

Request for proposal

For

Lit Fiber Internet, Leased Dark Fiber including IRU, Self-Provisioning, or Broadband over 3rd Party Networks, Maintenance and Operations, Networking Equipment

AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75
6360 CAMP CREEK RD,
MANHATTAN, MT 59741

Proposals will be accepted until:

5:00 PM Mountain Standard Time (4) calendar weeks from the latest posted Form 470 certification date or latest amendment posted to the existing Form 470, whichever is later.

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

Timeline:

Form 470 submitted and RFP available

There will be no site visits, please use resources available to make a recommendation. If uncertain, make best recommendation.

Questions should be emailed directly to technical contact listed on Form 470, if uncertain, service providers should provide their best recommendation.

Deadline for RFP Responses is 5:00 PM MST (4) calendar weeks from the latest posted Form 470 certification date or latest amendment posted to the existing Form 470, whichever is later.

July 1, 2023 Delivery date of new service or as soon as feasible after receipt of the funding commitment decision notification and / or state match award notification.

Submission of Bid Proposals:

Please submit your proposal, including all supporting documentation to:
Email: sroe@amsterdamschool.org and klsmith@klsmithconsulting.com

And

Mail:

AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75
ATTN: Sharon Roe , Business Manager
6360 CAMP CREEK RD
MANHATTAN , MT 59741

Proposals should be emailed and mailed and are to be identified as a “bid response for Form 470 Funding Year 2023”.

Mailed Envelopes must be identified as “bid response for Form 470 Funding Year 2023”. Sealed proposals shall contain one (1) hard copy labeled “ORIGINAL” and five (5) hard copies labeled “COPY”. Also, included in the envelope shall be an electronic copy of the submittal on USB/flash drive. (Note: This is to comply with any public records requests that the District may receive after award of contract for this solicitation.)

The District is not responsible for proposals delivered or received late. Any proposals received after the scheduled closing time may be returned unopened.

Due Date

Proposals are due (4) calendar weeks from the latest posted Form 470 certification date or latest amendment posted to the existing Form 470, whichever is later at 5:00 PM Mountain Standard Time.

Proposals received after this deadline may be returned unopened.

Contact Information

Questions should be emailed directly to technical contact listed on Form 470, if uncertain, service providers should provide their best recommendation.

District Rights

The AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75, hereto referred to as the District, reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

Withdrawal of Bid Proposals:

Any bid proposal may be withdrawn prior to the closing date. No bid proposal shall be withdrawn for a period of 90 days after the actual opening without a written request explaining the cause for the withdrawal and without the written consent of the District after reviewing the cause.

Evaluation of Proposals:

Evaluation of bids will proceed at 7:00 PM MST on the 9th of February, 2023. Observation of the evaluation is open to public.

An evaluator/evaluation committee will evaluate all responsive proposals based upon the evaluation rubrics as set within this RFP and recommend an award to the highest scoring respondent. In scoring against stated criteria, the evaluator/evaluation committee may consider such factors as accepted industry standards and a comparative evaluation of other proposals in terms of differing price and quality.

Opportunity for Discussion/Negotiation and/or Oral Presentation/Product Demonstration:

After receipt of proposals and prior to the recommendation of award, the District may initiate discussions with one or more offerors should clarification or negotiation be necessary. Offerors may also be required to make an oral presentation and/or product demonstration to clarify their RFP response or to further define their offer. In either case, offerors should be prepared to send qualified personnel to 6360 CAMP CREEK

RD, MANHATTAN , MT 59741 to discuss technical and contractual aspects of their proposal. Oral presentations and product demonstrations, if requested, shall be at the offeror's expense.

Contract:

The bidder to whom an award is made may be required to enter into a written contract with the District. Preference may be given to bids that include the contractual terms and conditions or a fully-disclosed contract as part of the bidding process/ bid submission to insure no unforeseen or additional terms or conditions after acceptance of bid and to assist in the evaluation process.

Additionally, the bidder chosen by the AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 may be required to sign an agreement holding AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75, its employees, representatives and agents harmless from any liabilities to the bidder caused by delays in funding by the Schools and Library Division which are not proximately caused or under the control of AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 .

