

SPOKANE COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

E-RATE BEN 145509

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Title	Due Date
E-Rate Hotspots	December 20th, 2024, at 12 p.m. Pacific Time

Contact: Claire O’Flaherty Christnacht, Consultant, E-Rate Expertise, Inc.

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Email: claire@erateexpertise.com

Description of Products & Services Needed:

The Spokane County Library District (the District) seeks a new contract for personal Wi-Fi hotspots and related monthly internet services. The District plans to participate in the new federal E-Rate program for Hotspots to be checked out to library patrons. Service providers are expected to be educated and compliant on the requirements of the program and should submit bids that align as closely as possible to the allowances in the program.

The current hotspot models in use are the Orbic RC400L and the Franklin T9 and the District will purchase additional units of these hotspots or models with equivalent functionality through this RFP. The internet service for the proposed models should cover an area of at least 30 miles from the District’s branch locations (see link at end of the RFP for branch addresses). The District may choose more than one vendor for service if needed to provide coverage for the entire District service area.

The District will purchase approximately 80-160 hotspot units in 2025, plus replacement units as needed for lost/broken equipment. The program may be expanded to include the purchase of up to 500 units during the term of the contract, but there is no guarantee of total sales. The District estimates that it could have between 160-450 hotspots in circulation that will require monthly internet service. Bids should indicate if there are pricing discount thresholds based on quantities purchased.

The District currently circulates to its patrons approximately 80 hotspots with data services that are provided through two vendors. Wherever possible, the District will re-use existing hotspots until they reach the end of life. Vendors should indicate if their monthly internet access service could be functional on existing hotspots that are currently served by another vendor by changing a SIM card.

The devices and plans should be compatible with or supported by services or platforms capable of providing District management of devices and filtering services necessary to comply with District policies and E-rate compliance for hotspot usage, including hotspot usage reports.

This RFP for hotspots is primarily intended for the purchase and service of hotspots to be checked out to patrons, however, the District may choose to purchase additional units and service for staff or other library program use outside of the E-Rate program that would be on a separate contract and account number and would be fully funded by the District.

This RFP process has the following disqualifying factors and bids that do not meet these requirements will not be evaluated: Bidders must be active participants in the E-rate program and have an E-rate Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN). For hotspots funded by the E-rate program, bidders must agree to comply with the service provider requirements of the E-rate Hotspot Program.

Requested Information & Bid Format:

1. Bids submitted should include plans specifically designed to conform with the requirements of the new E-rate Hotspot program including but not limited to:
 - a. Pricing that is at or near the E-rate price goals
 - b. 60-day notifications for unused units
 - c. 90-day disconnection for unused units
 - d. No ongoing or shut-off charges for disconnected units
 - e. Bills with itemized detail of usage for each unit
2. Provide capabilities and prices for the Orbic RC400L or the Franklin T9 (or equivalent) hotspots
 - a. Indicate if your monthly internet access service can be functional on the library's existing hotspots, regardless of the current vendor, by changing the SIM card. Provides costs for changing this SIM card, if any, and whether these costs are eligible under the E-rate hotspot program.
 - b. Include complete charging cable with an AC plug in the original purchase.
 - c. Include pricing for protective cases and spare charging cables if available. Indicate if these items are E-Rate eligible.
 - d. Include information on quantity discount pricing, if applicable.
3. Provide pricing for monthly internet service for the hotspots.
4. Provide maps of your coverage area.

