providing service, including but not limited to:

- Monthly recurring charges (MRC) include any recurring charge related to delivering the services, such as monthly charges for Internet access, IP addresses, basic terminating equipment, etc.
- Non-Recurring Charges (NRC) include any one-time fee other than special construction charges. This includes but is not limited to installation charges, connection charges, and/or basic terminating equipment charges.
- Special Construction Charges (SPC) include one-time costs for deploying new fiber or upgrading network facilities for eligible entities. These charges are non-recurring and include the following components: construction of network facilities, design and engineering, and project management. Offerors should provide special construction details sufficient to support E-Rate review, including route feet, cost per foot, and plant mix where applicable.
- Failure to identify the monthly recurring, non-recurring, and special construction charges will result in the disqualification of the proposal. Respondents are encouraged to provide the estimated taxes and surcharges associated with the service. Submissions indicating that there may be additional MRC, NRC, or SPC related to delivering the services **WILL** be disqualified.

Submission of the completed Pricing Attachment provided with this solicitation is encouraged.

When submitting the Pricing Attachment, offerors shall provide it as a Microsoft Excel-compatible file (.xlsx). Offerors may use any spreadsheet application capable of saving in .xlsx format (e.g., Microsoft Excel, Google Sheets, LibreOffice Calc).

- To ensure all offers are evaluated on an equal basis, Offerors must not alter the Pricing Attachment's structure (rows, columns, line-item descriptions, order, headings, or formulas) and must enter pricing only in the designated cells.
- Offerors may also submit a PDF copy for reference. The .xlsx file will be used for evaluation and will control if there is a discrepancy.

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.

Applicant reserves the right to consider its existing service as a standing proposal and evaluate it against the other submitted proposals.

Service Requirements

Applicant **requires** a minimum of 2 Gbps fully managed, symmetrical bandwidth Dedicated Internet Access with Transport service to the location specified in the Pricing Attachment. Service providers are requested to submit offers for incremental bandwidths from 2 Gbps up to 5 Gbps.

Offerors **must** provide static IP addresses.

Offerors should provide router lease options and pricing.

To be considered, services **must** be within the specified bandwidth range. In addition to the specified minimum and maximum bandwidths, Service Providers are encouraged to offer a variety of bandwidth options within this range. Refer to the provided Pricing Attachment for the requested service levels. If the exact bandwidths listed are not available, vendors should include their closest comparable service level for consideration.

Submissions meeting any of the three (3) numbered criteria **WILL** be disqualified.

1. Solution does **NOT** offer at least the minimum bandwidth.
2. Solution does **NOT** offer bandwidth dedicated to the applicant but instead, the bandwidth is dependent on the number of other customers on the network or some other factor that does not, generally, guarantee the minimum bandwidth as a committed information rate (CIR).
3. Solution includes caps on data usage or slows speeds based on data usage or other factors.

All solutions must terminate service or infrastructure at the demarcation point within the building, generally, the MDF. Solutions that only bring service to the property line but not to the demarcation point will be disqualified. The agreement must terminate service at an MDF designated by the Applicant. The Offeror should specify the exact demarcation setup included in the base fees, such as wall-mounted CPE and CAT6a handoff, rack mount patch panel, etc.

Offerors must accept responsibility for site delivery, construction, permitting, pathway, and right-of-way costs required to deliver service.

Contract Term and Modifications

Services are needed effective July 1, 2027. If the service cannot be guaranteed by this date, this should be indicated in the proposal, along with an estimated timeline for when the service will be available.

Service providers submitting proposals for contracted service are requested to provide 36-month pricing. Unless otherwise stated, the customer can voluntarily extend the agreement for two (2) additional twelve (12) month terms. Offers requiring an initial term of more than 60 months will not be considered.

All contracts should permit bandwidth increases during the term. Any such increases, including those during optional renewal periods, will be treated as modifications to the existing agreement rather than new agreements and, therefore, will **NOT** extend the contract's term.

All contracts should include a provision allowing for early termination of circuits without penalty if a location is closed by the Applicant.

All contracts should include a clause allowing additional sites to be added at the existing MRC for the duration of the agreement, with the Applicant covering any one-time charges related to adding the new site to the network. Any additional sites added will have the same end date as the main agreement.

No price increases will be permitted during the term of the agreement.

Service providers 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 life of the contract.

Subject to contract restrictions, services may be reevaluated for cost-effectiveness at any time during the life of the agreement including renewal periods.

E-Rate Specific Considerations/Information

All respondents must be a registered vendor with USAC and have a USAC issued 498 ID (formerly Service Provider Identification Number-SPIN).

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, the vendor certifies that the proposed products and services comply with 47 C.F.R. §§ 54.9 and 54.10, which prohibit the use of Universal Service Fund support to purchase, obtain, maintain, improve, modify, or otherwise support any equipment or services produced or provided by a company on the FCC's Covered List (including Huawei and ZTE) as 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.

Pursuant to 47 C.F.R. §§ 54.500(f) and 54.511(b), service providers may not charge applicants a price above the Lowest Corresponding Price (LCP) for supported services. LCP is the lowest price a service provider charges to nonresidential customers similarly situated to a particular 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

All proposals submitted must comply with the Texas Administrative Code §109.41 and §109.5001 regarding purchasing guidelines outlined in the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide Module 5: Purchasing. See https://tea.texas.gov/finance-and-grants/financial-accountability/financial-accountability-system-resource-guide

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 Applicant until a valid agreement and/or valid Purchase Order is executed.

The Applicant reserves the right to request Best and Final Offers (BAFOs) from one or more Offerors. BAFOs must be received by the date and time specified during discussions or negotiations. If an Offeror does not submit a BAFO by the stated deadline, the Applicant will evaluate that Offeror based on its originally submitted proposal. If BAFOs are requested, the Applicant reserves the right to conduct a subsequent evaluation and scoring of proposals, including any revised pricing and other information submitted in response to the BAFO request, in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth in this solicitation.

Applicant may, at its sole discretion, extend the due date for the submission of proposals and any extensions shall be done 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.

The request for proposal and the awarded offeror’s response may become an integral part of the resultant contract.

By submitting a proposal, the Offeror certifies that no relationship exists between the Offeror and Applicant that would interfere with a fair and open competition or is 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	Weight
Price of Eligible Products and Services: E-Rate eligible recurring and one-time costs	**30%**
Price of Ineligible Products and Services: including total long-term cost to the district	**5%**
Service/Product meets and understands the requested needs: Ability of the proposed solution to meet the scope, specifications, and requirements of this solicitation	**15%**
Past relationship with vendor: Applicant's previous experience with vendor	**25%**
Quality of vendor's service/product: including service level and proximity of vendor staff	**15%**
Reputation of vendor and vendor's service/product	**10%**