Request for Proposal:

HCP# 65394

FCC Healthcare Connect Fund

RFP ID#: RHC46100023456



Point of Contact:

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American Health Association, LLC
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1 Introduction

1.1 PURPOSE

This document seeks proposals for service, equipment, and maintenance support items in full accordance with the guidelines issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) as administered by the Universal Services Administrative Company (USAC).

1. Network equipment necessary to make broadband services functional
2. Equipment necessary to manage, control, or maintain broadband service or dedicated healthcare broadband network
3. Fiber-related service
4. Direct Internet Access
5. Circuits
6. Maintenance support

It is anticipated that the consortium may add new members to expand its network, substitute sites, and receive service upgrades. In response to this RFP, vendors must state such circumstances may occur within their contract.

1.2 ENTITY INFORMATION

Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN), part of Jefferson Health, is an integrated health network serving 10 counties in eastern Pennsylvania. LVHN operates 15 hospital campuses along with numerous health centers, more than 20 JeffExpress Urgent Care and ExpressCARE locations, and more than 13 community clinics. Through Lehigh Valley Physician Group, LVHN employs more than 2,000 primary care and specialty physicians and more than 800 advanced practice clinicians. LVHN combined with Jefferson Health in 2024; the combined system includes 33 hospitals and 65,000 colleagues across the Lehigh Valley, Delaware Valley, northeastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey.

The Lehigh Valley Health Network Consortium (HCP# 65394) includes 24 participating sites: 7 urban hospitals, 10 rural hospitals and clinics, and the data center and administrative sites that support the network.

LVHN's mission is to improve lives.

Sites included in this Consortium:

HCP# 65394; LEHIGH VALLEY HEALTH NETWORK CONSORTIUM		
HCP#	**Site**	**Address**
21972	Lehigh Valley Hospital-Schuylkill S. Jackson Street	420 South Jackson Street, Pottsville, PA 17901
35291	Lehigh Valley Hospital - Pocono	206 East Brown Street, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301
50119	Valley Forge Data Ctr	1000 Adams Ave, Norristown, PA 19403
65396	LVHN ExpressCare - Tobyhanna	100 Community Drive, Suite 102, Tobyhanna, PA 18466
65397	LVHP Rehabilitation Services - Tobyhanna	100 Community Dr, Suite 105, Tobyhanna, PA 18466
65400	LVPG Family Medicine - Kutztown	333 Normal Avenue, Kutztown, PA 19530
65401	LVPG Family Medicine - Pine Grove	121 S Tulpehocken Street, Pine Grove , PA 17963
65403	Health Center at Blakeslee	5683 Route 115, Blakeslee, PA 18610
65470	Lehigh Valley Hospital-Hazleton	700 East Broad Street, Hazleton, PA 18201
65474	Lehigh Valley Hospital Schuylkill E. Norwegian Street	700 East Norwegian Street, Pottsville, PA 17901
65476	LVHN Data Center #1 (PRIM.)	2024 Lehigh St, Allentown, PA 18103
65477	LVHN Data Center #2 (SEC.)	1770 Bathgate Dr, Bethlehem PA 18017
65478	LVHN Admin Site	2100 Mack Blvd, Allentown PA 18103
65480	LVHN Admin Site #2	707 Hamilton St, Allentown, PA 18101
65481	LVHN IS Admin	515 Hamilton St, Allentown, PA 18101
66115	LVPG Family Medicine - Frackville	10 East Spruce Street, Frackville, PA 17931
91518	LVH-M C-19 (Lehigh Valley Hospital - Muhlenberg)	2545 Schoenersville Rd, Bethlehem, PA 18017

94094	Coordinated Health Bethlehem Hospital	2310 Highland Ave, Bethlehem, PA 18020
94098	Coordinated Health Hospital of Allentown	1503 North Cedar Crest Blvd, Allentown, PA 18104
94462	LVHN TierPoint Allentown (Data Center)	9999 Hamilton Blvd, Breinigsville, PA 18031
135741	Family Medicine Physician	101 E 10th St. Jim Thorpe PA 18229
135981	JeffExpress Urgent Care-Lehighton	1205 Blakeslee Blvd Dr E; Lehighton, PA 18235
135982	Health Center at Carbon	2226 Blakeslee Blvd. Drive E.; Lehighton, PA 18235
135983	Lehigh Valley Hospital - Carbon	2128 Blakeslee Blvd Drive E, Lehighton, PA 18235

2 General Provisions

1. The bidding period is 28 days from the day it is posted on the USAC web site. The proposal evaluation period is anticipated to be 20 business days or less.