Licensure & Insurance

The respondent shall obtain and maintain all licenses, permits, liability insurance, workman's compensation insurance and comply with any and all other standards or regulations required by Federal, State, or local statutes, ordinances and rules during the performance of any contract between AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 and the respondent. Any such requirement specifically set forth in any contract document between the AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 and the respondent shall be supplementary to this section and not in substitution thereof. All responses should include a description of insurances and proof of liability insurance. All bids received should specify whether the District or the contractor shall carry fire, liability, or other insurance during construction.

Any subcontractor used by the vendor will be considered an authorized representative of the vendor. Said subcontractor must carry all assurances, certifications, insurance, and other listed requirements of this RFP or other applicable laws.

Scope of Services:

AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 is seeking bids for internet access, internet access and transport bundled, and / or self-provisioning from any transport type. AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 wishes to compare fully managed leased lit fiber, leased dark fiber including IRU, self-provisioned, and / or 3rd party network for delivery of Internet Services to the district.

The current Internet Service is provided with two bonded 20 Mb x 2 Mb copper DSL internet connections to serve approximately 200 students/staff, which is not able to support the District's growing bandwidth needs. Consideration may also be given for

solutions to bond with existing wireless connection to meet District's demands.

Preference will be given to respondents that run infrastructure or services to an existing network closet within the building as noted on the RFP document "Internet Route Worksheet".

If bids are received to property line or right of way only, separate bids may also be accepted for infrastructure required to complete the project from the property line / right of way to the network closet.

For leased dark fiber including IRU, District will accept bids for maintenance and operations of network for terms of 12, 24, 36 and 60-months.

For all solutions, District will accept bids for any needed equipment (i.e. routers, conduit, etc.) that may be needed to insure ready-to-use internet solution upon project completion.

Any bids may be from same vendor as internet services or separate vendors. In other words, bidders may bid on one component of project or entire project.

Bid responses are considered final costs for proposed solution and not initial pre-bidding costs. It is up to the service providers to take necessary steps to insure adequate infrastructure is in place prior to bid submission. A lack of infrastructure after the fact (closing of RFP) may be grounds for bid dismissal.

The new service is being planned to begin on July 1, 2023 or as soon as feasible after receipt of a Funding Commitment Decision Letter and / or a State Matching Award Notification.

The AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 is seeking options for bids including Leased Lit Fiber, Leased Dark Fiber including IRU, Self-Provisioning, Broadband over 3rd Party Networks, and / or Networking Equipment, if required. The applicant will accept bids for the leased lit fiber, leased dark fiber including IRU, self-provisioning, broadband over 3rd party networks, and / or networking equipment from one vendor or from separate vendors. In other words, respondents may bid any one of the bid options, or all options, or any combination thereof.

Respondents should clearly illustrate proposed network design and construction routes. AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 is not advocating or mandating any preconceived network design or construction route and leaves this decision up to the vendor to present their best solution while recognizing the cited termination locations.

Options can include special construction or one-time E-Rate eligible non-recurring costs as well as E-Rate eligible recurring circuit costs.

As required by E-Rate rules, networking equipment must be broken out into separate line items in bids or can be separate stand-alone bids or cannot be considered.

Additionally, bids may only include eligible costs and any ineligible costs must be identified and / or cost allocated out of bid as ineligible.

Based on the bids, and both a short-term and long-term cost effectiveness analysis, AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 will determine which, if any, of the solutions is acceptable with price being the most heavily weighted factor. The District also will choose the most cost-effective maintenance and operations, networking bids, and provisioning of infrastructure from property line / right of way to network closet, which may or may not be the same as the bid for the internet solution. The specifications related to each solution option follows.

The AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 is requesting bids for fully-functioning solution and may accept or reject bids or portions of any one bid that require additional sight surveys or analysis of whether or not a service can be provided, or additional distance requirements or equipment needs after acceptance of a bid. It is the responsibility of the bidder to insure all proposed services, equipment, etc. are accounted for in the bid.

