Pierce County Library System

E-Rate BEN 145283

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS ("RFP")

Title	Proposal Submission Date
RFP for Routers, Switches, and Firewalls	**Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 5 p.m. Pacific Time**

Submit proposals and direct questions to:

Contact: Claire Christnacht, Consultant, E-Rate Expertise, Inc.
Phone: (253) 320-0664
Email: claire@erateexpertise.com

SCOPE:

The Pierce County Library System plans to update their existing broadband routing, switch and firewall infrastructure, including licensing, configuration, and installation and will sign a multi-year contract for these purchases.

The Library's current network architecture includes a central hub at the library's Administrative Center that has a single 10 G synchronous fiber internet connection with a Service Level Agreement (SLA) that provides internet access to the 18 branches in the library system through the WAN. The administrative center has a 10 G WAN connection, and the branches are each connected to the administrative center with a 1 G WAN connection. These synchronous fiber lines provide service to all hard-wired computers in the library system. The Library also has separate 1 G asynchronous direct cable internet connections to the service provider with no SLA at each library branch and this service is segmented for only the Wi-Fi users.

Existing circuit speeds meet current system demands and the Library projects that demand could increase to require WAN and internet speeds up to 50 G in the next 5-10 years. The Library does not have plans to provide direct synchronous fiber connections to the branches for the hard-wired computers in the future.

The Library currently uses Dell products and the following equipment needs to be replaced with equivalent functionality. The branches are equipped with three Dell N3248x-ON switches and one SonicWall TZ470, which is primarily used for routing. The core switches consist of two Dell S3248F-ON, two Dell S5248F-ON, four Dell EMC N1524, and two SonicWall Supermassive 9200 units. Additionally, the IDF closets are outfitted with four Dell S3248F-ON switches.

Core Switches are used for LAN aggregation, VLANs, applying ACLs, and handling internal routing between the on-premise virtual environment, storage, and physical infrastructure located at PCLS HUB site. The SonicWall Supermassive 9200s are used for WAN routing, aggregation, and application services through a DMZ.

Please see the RFP chart that itemizes the desired device models (or equivalent) and projected quantities for the 2025-26 E-Rate program year with the maximum purchase quantities during the term of the contract noted at the bottom. Maximum quantities are not a guarantee of sales

The Library seeks to take advantage of E-Rate funding for this project and is open to other manufacturers and service providers that fully participate in the E-Rate program. The chart included in the RFP represents the Library's understanding of equivalent products to replace the functions of their existing equipment. Recognizing that this project may require a transition to a new platform, the Library welcomes vendor recommendations on products and configuration that will meet the technical and security needs of the system. Vendors Bids will be evaluated based on a comparison of the products listed in the RFP (or the equivalents) and the Library will work with the winning vendor to refine the model selections, including upgrades with greater capacity but the same functionality if needed.

If there are multiple licensing options, vendors should provide quotes for all service levels and types of licenses, including right-to-use, support licenses, Enterprise Agreements, Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections (i.e. SmartNet), or all equivalents so the Library can make comparisons and select the options that best suit their needs.

Proposals should include costs for configuration and installation, and the Library will select the most cost-effective options that meet their needs, including self-installation, based on the submissions received.

Proposals should also include the required power supply, network modules, transceivers, and accessories to make the new network function.

In 2024 the Library applied for funding under the E-Rate Cybersecurity Pilot Program but the funding decisions for that program have not been released at the time of posting the 470 form/RFP. This RFP is a competitive process for all E-Rate funded programs and purchases, and the Library will determine whether all or part of the requests in this RFP will be included in the regular E-Rate Program or in the Cybersecurity Pilot Program after USAC has announced which applicants have been accepted in the Cybersecurity Pilot Program. Since the level of E-Rate funding varies among the programs, the Library will work with the winning vendor to determine the most cost-effective models, bundles, services, and combination of equipment based on the Library's technical needs, budget constraints and the level of E-Rate funding available.

This RFP process has the following disqualifying factors and bids that do not meet these requirements will not be evaluated: 1. Late submittals will not be evaluated. 2. Recycled or refurbished products will not be considered, 3. Generic or auto-generated bids will not be considered, and 4. Vendors must have an E-Rate Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) and be up to date on annual certifications.