2. The Healthcare Connect Fund Order requires that proposers obtain a Service Provider Identification Number (498 ID). This may be obtained from USAC at http://www.usac.org/sp/default.aspx. This 498ID must be included in the Service Provider's Proposal.

3. To warrant consideration for an award of contract resulting from this RFP, proposers must agree to participation in the FCC Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF) as administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) mechanism as provided for and authorized under the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 (Reference 47 U.S.c. § 254, "Universal Service").

4. Lehigh Valley Health Network will contract directly with the service provider of record. The proposer must hold the 498 ID/SPIN under which the service will be billed and must be represented directly. Brokers, commissioned agents, and third parties submitting another provider's services for commission or other compensation will not be considered. A service provider that purchases underlying facilities or last-mile access from another carrier is not a broker or agent for purposes of this provision, provided it is the billing entity of record.

5. Lehigh Valley Health Network may seek clarification concerning the submitted proposal.

6. Vendors are responsible for ascertaining pertinent legal requirements and restrictions. Vendors are encouraged to visit the official FCC website pertaining to the Healthcare Connect Fund, at: http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/rural-health-care#HCF.

7. Vendors acknowledge that any contractual relationship resulting from this solicitation of proposals may be partially or entirely dependent upon the successful receipt of HCF subsidies.

8. In accordance with the Site and Substitution Rules found in the Order (47 C.F.R §54.646), Lehigh Valley Health Network will extend this RFP to include new healthcare providers that become new members of our consortium during the length of this agreement.

9. This RFP may become part of the contract with the selected proposer(s) for services. The proposer(s) will be bound to perform according to the terms of this RFP and their proposals. The contract is to be a consortium-level contract, and Lehigh Valley Health Network will sign the contract for all locations.

10. In some cases, bids are being requested for connections and services that already have circuits in place and are under existing contracts. Vendors holding these contracts may view this RFP as an opportunity to extend or expand what is already in place and under existing contract. Otherwise, services from existing service providers will be used as a standing bid response to this RFP. If existing vendors' bids are deemed to be the most "cost-effective," the existing vendors' solutions may be selected with whatever contract modifications are required to meet the new circumstances and HCF rules. New vendors are welcome to bid on services.

11. Quotes may be requested for variable levels of service. This will enable Lehigh Valley Health Network to weigh the pros and cons of higher levels of service against the additional cost incurred. However, it is recognized that for a variety of reasons, different service providers will have different increments of service that they can provide. Vendors should feel free to quote the increments of service (even if not identical to what is in our request) they are in a position to deploy. Where variable service levels are quoted, the HCP will first determine the bandwidth level required at each site, and bid proposals will then be evaluated against the criteria in Section 5 at that level.

12. The technology requested in this RFP is neutral; however, the proposer must submit responses that are equivalent to services requested.

13. In those circumstances in which variable levels of bandwidth are being requested and quoted, vendors will be asked to incorporate the variable bandwidth levels and associated costs into the contract in order to allow HCPs to "turn up their bandwidths" without the need to engage in a new competitive bidding process.

14. Frequently, sites have completed their original contract term and have the benefit of being month-to-month, while maintaining their originally contracted rate. HCP is requesting various term lengths for review to meet needs. Various requested bid contract terms include month-to-month or up to 3 years. HCP may require 3 year agreements to include 2 one year extensions to be exercised at the sole discretion of the HCP.

15. Service providers understand their responsibility to sign, certify, and submit proper invoices and documentation (included submitting bills for services with a breakdown of eligible and ineligible services) to be reimbursed. The invoicing deadline is 6 months after the end of the commitment period.

16. HCP may choose multiple service providers for the same requested service if redundant services are desired.

17. Services requested may require diverse service providers for redundancy. The HCP reserves the right to choose the service provider that would allow the HCP this diverse network solution. HCP may select multiple service providers for the same requested service type if redundant services are desired.

18. HCP reserves the right not to award a bid from this RFP if it appears the lowest cost solution has not been submitted.

19. Service Provider may be required to acknowledge TSP (Telecom Service Priority) for all circuits, at the time of submission.