Leased Lit Service, Leased Dark Fiber including IRU, Self-Provisioning, or Broadband Solutions over 3rd Party Networks:

With pricing options up to 5 Gb download speeds allowing for a scalable solution in which the applicant may exercise the option to increase speeds during the bid period, without an extension of the term of the agreement. May consider bonding if needed. with Service Level Agreement (SLA) guarantees to the specified site. Solution may have to bond to existing connection.

The solutions must be scalable to meet demand including 1:1, BYOD, and / or guest access. Bids should demonstrate a scalable solution to meet future demand. AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 has approximately 200 students/staff.

All respondents must be capable of providing telecommunication / internet services including access and transport services under the Universal Service Support Mechanism.

Internet Solution Price Proposal

The "Internet Pricing Sheet" in the attached spreadsheet includes columns for respondents to provide pricing options of pricing options up to 5 Gb download speeds allowing for a scalable solution in which the applicant may exercise the option to increase speeds during the bid period, without an extension of the term of the agreement. Price quotes are requested 12 months, 24 months, and 36 months terms of service.

As such, prices should be all inclusive. All inclusive, in this case means, including all **special construction and / or non-recurring costs (NRC)** (see description in later section) required by the vendor to commence service and all **monthly recurring costs (MRC)** should be included in the requisite columns of the pricing sheets. No increased pricing will be allowed during the term of the quoted special construction/NRC and / or MRC rate in each pricing cell of the worksheet.

Each service response must also include description of proposal, Service Level Agreement, timeline, network diagram / construction route, estimated cost details including bill of materials, average cost per foot, # of strands if applicable, etc., demarcation, references, and Connect America Fund status as described in later sections.

Preference may be given to proposals that offer pricing with the majority of the costs being paid up-front and minimal annual costs. The solution should include all costs related to the deployment of the proposed circuit, such that there are no additional costs that are expected to be incurred by the district after acceptance of a bid or at the end of the project. Costs for maintenance and operations, networking equipment, and / or provisioning of infrastructure from right of way / property line should be allocated out as separate line items for cost comparison (see later sections in RFP).

The solution should include all costs related to the deployment of the proposed circuit to the designated demarcation point as noted at the longitude and latitude described in the attached "Internet Route Worksheet", such that there are no additional costs that are expected to be incurred by the district after acceptance of a bid or at the end of the project. Any additional costs such as conduit, routers, etc. that are not included in the bid to be able to execute a fully-functioning internet connection should be identified in the bid.

Bids that require additional site surveys or resources to determine actual infrastructure required after the RFP deadline or do not fully meet the RFP requirements may be accepted or rejected by the District.

Preference may be given to proposals to meet the requirements of the RFP with the following information identified in the bid:

- If fiber solution applicable, indicate the total number of fiber strands reasonable for the District of this size for the scalable internet so there is no warehousing; any excess fiber strands should be cost allocated out and identified separately in bid. If 12-strand fiber is the standards solution, **please indicate** why it is the most cost-effective solution over a lower strand fiber (i.e. 4-strand fiber may be more expensive than a 12-strand fiber).
- Identify the longitude and latitude of the start point of the network and the longitude and latitude of the end point of the network related to the special construction charges.

- Please provide the details of the route(s) being constructed and the cost breakdown of the Network Equipment and Labor. Complete the cost breakdown on the attached excel spreadsheet named “AMSTERDAM_Internet Route Worksheet_RFP Attachment”.
- If fiber solution applicable, provide the value for route feet and cost per foot. The route feet and cost per foot provided should only include the new fiber build. It should not include the distance or cost of any existing infrastructure. Please provide the following information related to your Special Construction project:
 - Total Project Plant Route Feet
 - Average Cost per Foot of Outside Plant
 - Total Strands
 - Number of Eligible Strands
- Provide a map of the suggested route to be constructed on one of the mapping websites such as Google Maps, Map Quest, etc. That mapped out route should be available in either a .kmz or .json file.
- Indicate in bid if services will be provided by aerial, direct buried and /or buried with conduit fiber route or wireless. Bids should indicate the cost per foot for the Aerial portion of a fiber build (if applicable); direct buried portion, and buried with conduit route, if applicable.