Estimated Purchases (or equivalent) for 2025-26:

Product # (or equivalent)	Product Description (or Equivalent)	Estimated Purchase Quantity for 2025	Function/Locations
Cisco Catalyst 9500-32C	Switch	2	Internal routing at Hub; Managed with DNA (2 at Central Hub)
Cisco 9300-48P	Switch	54	• Intra- Branch switching; Managed with DNA (3 each at 18 branches) • Stacked for IDF switching; Managed with DNA (4 each at 2 IDF closets at Central Hub) • For network devices in rack and connections to IT Dept and including Management/OOB connections; Managed with DNA (2 @ IT Dept at Central Hub) •
Cisco ISR1161X-8P	Routers	20	• Branch to Hub routing; Managed with DNA (1 each at 18 branches plus 1 each at 2 IDF closets)
Cisco 3120	Firewall	2	• Hub site routing to branches and WAN aggregation; Managed with DNA (2 at Central Hub)
TBD	DNA Advantage Licenses for all requested equipment	TBD	• As needed for above estimated equipment
TBD	BMIC Licenses/ support for all requested equipment	TBD	• As needed for above estimated equipment
Stack-T1-50CM	Stacking Cables (0.5m)	TBD	• As needed for above estimated equipment
Transceivers		TBD	As needed for connectivity. To be determined once final device selections have been made.
Modules		TBD	As needed for connectivity. To be determined once final device selections have been made.
TBD	Other equipment, software or accessories	TBD	As needed for connectivity. To be determined once final device selections have been made.

Estimated purchases over the term of the contract could be up to 200 switches, 60 routers and 10 firewalls with the capabilities of the above equipment, or equivalent. These numbers are not a guarantee of sales.

1. Proposals should include the unit price for every product (or equivalent) listed above, even if not projected to be purchased in 2025. The Library welcomes recommendations and alternatives to their existing structure and will work with the winning proposer to finalize the exact models and quantities that best meet the Library's technical and financial needs for 2025 and future contract years. Finalized models, services, bundles, and quantities will be consistent with the scope of this RFP and will provide equivalent functionality of the products listed above. The winning vendor will provide updated quote(s) with the required models and quantities for each year for contracting and E-rate application purposes. Equivalent substitutions can also be made via amendment or updated quotes throughout the term of this contract.

2. Provide the maximum circuit speeds and system demands that can be supported by your proposed equipment.

3. Provide the costs for 1-year, 3-year and 5-year licenses for all types of licenses required or recommended for each of the devices. If there are multiple licensing options, vendors should provide quotes for all service levels and types of licenses, including right-to-use, support licenses, Enterprise Agreements, Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections, SmartNet, or all equivalents so the Library can make comparisons and select the options that best suit their needs. The Library will determine the most cost-effective license level and term based on technical needs, budget resources, and prices once the winning proposal has been selected, and these details will be included in the final quote from the vendor that will be included in the contract. Indicate whether the licenses are a "Right to Use" type license that is required for the products to function, or if the licenses are Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections type licenses that provide technical support and software upgrades, etc. License terms should coincide with the months of an E-Rate year and should be billed (including renewals) at or near the E-Rate start date. Pro-rating may be necessary to facilitate program administration.

4. Provide manufacturer's current list prices for these models as a point of comparison.

5. Provide pricing for both product configuration and installation. Based on the technical needs of the project, IT resources and budget constraints, and the Library's intent to select a cost-effective solution, the decision regarding outsourcing the configuration and installation will be made once the proposals have been evaluated and the winner has been selected. The per-unit configuration and installation price in your proposal will be reviewed at the time of the future purchases and may be added to the contract with a new quote and/or amendment.

6. Proposals must identify any cost estimates for shipping and other handling fees. Please include the estimated lead time between order date and delivery date.

7. Proposals should indicate if any items are not eligible or are partially eligible for E-rate funding. If the item is only partially eligible for E-rate funding, provide the eligibility percent (%) with the proposal. Ineligible items should be included in a separate Non-E-rate quote. If there is another comparable item that is fully eligible, please also include that item in your proposal. The Library may work with the winning vendor to adjust the final quotes for ineligible products and/or locations.

8. Include a copy of your company's standard contract for these products/services (if any).

9. Proposers have the option to include up to three (3) references where your company has performed a similar service, including business name, contact name and contact information.

The Library prefers at least one reference be for a library/school district of similar size within 200 miles of Tacoma, Washington. Vendors that have done business with the Library may submit the Library as a reference.

10. Please indicate if your company has successfully sold this equipment before as part of the E-rate program and your number of years of experience with the E-rate program. Vendors should include their E-Rate SPIN number in their proposal and confirm that they are current with their USAC SPAC/Form 473 requirements. Failure to maintain E-rate SPIN eligibility requirements could result in contract termination. Vendors must be willing to do either SPI or BEAR methods of reimbursement, and the Library will select the reimbursement method, unless the BEAR method is required per E-Rate early purchase rules (see Item 1 in Contract Terms).