3 Scope of RFP

3.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT & IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Due to incumbent services providers already providing services, parts of this may not apply to incumbents. New Service Provider Bidders shall include a detailed Project Management Plan. The detailed Project Management Plan shall include narrative information and detailed project milestone and schedule information. The New Service Provider Bidder shall include an estimated start and completion date for the project. New Service Provider Bidders shall outline their implementation plan for the project described in the RFP. The plan shall include timetables that address the following issues:

Project Management: Provide a description of the Bidder's management team for this project. List all key personnel and their qualifications.

Project Schedule: Provide an implementation schedule for the proposed service, including delivery dates, implementation milestones, task relationships and dependencies, and a timeline.

Broadband System (Private Intranet) and public Internet Services System Architecture and Development: Provide descriptions of how the service(s) will be designed, including:

1. Details of customer testing and final implementation;

2. Extent to which broadband (private Intranet) and public Internet connectivity to participating Lehigh Valley Health Network entities will be guaranteed;

3. How the private Intranet and public Internet service will deliver differentiated levels of service depending on the different bandwidth needs;

4. Quality of service (QoS) requirements of the Lehigh Valley Health Network users.

3.2 EQUIPMENT, INSTALLATION, AND MAINTENANCE

All equipment, installation, and maintenance used to implement and maintain the Lehigh Valley Health Network network must meet the specified services required to maintain the high standard of healthcare established by Lehigh Valley Health Network. Any deviation from the specified service and/or equipment may result in the submitted proposal being rejected.

1. **Equipment:** Any and all equipment necessary to make the service functional, and costs associated with said equipment, must be included in the proposal submitted. The vendor(s) will be responsible for all network hardware purchasing and maintenance to terminate the new connection at the premise and provide a single point of demarcation.

2. **Implementation/Installation:** Costs associated with the implementation of services must be defined and expressed within the bid proposal. Any potential installation costs shall be estimated and included in the proposal. The consortium understands that precise installation costs cannot be ascertained until detailed discussion occurs; however, if there will be installation costs, they must be estimated and included in the proposal. Failure to estimate any potential costs associated with equipment or services will be acknowledgment that no such costs will be included in the proposal.

   Vendor(s) may be required to purchase local access from the local exchange carrier to complete last-mile connectivity to nearest point of presence (POP). The end user site would be responsible for internal wiring and connection to the room locations. The vendor will be responsible for all network hardware purchasing and maintenance in accordance with the site needs. The vendor shall provide network services in a manner that meets HIPAA requirements concerning telecommunications.

3. **Maintenance:** Any and all costs (monthly or annual) associated with network maintenance and/or support must be included in the bid proposal submitted. Failure to include any and all maintenance and/or support costs is an acknowledgment that no such costs will be included in the proposal. Bidders shall provide details of all maintenance activities and how assistance will be provided to Lehigh Valley Health Network users.

3.3 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA)

The Vendor must be able to guarantee that the requested services are included in the SLA for each dedicated connection requested. If Vendor parameters are different from below, please provide those parameters for review to be optionally accepted by HCP. If the parameters, listed below, cannot be met after the point of implementation, the consortium reserves the right to terminate any and all contracts due to failure to meet service requirements.

1. Specified or equivalent equipment for each site.

2. Administrative network security policy and operational requirements for data transport that meets HIPAA security and privacy requirements of State and Federal regulations and statutes.

3. Support for standards-based encryption protocols.

4. Requirements defined for common technical standards and operational procedures to maintain system reliability, relevant parameters include:

    a. An average end-to-centralized consortium hub site delay of less than (<) 20 milliseconds.

    b. Provide less than (<) 0.1% packet loss.

    c. Provide less than (<) 20 milliseconds jitter (delay variance).

    d. Provide greater than (>) or equal to 99.99% network availability.

Proposed system testing and acceptance provisions will be required on all bid proposals. Lehigh Valley Health Network reserves the right to work in concert with vendors to develop appropriate test and acceptance criteria for a specific installation or configuration, to be defined and accepted by both parties prior to contract initiation.

3.4 INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

HCP may request proof of service provider's insurance and request changes as necessary. HCP reserves the right to withdraw an award if service provider does not meet minimum insurance requirements.