Internet Solution - Service Level Agreement

Respondent will provide a description of the proposed services and service levels provided with the leased lit fiber, leased dark fiber including IRU, self-provisioning, and/or Broadband services over 3rd party networks and operations responses. The respondent will provide a proposed Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the RFP response. The proposal must include a description of the following services and how these services will be measured.

- Network Availability: the provider will make all reasonable efforts to ensure 99.99% network availability of each circuit.
- All solutions are highly encouraged to meet the following:
 - .25% frame/packet loss commitment
 - 3ms network latency commitment
 - 4ms network jitter commitment
 - There is no right of provider to limit or throttle the capacity of the circuit at any time for any reason

In addition to the required services, the proposal may include but is not to be limited to the following services:

- Network Operations Center: Solution will provide customer support functions including problem tracking, resolution and escalation support management on a 24x7x365 basis. Customer has the right and is encouraged to call concerning any problems that may arise relative to its connection with Vendor provided services.
- Trouble Reporting and Response: Upon interruption, degradation or loss of service, Customer may contact Vendor by defined method with a response based on trouble level. Upon contact from the Customer, the Vendor support team will initiate an immediate response to resolve any Customer issue. Customer will receive rapid feedback on trouble resolution, including potential resolution time.
- Escalation: In the event that service has not been restored in a timely manner, or the Customer does not feel that adequate attention has been allocated, the Customer can escalate the trouble resolution by request. A list of escalation contacts will be provided when implementation schedule is completed.
- Resolution: The Customer will be notified immediately once the problem is resolved and will be asked for verbal closure of the incident.
- Trouble Reporting, Escalation and Resolution: A detail trouble reporting, escalation and resolution plan will be provided to the district.
- Measurement: Vendor stated commitment is to respond to any outage within two (2) hours and a four (4) hour restoration of service. Time starts from the time the Customer contacts the Vendor and identifies the problem. Credits for Outages of shortage will be identified.
- Reports: Upon request, an incident report will be made available to the Customer within five (5) working days of resolution of the trouble.
- Link Performance per segment: The service will maintain the proposed Link Performance throughout the term of the contract.
- Historical uptime: Provide aggregate uptime statistics for your proposed service in the geographic area encompassing the Roberts School District.

Network Equipment

The District may require some networking equipment for the project. It is expected the network equipment is category 1 and the first network equipment to make the internet functional. Pricing for networking equipment must be a separate line item for cost comparison regardless of the proposed Solution. The applicant will accept bids for network equipment from a vendor that bid any of the bid options and/ or from a separate vendor. Networking equipment may include switches, connectors, conduit, cabling, and any other necessary equipment to allow a functional internet access connection at the

designated network closet inside the demarc location identified on the “Internet Route Worksheet”.

Description of Proposal

Respondent will provide a description of their proposal for all services and solutions. Description will include an overview of the proposal, any deviations from the requested architecture, design or requirements, assumptions made, other detail the District may find useful or necessary (or could differentiate the solution from a competing proposal).

Timeline

For each response, respondents must include a construction roadmap timeline for all sites. Preference is given to responses with a service start for all sites on July 1, 2023 or as soon as feasible after receipt of a funding commitment decision notification and/ or State Match Award notification.

Demarcation

All solutions must terminate service or infrastructure to an existing network closet inside of the designated demarc address specified in the “Internet Route Worksheet”.

Respondent must specify your expected demarc setup included in base fees, e.g. wall mounted CPE and Cat6a handoff, etc.

If solution is bid to the property line/ right of way, service providers may provide an estimate of cost to take connection from the property line/ right of way to the network closet as an alternative option such as self-provisioning for example in which the District owns the conduit and the service provider provides the installation services. This is only an example and not meant to set a precedence of favoritism of self-provisioning over any other solution.

Bids will be accepted from vendors for portions of the services requested in this RFP or all from one vendor for all services required to have a fully functioning internet connectivity. The District reserves the right to accept or reject all and/ or portions of any one bid that is not in the best interest of the District or may put the District at risk.