5. Provide costs and information on the capabilities and compatibility of management services or platforms that are available.
6. Provide your company's policies on lost/damaged units, including your capabilities for suspension of service and associated costs.
7. Provide your company's warranty terms for faulty equipment.
8. Provide information on your filtering software costs and capabilities. Note that the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) rules state that a filtering technology protection measure is required to be in place for equipment that is owned by the Library District. The District's internal policies on filtering will also be applied.
9. Bids should indicate if any services or items are not eligible or are partially eligible for E-rate funding. If the item or service is only partially eligible for E-rate funding, provide the eligibility % or ineligible cost itemization with your bid.
10. Bids should include a copy of your company's standard contract(s) for Hotspot Services. Please indicate if your company does not have a standardized contract for this type of agreement.
11. Bids should include an example of the billing statement that includes all estimated costs, taxes, and fees. Hotspots should be billed on a separate account that includes only E-rate eligible equipment. Details should be provided for hotspot usage to comply with E-rate requirements.
12. Please indicate if your company has other hotspot contracts that are part of the E-rate program and indicate your number of years of experience with the E-rate program.
13. Vendors should include their E-Rate SPIN number in their bid and confirm that they are current on their USAC SPAC/473 requirements. Failure to maintain E-rate SPIN eligibility requirements could result in contract termination. Vendors must be willing to do SPI or BEAR methods of reimbursement, and the District will decide which method will be used.
14. Secure Networks Act: The District will not accept any equipment or services produced, provided by, or containing parts, from any company, including parents, affiliates, or subsidiaries thereof, that the FCC has designated as a national security threat to the integrity of communications networks or the communications supply chain pursuant to 47 CFR 54.9(a). A list of covered communications equipment and services can be found on the FCC's website at <https://www.fcc.gov/supplychain/coveredlist>. The list will be updated as necessary, and proposers have the responsibility to check for updates and to ensure that all products and services in quotes and final contracts are compliant.

Vendor Contract Terms:

1. The new contract for these services will include a copy of the vendor's proposal/quote, the terms outlined below and elsewhere in this RFP, and additional terms provided by the vendor and agreed upon by District.

2. **Start/End Dates:** The official start and end dates for the contract would coincide with the months of the E-rate program year beginning July 1, 2025 through June 30th of the final year of the contract term.
3. **Term:** The District seeks a 1 or 2-year contract with automatic annual extensions up to a total of 3 years. Please indicate if the term length and conditions affect the pricing.
4. Alternate hotspot models with the equivalent functionality of the ones listed in this RFP may be substituted as needed if agreed upon by both parties.
5. **Non-Appropriation of Funds:** The contract may be canceled or not renewed in the event of loss of federal E-rate, State or District funds.

Bidding Process Information:

1. The bidding period may be extended or re-opened at the District's discretion if necessary to conduct a competitive bidding process.
2. The District reserves the right to request additional information and/or a Best And Final Offer (BAFO) during this bidding process as responses are compared and evaluated.
3. Responders are required to read and understand all information contained within this entire RFP package. Submitting a bid constitutes complete understanding and compliance with the terms and conditions in this RFP and certifies that all necessary facilities and personnel are available and established at the time of bid submittal.
4. The District reserves the right to reject all proposals and to not pursue this project at this time.

Evaluation Criteria for Selecting the Winning Bid:

Proposals will be judged on the following criteria:

1.	35 Points	Price (most heavily weighted criteria)
2.	20 Points	Proven service coverage in library district
3.	20 Points	Capabilities of Management Software
4.	15 Points	Proven experience in E-rate program and school/library sector
5.	10 Points	Quality of Bid

Disqualifying Factors:

This RFP process has the following disqualifying factors and bids that do not meet these requirements will not be evaluated:

1. Vendors must have an E-rate Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) and be up to date on annual certifications.
2. Bidders must agree to comply with the service provider requirements of the E-rate Hotspot Program.

Contact, Submittal & Misc. Information:

1. **The bid deadline is December 20th, 2024, at 12 p.m. Pacific Time.** Any responses received after 12:00 p.m. on the due date of this solicitation, regardless of the postmark date, will be considered non-responsive and will not be included in the scoring process.
2. Questions regarding the RFP should be submitted in writing to Claire Christnacht at claire@erateexpertise.com by 5 p.m. Friday December 6th. Answers will be posted on the District's website and on the 470 form within 5 business days after the questions deadline.
3. Bids should be submitted via one of two methods before the bid deadline:
 - a. In sealed envelopes mailed to Doug Stumbough at 4322 N Argonne Rd, Spokane, WA 99212.
 - b. Electronically mailed to Claire O'Flaherty Christnacht, claire@erateexpertise.com and to Doug Stumbough dstumbough@sclcd.org .
4. All RFP documents, including instructions, bid formats, Q&A, updates, etc. will be uploaded to the original E-Rate 470 form on the E-Rate EPC system and will also be posted on the District's website at: <https://www.sclcd.org/about/request-for-proposals/>
5. Please see <https://www.sclcd.org/locations/> for a list of the District branch locations. The service center address is not listed on this website and the address is 12004 East Main Avenue, Spokane Valley, WA, 99206.