4 Instructions to Bidders

4.1 NOTICE OF INTENT TO BID

A letter signifying the bidder's intent to bid on this project must be received via email no later than 5PM EST 5 days after the RFP is posted for bidding. The subject line of the “Letter of Intent” must be titled, “HCP 65394; Lehigh Valley Health Network RFP ID#: RHC46100023456– Letter of Intent to Bid” and be sent to the RFP Point of Contact:

Gabriel Thrasher

American Health Association, LLC

Email: g.thrasher@ahaosp.com

All emails must state the HCP#, Health System and RFP ID#, as noted above, in the subject line. Emails not including the correct subject line may not receive responses.

The following information shall be included in the email:

a) Name and address of the company;

b) The company's authorized representative's name, title, address, phone, email address, and 498 ID. Only bidders submitting such a notice will be eligible and receive responses to questions submitted by all bidders concerning this RFP.

Emails not including this requested information above may not receive responses. No responses to vendors will be acknowledged, until a letter of intent has been received.

Questions concerning this RFP shall be submitted to the RFP Point of Contact via email. Vendors are invited to submit written questions and/or requests, interpretations, consideration, or acceptance concerning this RFP by 5PM EST on the 5th business day following the posting of the RFP. Any communications not sent to the RFP Point of contact via email will not be entertained. In addition, the subject line of the email must state “HCP 65394; Lehigh Valley Health Network RFP ID#: RHC46100023456”. Emails not including the correct subject line and/or incorrect data may not receive responses.

Proposers that choose to communicate directly with the HCP during the 28-day bidding period regarding the RFP, rather than follow this process may be disqualified.

All questions and responses will be shared with all bidders who have submitted a letter of intent to bid as outlined in section 4.1 above via email.

In the event it becomes necessary to amend, add to, or delete any part of the RFP, the amendment will be posted on the USAC website. All bidders who provided a letter of intent to bid as outlined in section 4.1 may be notified of the revision.

4.2 PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposer is the person responding to the RFP.

1. Provide name, address, telephone number, email address, 498 ID, and any other relevant contact information.
2. Service Provider must state last mile vendor with submission.
3. State non-recurring cost and identify what the cost covers. Include all estimated taxes, surcharges, and fees, if applicable.
4. State monthly recurring cost of each requested service, separately identified, including all estimated taxes, surcharges, and fees, if applicable.
5. Provide name(s) of billing party/parties.
6. Provide sample bill for services. Explain whether services will require multiple accounts with your company.
7. Provide the Universal Service 498 ID of billing party/parties and indicate whether the billing party/parties have complied with all USAC requirements to participate in the Healthcare Connect Fund program.
8. Affirm that any and all hardware provided will be new and not refurbished equipment, as well as a listing of such equipment.
9. Provide the process for HCP to report any problems with the facilities, circuits, network, and telecommunications services including the minimum response time that can be expected. Also, state response time for arrival of an on-site technician for troubleshooting, if required.
10. The contract term shall commence on the later of July 1 of the funding year for which the bid is proposed, or the date service is installed and accepted at each individual site, and shall end on June 30 of the final year of the agreement. Billing for each site shall begin upon acceptance of service at that site; delayed installation at one site shall not delay commencement or billing at other sites. Proposers acknowledge that program support is available only for eligible services delivered within the applicable funding year.
11. Bid proposals must be sent via email to RFP Point of Contact email address no later than midnight EST on the final day of the 28-day posting period as shown on the USAC website: https://rhc.usac.org/hcf/public/searchPosted.htm.
12. All responses for services and costs MUST be submitted on the Circuit List provided with this RFP, completed in accordance with the instructions stated on that document, in EXCEL format. Any submission that does not use the Circuit List format may be eliminated from review. Must state last mile vendor on each service line.
13. New bidders must confirm, for each service line bid, that TSP (Telecommunications Service Priority) is included in the quoted cost. This confirmation must be stated per line on the Excel Circuit List submitted with the bid.

14. Service Provider must state last mile vendor with submission.

4.3 BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS AND REFERENCES

The below only applies to <u>new vendors</u> not currently providing the services requested in this RFP to Lehigh Valley Health Network.