VENDOR CONTRACT ISSUES:

1. **Contract Documents:** This RFP, the winning proposal, and the final quote will be considered part of the contract and are applicable unless specifically negated in the contract.
2. **Start/End Date:** The months of the official start and end dates for this E-Rate Category 2 contract would coincide with the Category 2 purchasing period for the E-Rate program year which is April 1st to September 30th of the following program year.
   a. Most purchases would be made in the standard purchasing period of July 1st – September 30th of the following program year.
   b. If purchases are made between April – June prior to the start of the program year, as allowed by program rules, the Library will pay the full invoice price and will seek the E-rate reimbursement through the BEAR process after the Funding Commitment has been received and the program year has officially started.
3. **Term:** The Library seeks a 5-year contract with the option to automatically extend it for one (1) additional year.
4. **Non-Appropriation of Funds:** The contract may be canceled or not renewed in the event of loss of federal E-rate, State, or Library funds.
5. **Price Updates:** If the market supports a price reduction after the initial term, the Library will exercise price reduction options, if any are available, through an amendment to the original contract or an updated quote. Similarly, the Library recognizes that market conditions, inflation, and other factors beyond the vendor's control could increase the pricing of the products during the term of this contract and reasonable changes may be made via updated quotes and amendments, provided that any price increases are commensurate with the increase over the manufacturer's list price.
6. **Secure Networks Act:** The Library is prohibited to accept equipment or services that violate title 47, part 54, section 9 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations Title (CFR). A list of prohibited communications equipment and services can be found on the FCCs 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.
7. **Taxing District & Library Info:** The Pierce County Library System ("Library") is a junior taxing district under the laws of the State of Washington established in 1946 as a rural library district

under Chapter 27.12 RCW. The Library provides library services for the residents of unincorporated Pierce County, 15 annexed cities and towns (Bonney Lake, Buckley, DuPont, Eatonville, Edgewood, Fife, Gig Harbor, Lakewood, Milton, Orting, South Prairie, Steilacoom, Sumner, University Place, and Wilkeson). The total estimated population served is 680,000. More information about the Library may be found online at www.mypcls.org.

8. **Terminology:** This RFP uses the word "proposal" and "proposer" et al, consistent with the use of a Request for Proposal conducted in a public entity procurement process. USAC terminology for competitive E-rate process for procurements may use words such as "bid" and "bidders". As such, without discrimination to terminology used be either the Library or USAC, the word "proposal" and any derivatives are to be considered the same as USAC's usage of the word "bid" and any derivatives. All other typical words used in procurement processes, such as "submission", "response", and "vendor" are considered materially similar as used between the Library and USAC.

9. **Minority & Women's Businesses:** The Library encourages qualified proposals from minority- and women-owned businesses. Resources to assist such proposers can be found at https://omwbe.wa.gov, the website for the Washington State Office of Minority & Women's Business Enterprises.

PROPOSAL PROCESS, EVALUATION & CONTACT INFORMATION:

Process Information:

1. The submission date and time are listed above. The submission period may be extended at the Library's discretion.
2. The Library reserves the right to request additional information or a "Best And Final Offer" (BAFO), or both, during any part of the submission process.
3. The Library reserves the right to reject all proposals and to cancel the proposal with or without cause.
4. Responders are expected to read and understand all information contained within this RFP. Submitting a proposal constitutes acceptance with the terms and conditions contained herein.

Evaluation Criteria for Selecting the Winning Proposal:
Proposals will be judged on the following criteria:
1. 35 Points   Price (Most heavily weighted criteria)
2. 25 Points   Products meet Library's needs and are compatible with existing systems
3. 10 Points   Quality of references
4. 20 Points   Completeness, quality and reliability of submission
5. 10 Points   Compliance with E-rate rules and prior E-rate experience

Disqualifying Factors:
This RFP process has the following disqualifying factors, and proposals that do not meet these requirements will not be evaluated:
1. The proposal submission date and time are listed above. Responses received after the submission date and time will be considered non-responsive and will not be included in the scoring process.

2. Recycled or refurbished products will not be considered.
3. Generic or auto-generated proposals that were not specifically created as a response to this RFP will not be considered.
4. Vendors must have an E-rate Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) and be up to date on annual certifications.

Contact, Submittal & Misc. Information:
1. **The proposal submission date and time are listed above.**
2. Questions regarding the RFP should be submitted in writing to Claire Christnacht at claire@erateexpertise.com within fourteen (14) days after the E-rate 470 form has been issued. Answers will be posted on the Library's website and on the E-rate 470 form within five (5) business days after the deadline for submitting questions.
3. Proposals should be submitted via email to Claire Christnacht, claire@erateexpertise.com and to PCLSITPurchasing@piercecountylibrary.org
4. All RFP documents, including instructions, proposal formats, Q&A, updates, etc. will be uploaded to the original E-Rate 470 form and will also be posted on the Library's website at https://mypcls.org/get-involved/partner-with-us/
5. For Library branch addresses, please see https://mypcls.org/visit-the-library/locations-hours/