

STATE OF WASHINGTON
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON STATE LIBRARY

RFP 23-04 – E-Rate Category 1 Internet and WAN Services
for the Washington State Library Technology Consortium (LIBTECH)

AMENDMENT NO. 2

(January 13, 2023)

SUMMARY

This Amendment No. 2 to RFP 23-04 compiles the questions received from vendors prior to and during the Pre-Proposal Conference held jointly for RFP 23-04 and RFP 23-05 on January 6, 2023, and provides answers to the vendors' questions. In an effort to present to all vendors the entire content and discussion of the Pre-Proposal Conference, without omissions that might prevent a full understanding of the concepts discussed, both the questions and answers relevant to this RFP 23-04 and to RFP 23-05 are included below, along with an overview of the project shared at the Pre-Proposal Conference, and the Conference agenda.

Project Overview:

The Washington State Library (WSL) issued RFP-23-04 and RFP 23-05 with the goal of improving technology resources for libraries in our state by consolidating the planning, purchasing and technical support through the LIBTECH consortium. The smallest libraries in the state are prioritized in the first phases of the program. LIBTECH is leveraging managed services with this procurement due to the current size and capabilities of WSL staff, but will move toward purchasing products once WSL staffing is increased and can assist libraries directly. In 2023, there will approximately 20 libraries in the program. WSL secured pandemic ARPA funding to provide equipment to the initial group of libraries and hopes to add more state and federal funds in future years.

For Category 2, our goal is to replace and upgrade all existing networking equipment at the libraries. To ensure consistency of service and support, Category 1 internet access is also being requested for member libraries. Some libraries may currently rely on K20 single internet circuits, but there are no additional hub and spoke connections available to the branches in a system. The goal for LIBTECH is to make IT transparent to libraries.

Questions and Answers:

Q: In regards to the Category 1 bid sheet, there is a line indicating the following: *Phase 1A Libraries - Quotes for Costs Required for All*. Does this mean that in order to bid, we need to provide pricing for all locations? If we do not have access to a particular location, does that exclude us from bidding?

A: We expect whoever wins the Category 1 bid to either be able to directly provide connection service (DIA, MPLS, SD-WAN, etc) OR subcontract for locations that they don't have access to.

Q: In regards to the WAN request- Is there a central point for the WAN location? The RFP makes it sound that some locations MAY need a WAN vs DIA. Do we know which locations those are and where the WAN central location would be?

A: There are no central points as of yet. Most connections over the next 5 years will be DIA, with a few possible MPLS/SDWAN. Please provide your best suggestion.

Q: What type of internet circuit do you want?

A: We have not specified a type of circuit. We are relying on vendors to propose the best options available for certain areas. Since all sites are independent libraries, multiple plans are ok.

Q: Please provide more details on the requirements for managed UPS Units. What size units, what is the estimated draw and run time, should they be rack mounted?

A: We are initially looking for a layer of electrical protection for brownouts and surges, not for redundancy and long term back-ups. Assume we need 110/120 voltage, single phase units to support two switches and a router on each battery. The units need to be off the floor and rack mounted.

Q: Will the Category 2 Miscellaneous line items be excluded from financial evaluation? We have concerns that if we recommend and propose additional features that our costs will not be competitive.

A: This is a good question considering the RFP is for managed services which are often a bundled monthly/annual fee, rather than invoiced with line-item expenses that can be removed at the purchaser's discretion. As best as possible, please provide a complete description of what is included in your costs and what additional and/or optional features are available. Our intent is to compare similar products and features for fair comparisons so any information you can provide to aid us in this evaluation would be appreciated. Note also that the evaluation criteria include more factors than just cost so that although a higher price may score lower points, a higher quality bid will also score higher points. In addition, the RFP allows LIBTECH to work with the successful proposer to modify the services included in the contract to meet the members' needs.

Q: Would you consider other manufacturers?

A: Yes, all equivalent equipment will be evaluated. Note that the WSL has already invested in some Meraki equipment with ARPA funding.

Q: What are the requirements of the firewall?

A: Standard layer 4 and layer 7 features for an office environment, it should have 1 GB throughput or higher, and the ability for multiple 1GB WAN ports or at minimum a single 10GB WAN port. There is currently a wide variety of mostly inadequate firewalls/software products in place at the libraries now and we are attempting to install a standardized solution.

Q: Would SOS be the contracting entity?

A: Yes, the Office of the Secretary of State, Washington State Library will be signing all contracts, making all purchases, and paying all bills on behalf of the LIBTECH consortium.

Q: Does installation require prevailing wages? If so, what are the job classifications? K12 usually includes prevailing wage in their RFPs but doesn't provide specifics.

A: In other E-rate eligible projects, product installation is generally not subject to prevailing wages; however, cabling installation is classified as a Public Works project and does require it. The nature of the work to be performed will dictate whether prevailing wages must be paid. If vendors have questions about whether prevailing wages must be paid with respect to one or more aspects of the work proposed, they should contact the Washington Department of Labor & Industries and seek guidance on the specifics of their proposal and get a final determination.