Bidders shall demonstrate their ability and competency to complete the project. A brief description of the Bidder's company and services offered shall be submitted in addition to responses to each of the items below (responses shall correspond to the numerical order outlined below):

1. Full legal company name.
2. Year business was established.
3. Number of people currently employed.
4. Most recent annual report, if a public company.
5. A description of the qualifications, experience, capability, and/or capacity of the Bidder to successfully provide the broadband service and complete the project in a timely manner.
6. A description of the qualifications of the members of the proposed project team that will be assigned to the project.
7. Information on current broadband clients including total number of current clients.
8. Contact information for three in-state healthcare provider references from projects similar in size, application, and scope and a brief description of their broadband installations.

4.4 PRICING AND COST INFORMATION

Vendors submitting proposals shall identify all costs associated with the solution being quoted. All hardware shall be new and not refurbished equipment. Bids must be accompanied by sufficient descriptive literature and/or specifications to clearly identify the item and provide for competitive evaluation. Quotes shall include the following:

1. Implementation fees, including purchase of required new hardware for end-to-end connectivity and initial configuration of network hardware.
2. Ongoing transmission fees for end-to-end connectivity.
3. Ongoing manufacturer maintenance for the new hardware that will be purchased.
4. Any other costs associated with the solution that may add cost to participants.
5. Pricing for services or equipment that include an ineligible component must be provided for comparable services or piece of equipment that includes only eligible components. Ineligible components/ services will not be covered by USAC.
6. The cost for a) owning and b) leasing any proposed equipment.

Bid proposals shall identify all costs that are included in bid with sufficient detail as to confirm the proposed solution, including installation, configuration, maintenance, and any recurring costs, complies with the Healthcare Connect Fund's eligibility requirements. Purchase price for each unit. Bundled pricing may be cited, but individual components must be identified and detailed pricing provided. Shipping cost for each unit or shipment shall be included as well.

Any and all costs incurred by Vendor(s) in preparing and submitting a proposal are responsibility of the Vendor(s) and shall not be charged to the consortium or reflected as an expense of the resulting contracts.

All bid proposals must adhere to USAC invoicing requirements and formats.

5 Proposal Evaluation

The selection will be based on all factors indicated in this section and may not go to the lowest bidder if cost is outweighed by a combination of other features in the winning vendor's bid. The percentage scale listed below will determine the most cost-effective solution for Lehigh Valley Health Network.

Criterion	Weight
Price	25%
Prior experience, including past performance	20%
Management capability, including solicitation compliance	20%
Leverage existing resources	20%
One Vendor Solution	15%

Lehigh Valley Health Network reserves the right to select bid proposals which, in the sole judgment of the Lehigh Valley Health Network, most nearly conforms to the specifications set forth herein.

Lehigh Valley Health Network, in its sole and complete discretion, may reject any and all proposals received as a result of this RFP and reserves the right to award all or part of the bid as to best serve the interest of the health system.

Lehigh Valley Health Network reserves the right to waive any and all issues of form or presentation in considering bid presentations for acceptance or rejection, if, in the sole opinion of the Lehigh Valley Health Network, such waiver is in the best interests of the project.

The selection decisions made by Lehigh Valley Health Network and reported to USAC under this RFP are final, and appeals or re-submissions will not be considered. Changes in applicable laws and rules may affect the award process or any resulting contracts.

Only chosen service provider(s) will be contacted following the ACSD. Non-selected service providers that request results regarding this process during or after the conclusion of the ACSD may be penalized for failure to follow instructions.

Services &/or Equipment Sought in this RFP

A Circuit List detailing per-site services, bandwidths, service types and terms may be posted with this RFP on the USAC website and forms part of this RFP. If a Circuit List is not posted with this RFP, it will be provided by email to any vendor requesting it from the RFP Point of Contact at any time during the bidding period. The services identified in the Circuit List, together with the services noted in the Form 461 posting — including various bandwidths of internet, data connectivity, and network management and risk mitigation (day-to-day management and monitoring of the Core and Edge network equipment at the HCPs mentioned in this RFP, and monitoring and maintenance of WAN systems and carrier device triage at all locations) — are the services sought in this RFP.

It is understood that any ports or other equipment necessary to enable these services are being requested. These are minimum services requested and the equivalent may be submitted.

It is understood that these may not be the only services sought at these sites and that the HCP may require a no common point of failure requirement before selecting a service provider. Multiple service providers may be chosen at a site for redundancy. ***Current vendors supplying HCP with other services may not be selected if redundancy is required.***

If providing a quote as a new vendor, please note the last mile carrier with your submission.