Network Diagram

For each response, respondents must include a network diagram displaying the paths to be used to serve each endpoint.

References

For each response, respondent must provide 3 references from current or recent customers (preferably K-12 in Montana) with projects equivalent to the size of

AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75. If service provider bids more than one service option, provide 3 references for each solution.

Stimulus or Other Type Funding Considerations

To prevent duplicative or fraud waste and abuse:

For each school site, the respondent must note whether the address is included in a region where the respondent has already received (or is pending receipt of) funding via any type of stimulus or similar purpose federal funding. In these cases, mention how the NRC or special construction charges have been adjusted considering the other source of funding.

Special Construction and Non-Recurring Cost

Respondents providing internet solution proposals which require an upfront payment may include a special construction cost or non-recurring cost. This upfront payment is considered **special construction** if any new infrastructure or equipment is being installed. If new infrastructure/ equipment installation is not necessary, the payment is considered a **non-recurring cost** and must be entered into the pricing sheet accordingly.

Special construction charges for broadband projects as defined by the FCC's Modernization Order include construction, design, engineering and project management. The applicant requests that the respondents consider allowing the District to pay the non-discount share (share of special construction costs that are the responsibility of the applicant) to be paid in equal annual installments over the four years from Funding Year 2023 inclusive. **Responses must include agreement or non-agreement of this request.**

The amount of special construction capital requested will be reviewed based on the cost of historical internet solution builds in the region. All solutions must be exclusively to serve AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75. Furthermore, respondents must request only the special construction capital allocable to the AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 services. Construction costs for infrastructure that will serve other entities in addition to AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 or are not considered "last mile" (i.e. upgrading equipment at a central office in a nearby community) are not E-Rate eligible and must be cost allocated out of bids.

Any additional costs such as conduit, routers, etc. to be able to execute a fully-managed internet connection should be identified in the bid.

Special Construction Information for Form 471 and PIA Review

All responses must agree, in writing, to this section with a yes or no answer. Answering no or failure to answer, may result in rejection of bid from further consideration.

All E-Rate applications including special construction are subject to detailed questioning during PIA review. Additionally, certain information on necessary special construction is needed to accurately fill out the Form 471. By bid submission, service provider agrees to produce information regarding construction labor, construction materials and other cost information requested in RFP and PIA review.

Respondents are requested to fill out the table in attached "Pricing Worksheet". Additionally, respondents are encouraged (but not required) to submit the additional information described in "Internet Route Worksheet" that will likely be requested during PIA review.

Respondents with special construction costs should submit this additional information with their bid and any additional information not described in this RFP that may be requested during PIA Review. Please note that vendors may assist applicants with preparing funding requests or responding to PIA questions and may speak directly with USAC's designated special construction representatives. Failure to provide this information may result in the dismissal of bid from further consideration.

Required Notice to Proceed and Funding Availability

The District will follow the purchasing policies of the AMSTERDAM ELEMENTARY DIST 75 and requirements and procedures of the FCC's E-Rate program as administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company to be eligible for all available funding. The implementation of any associated contracts resulting from this competitive bid process will be dependent on the district's issuance of a written Notice to Proceed. E-Rate funding notification alone will not signify Notice to Proceed. The district will have the right to allow the contract to expire without implementation if appropriate funding does not come available. The District has the right to accept or reject any portion of and/ or all bids.

All responding vendors must be a registered vendor with USAC and have a USAC issued Service Provider Identification Number-SPIN. At the District's discretion, bids may be rejected if no SPIN has been secured by RFP due date.

E-Rate Modernization Order Note

Special construction and service eligibility for reimbursement have changed starting funding year 2016. See the Federal Communications Commission E-Rate modernization order 2 (WC Docket No. 13-184) (<https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-releases-order-modernizing-e-rate-21st-century-connectivity>) for more information.