Q: What type of connections do you seek? Fiber, copper, coax, etc.

A: Per the RFP, an enterprise grade Service Level Agreement is required for all circuits and synchronicity is also desired. This likely means that fiber is the best option in most cases, but cable is also acceptable if necessary.

Q: Can you elaborate on what information you need regarding Construction?

A: LIBTECH is not looking for a self-provisioned network and we do not want to be actively managing a construction project. It is expected that construction costs would be either rolled into the Monthly Recurring Costs or included as an upfront Non-Recurring/Installation Cost. We would like to understand how extensive the construction requirements would be and what is the approximate length of construction required to make this connection (i.e. on the library's property, a few blocks to link to another existing line, or installation of an entirely new line). Note that libraries will likely be open during any construction period and we want to minimize the impact on operations.

Q: Is WSL responsible for any C2 upgrades in the buildings?

A: Yes, WSL will coordinate the C2 upgrades. There is a wide variety of cabling and equipment in place, and we will issue another RFP if necessary. Vendors do not need to anticipate these needs in their proposals.

Q: Can you please confirm the Kittitas Library's address?

A: Gilmour Memorial Library/Kittitas Public Library, 200 N Pierce St, Kittitas, WA 98934

Q: How many IP Addresses do the libraries need?

A: The libraries already have their own IP Addresses, public or private depending on location. Vendors should propose the Standard /29 or /30 IPv4 hand off IPs. The Washington State Library is also providing IPv6 ranges to all public libraries.

Q: Many manufacturers require a full 1-year commitment for equipment used for managed services. How will this be handled in year 5 and the optional year 6 of the contract?

A: Please make a note if manufacturer requirements make it impossible to add products in the 5th year. This challenge will likely mean that new libraries can only be added to the program in years 1-4 of the program, and after that time new libraries would have to wait until the next contract is completed. Note that the 1-year optional contract extension is considered a safety measure in case something comes up where we are not able to go out to bid and complete a new contract by the end of the 5th year.

Q: Will any members of the consortium be applying for E-rate funding on their own?

A: This consortium can cover all libraries across the state of WA. Most of the larger libraries have dedicated IT staff and already participate in the E-rate program on their own. Since it is generally not financially advantageous for the smallest libraries to participate in E-rate, you can assume that the single site libraries will not be applying for funding on their own. Note that this consortium is different from a state contract where government entities can do their own purchasing based on the state contract and E-rate 470 form. In order to capitalize on multiple funding sources and provide efficiencies in administration and technical expertise, the WSL will enter into the contract, make the purchases, and pay all bills on behalf of the members.

Q: For the 1G bandwidth requirement, will a 10G port be acceptable?

A: Yes, 10GB SFP+ is acceptable.

PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE

Friday, January 6, 2023

10:00 A.M.

(Virtual conference via Microsoft Teams)

RFP 23-04 E-Rate Category 1 Internet and WAN Services

RFP 23-05 E-Rate Category 2 Equipment, Managed Services and Support

Office of the Secretary of State, Washington State Library

On behalf of the Washington State Library Technology Consortium (LIBTECH)

AGENDA

I. Welcome & Introductions

- **Jim Webster**, Office of the Secretary of State (RFP Coordinator)
- **Mike Buschman**, Washington State Library (Library Development Manager)
- **Cody Hansen**, Washington State Library (IT Specialist)
- **Claire O’Flaherty**, E-Rate Expertise, Inc. (E-Rate Specialist)

II. Important Information for Vendors on Solicitation Process *(Jim Webster, 5 minutes)*

A. RFP Coordinator Sole Contact for Questions

B. Locations to Find Answers, RFP Amendments, and Notifications

- Washington Electronic Business Solution (WEBS)
- OSOS Current Procurements Webpage
- EPC Portal

C. Questions & Answers

- Ask questions but follow up with an email to RFP Coordinator
- Answers given at conference are unofficial; official answers will be posted
- Questions asked at conference and beforehand will be posted with answers at the above locations on January 13, 2023
- Questions submitted after conference will be posted with answers at the above locations on January 17, 2023

D. Important Dates

January 13, 2023 – Last Day for Questions

January 17, 2023 – All Questions & Answers will be posted

February 2, 2023 – Proposal Due Date* (*see note below*)

February 13, 2023 – Apparent Successful Bidder Announced

July 1, 2023 – Contract Start Date

III. **Background and Objectives of RFPs** (*Cody Hansen & Claire O’Flaherty, 20-30 minutes*)

IV. **Question and Answer Session**

V. **Final Comments**

(Please note that the Proposal Due Date of January 26, 2023 originally posted in the RFPs **has been extended one week, to February 2, 2023. This extension has impacted subsequent activities in the solicitation schedule. **An updated schedule of activities will be posted on WEBS, the OSOS Current Procurements webpage, and the EPC Portal in the next several days.**)*