Benefis Health System Consortium
FCC Healthcare Connect Fund

HCP 132566

Benefis Health System

1101 20th Street South
Great Falls, MT 59405

Tyler Webb

Project Coordinator

406-455-4939

https://www.benefis.org/

Benefis Health Systems (Benefis Health) is seeking bids for telecom services under the FCC's Healthcare Connect Fund. Benefis Health System Consortium is comprised of eleven (5) locations. Benefis Health is committed to fulfilling their mission: to improve community health and quality of life. All of the locations are in Montana. This RFP addresses the telecommunications and perimeter hardware of these locations.

Benefis Health is seeking to create a network that will allow all location to communicate with each other. The networks requested should be in a point-to-multiple point arrangement and Internet connections at each location.

Billing Party
Benefis Health System

ATTN: ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

1101 26th St South

Great Falls, MT 59405

General Project Summary

1. 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").
2. 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.

3. Benefis Health System will contract directly with organizations capable of performing the requirements of this RFP. Proposers must be represented directly. Participation by brokers or commissioned agents will not be allowed during this proposal process.
4. Benefis Health is not responsible for any costs incurred by a vendor related to the preparation or delivery of the proposal, or any other activities carried out by the vendor as it relates to this RFP. Changes in applicable laws and rules may affect the award process or any resulting contracts. 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.
5. Benefis Health may seek clarifications concerning the submitted proposal.

6. If Benefis Health fails to enter into a contract before the winning proposal expires and there is a change in the offered pricing, Benefis Health reserves the right to reopen the RFP for new proposals. If Benefis Health elects to do this another Form 461, along with the RFP, will be reposted on USAC's portal.
7. This RFP will become part of the contract for services with the selected proposer(s). 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 Benefis Health will sign the contract for all locations.
8. The bidding period is 28 days from the day this RFP is posted on the USAC web site. The proposal evaluation period is anticipated to be 5 business days.
9. In some cases, bids are being requested for connections/services that already have circuits in place and are under existing contracts. Vendors holding these contracts should view this RFP as an opportunity to extend or expand what is already in place and under existing contract(s). 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. This does not mean that existing vendors will be given priority. New vendors are welcome to bid.
10. Quotes are being requested for variable levels of service. This will enable the Benefis Health 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 service increments available than those indicated in this RFP. Vendors should feel free to quote the increments of service that they are in a position to deploy, even if not identical to what is in the RFP.
11. In those circumstances for which variable levels of bandwidth are being requested and quoted, vendors will be asked to incorporate those variable bandwidth levels and associated costs into their contract in order to allow HCPs to "turn up their bandwidths" without the need to engage in a new competitive bidding process.
12. The HCF program requires the completion of a Form 463 in order for applicants to invoice for services. It is critical that bidders be aware of their responsibility to sign/certify/submit proper invoices and documentation (including submitting bills for services with a breakdown of eligible and ineligible services) in order to be reimbursed. More information about service providers' responsibilities can be found here: http://www.usac.org/rhc/healthcare-connect/sp/step05/default.aspx

13. Allowance for the Substitution of Sites and Services Bidder allows for the Consortium to add sites and/or upgrade or change services throughout the length of the contract term without having to re-bid in accordance with Appendix D, 47 C.F.R. § 54.646. Bidders should make such site and service adjustments in accordance with the Site and Service Substitution rules found in the HCF Order (47 C.F.R. § 54.646: 746 Appendix D, 47 C.F.R. § 54.646).
    Benefis Health understand that the competitive bidding process must be "technology neutral" in order to comply with the Federal Communication Commission competitive bidding rules (see 47 C.F.R. § 54.603 and § 54.642). Nothing in this RFP is intended to undermine the competitive bidding requirements. Any technology specific information in this RFP is meant to be guidance only. Any vendor, regardless of the technology that the vendor uses to provide service, is welcome to submit a bid for this RFP. If the vendor cannot provide the specific technology requested (example: QoS) the vendor should respond with detailed information on exactly what equivalent service

Contract Term

Month to Month, 36, 48 or 60 months Service to begin July 1, 2026

Circuit Pricing Requested

Benefis Health is requesting bids for data circuits via hub and spoke to connect back to the main hub at HCP 10017. They are also requesting bids on an Internet circuit, Firewall and SD_WAN hardware they will all share.

Proposal Requirements:
Proposer is the person or company responding to this RFP.

1. Provide name, address, and telephone number of proposer.
2. Benefis Health will contract directly with organizations capable of performing the requirements of this RFP. Proposers must be represented directly. Participation by brokers or commissioned agents will not be allowed during the proposal process.
3. State monthly recurring cost of each requested service, separately identified, including all estimated taxes, surcharges and fees if applicable.
4. State non-recurring cost and identify what the cost covers. Include all estimated taxes, surcharges and fees if applicable.
5. Please provide a SLA for the service levels and response time.
6. State response time for arrival of an on-site technician for troubleshooting.
7. Provide name(s) of billing party/parties.
8. The Healthcare Connect Fund Order requires that the successful bidder obtain a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN). This may be obtained from USAC at http://www.usac.org/sp/default.aspx. Please provide the Universal Service SPIN number 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.
9. Vendor will pay 100% of vendor invoice while waiting for credits to be approved
10. Provide the date the bid expires.

11. Contract term should begin upon installation of the last circuit or the contract date, whichever is later.
12. Contract should be for an initial 36-month term.

Criteria for Selecting Service Provider

All bids received will be evaluated based upon the following criteria:

Criteria	Weight
Cost of Solution	40%
Prior Experience, including past performance	30%
One vendor (3 Healthcare references in the same state	30%

The selection will be based on all factors indicated in this section and the winning bid may not be the lowest cost bid. The point scale listed above will be used to determine the most cost-effective solution for the HCP.

SUBMISSION / QUESTION PROCESS

1. Questions concerning this RFP should be submitted via email to David Boggs at David.boggs@theusfgroup.com. Vendors are invited to submit written questions and/or requests for interpretations/consideration/acceptance concerning this RFP within 15 business days from the posting of the RFP. All submitted questions and the applicable responses will be compiled and will be sent to all bidders who submitted a letter of intent to bid 18 to 20 days after the RFP is posted. Any communications not sent to the email address above will not be entertained.
2. 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.
3. Bid proposals must be sent via email to David Boggs at David.boggs@theusfgroup.com no later than midnight Eastern Standard Time on the 28th day after the posting date as published on the USAC website http://www.usac.org/rhc/healthcare-connect/tools/search-posted-services/consortia.aspx.

The Consortium Leader may seek clarifications concerning the submitted bid.

If the Consortium Leader fails to sign a contract before the winning bid expires, which results in a change in price by the winning bidder, it reserves the right to resubmit the RFP for bids on the USAC website

HCP#	Name	Address		ST	Zip	County	U/R
10356	Benefis Missouri River Medical Center	1501 St Charles St.	Fort Benton	MT	59442	Chouteau	Rural
10353	Benefis Teton Medical Center	915 4th St. NW	Choteau	MT	59422	Teton	Rural
10017	Benefis East Campus	1101 26th St. S	Great Falls	MT	59405	Cascade	Urban
134923	Benefis West Campus	500 15th Ave South	Great Falls	MT	59405	Cascade	Urban
133722	Benefis - Lewistown Walk-in Urgent Care	1422 W Main St.	Lewistown	MT	59457	Lewis and Clark	Rural