RFP Scoring Rubrics

Evolution scoring for bids for Internet Solution, Maintenance and Operations, Networking Equipment, Connectivity from Right-of-way/ Property Line to Demarcation Point, and Used for final comparison

% Weight	Criteria
30%	E-rate eligible recurring and one-time circuit costs*
15%	Ability to support requirements as laid out in the RFP
15%	Proposed contract terms and conditions
5%	Service Reliability
15%	E-Rate ineligible recurring or one-time costs
5%	Past experience with Vendor/ Montana Vendor
5%	Provider references
10%	Risk for District

*this element must always be the highest weighted

Notes:

Notes:

1: E-Rate eligible circuit cost is the total cost of ownership that includes special construction and NRC in addition to MRC and includes any and all services that will be applied on a monthly recurring basis. E-Rate special construction costs should be clearly indicated and separated from any other E-Rate eligible NRC cost. All services offered must be eligible for E-Rate Category 1 discounts. Any portion of the solution that is not E-Rate eligible should be clearly identified and cost allocated out as separate line item(s) in bid.

2: Ability to support requirements of RFP: all bidders are advised to commit to an initial roadmap for rollout of their solution per circuit, based on the E-Rate and District timeline. The roadmap should include all steps towards deployment and “go live” of all circuits within this RFP. Any risks or contingencies on the timing should be clearly highlighted in the response.

Preference may be given to bidders who can provide the highest level of compliance to all requirements laid out in this document. Preference may be given to bidders who are agreeable to bill E-Rate discounts on the bill (SPI), allow a four-year installment plan, bring the service inside the demarcation, and provide cost details in bid as laid out in the RFP and appendices.

3: Proposed Terms and Conditions including contractual: preference may be given to bidders that provide the most favorable conditions for implementation and ongoing service. These elements include (but are not restricted to): length of contracts, ability to scale bandwidth within the contract period, technical SLAs, flexibility in timing of up-front payments, agreeable to put E-Rate discounts on bills, contractual terms, etc.

It is expected that contractual terms and conditions or a contract is to be made available to District as part of the bidding process/ bid submission to insure no unforeseen or additional terms or conditions after acceptance of bid.

Prices to remain firm through the Schools and Libraries Division's approval process, execution, and duration of the proposed contract. In the event of a price decrease for service or from the manufacturer, said decrease shall be passed on to the school and documented with the new price sheet sent to the District.

Installation changes made to fulfill these concerns are the financial responsibility of the vendor.

The District expects that vendors are fully certified and knowledgeable in regard to the procurement, installation, and configuration of all items bid and required by this RFP.

The vendor will fully comply with all building codes, as well as address all concerns raised by officials (either school district, local, state, or federal).

Vendor must provide satisfactory proof of insurance(s) in regard to the requirements of this RFP.

Any subcontractor used by the vendor will be considered an authorized representative of the vendor. Said subcontractor must carry all assurances, certifications, insurance, and other listed requirements of this RFP or other applicable laws.

All bids received shall specify whether the District or the contractor shall carry fire, liability, or other insurance during construction.

4: Service Reliability: preference may be given to bidders that provide a favorable SLA for the district and have a robust network architecture and documented history of service reliability.

5: E-Rate ineligible recurring or one-time costs: bids must clearly identify the one-time costs and any ineligible costs as separate line items if included in bid. It is the responsibility of the bidders to communicate with the USAC help desk and/ or understand the E-Rate rules to insure a clear understanding of the eligible/ ineligible recurring costs as well as one-time costs for proposed services and/ or equipment. This does not refer to the post-discount portion of eligible costs that are the responsibility of the Applicant.

6: Past Experience with Vendor/ MT Vendor: preference may be given to vendors that have a positive past experience with the applicant and/ or be a local Montana vendor.

7: References: preference may be given to bidders who are able to demonstrate a track record of successfully working with K-12 school districts or similarly sized customers within the state of Montana to provide high-quality, affordable solutions and exemplary ongoing service. Bidders should be able to provide access to up to 3 references for each proposed solution as part of the bid response.

8: Risk for district: District seeks to minimize any potential risks related to construction of new infrastructure. When evaluating solutions, the district may award more points to lower risk solutions and fewer points to high risk solutions according to SLAs,

maintenance, construction proposals, up-front costs versus monthly recurring costs, proposal cost details, proposed construction end-point, ineligible costs, and/ or any other requirements of contract terms and conditions, etc.