

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**Telecommunications Wide Area Network**

**RFP# 1940VF**

**Release Date:** October 4, 2019

**Responses Due: January 8, 2020, 3:00pm Eastern Time**

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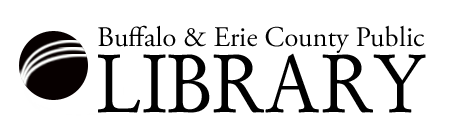
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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**Telecommunications Wide Area Network for the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library**

**Section 1 – Scope of Request and Background**

* 1. **Scope**

The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL or Library) is seeking qualified service provider(s) to propose an integrated solution for its Wide Area Network (WAN) connecting the Central Library and each of the thirty-six (36) Buffalo city branch and suburban libraries, utilizing leased lit fiber. Vendors submitting proposals must be “e-Rate” eligible service providers of the services described in this RFP and must be properly registered for participation in the program and in good standing with the e-Rate program.

The service provider(s) must possess the technical expertise and experience to work with the Library to support the WAN’s current infrastructure and future upgrades. The Vendor may work under the guidance of the Library’s Information Technology Administrator as a member of the Information Technology team, located at the Central Library, 1 Lafayette Square in Buffalo, NY. In the course of the work, candidates may travel to any B&ECPL library location in Erie County.

A list of all B&ECPL Libraries is provided in Appendix A.

* 1. **Background**

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library provides patron access to the Internet at the Central Library and each of the thirty-six (36) Buffalo city branch and suburban libraries. In addition, staff at all locations shares a common Library Automation System to maintain patron, bibliographic, inventory and circulation records. The Library’s Information Technology Department provides telecommunications services and information systems support for both patrons and staff. These systems and services comprise a complex WAN of the highest importance.

The existing WAN consists of thirty six (36) point-to-point fiber optic circuits from the thirty-six (36) Buffalo city branch and suburban libraries to the Central Library, handed off as Ethernet connections that support IEEE 802.1q VLAN tagging. Spectrum is the current provider of these fiber optic circuits since July 2010. Bandwidth to the 36 locations presently ranges from 30Mbps to 50Mbps. The existing network used by the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is presented as Appendix B.

The Central Library Network Center has a Cisco 4506 switch and each Buffalo city branch and suburban library has an HP Procurve 2500 series and/or 2600 series switch.  A Cisco 3825 router is used for Internet Access. Under a multi-year contract, which began July 2012, Crown Castle Fiber serves as the Internet Service Provider (ISP). ISP services are not requested under this RFP.

Over the course of the anticipated contract period, additional bandwidth may be required at some or all libraries. This RFP seeks to maintain or upgrade existing levels of service while improving network cost performance. **The Library seeks pricing for potential upgrades up to 10,000 Mbps.**

The proposed network must have the highest possible availability and uptime. Demonstrable redundancy and self-healing network technologies are preferred.

Consistent with e-Rate rules (please see <https://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/beforeyoubegin/fiber.aspx> for additional information) the proposed cost of the WAN must identify all:

* Monthly recurring charges (breaking out and describing all charges, taxes, fees, surcharges that would be assessed);
* Special construction charges (identify and describe, if any);
* Basic installation charges (identify and describe, if any);
* Charges for Network Equipment, i.e., modulating electronics and other equipment necessary to make a Category One service functional (identify and describe, if any).

The mission of the services provided over this network requires the awarded vendor to be a well proven, high-capacity, and resourceful data telecommunications provider. The awarded vendor must have a proven troubleshooting capability 7x24 and be well-tested in emergency response situations. Total costs, calculated over time, including all implementation costs, will also be a major factor in the contract award.

**Section 2 - Procedural**

* 1. **How to Respond**

In responding to this RFP, vendors must clearly reference **ALL** of the numbered sections, paragraphs and sentences with **“Comply”** or **“Exception.”** Responses must be specific and explain in detail any requirement, specification, detail and/or paragraph to which the vendor takes exception in part or whole.

Vendor specifications and explanation of an exception in no way obligates the Library to find the exception an acceptable alternate to the RFP requirements.

Non-delineation of exceptions will be taken to mean full vendor compliance with the specifications, requirements and details herein.

* 1. **Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Project Manager**

Stephen Hovey

Library Information Technology Administrator

1 Lafayette Square

Buffalo, New York, 14203-1887 E-Mail Address: [hoveys@buffalolib.org](mailto:naumovskit@buffalolib.org)

* 1. **Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Contracting Official**

Kenneth H. Stone

Deputy Director - CFO

1 Lafayette Square

Buffalo, New York, 14203-1887 E-Mail Address: [stonek@buffalolib.org](mailto:stonek@buffalolib.org)

* 1. **Questions / Responses**

The Library believes this RFP is comprehensive and provides the necessary information to submit a competitive proposal. However, if a prospective Proposer desires to ask technical questions they must be submitted **VIA E-MAIL TO Mr. Stephen Hovey** [hoveys@buffalolib.org](mailto:hoveys@buffalolib.org) Administrative questions concerning the RFP process should be submitted **VIA E-MAIL to Mr. Kenneth H. Stone** [stonek@buffalolib.org](mailto:stonek@buffalolib.org) The Library cannot guarantee a response to questions submitted after **1 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday November 1, 2019**

The subject of any E-mail correspondence should be clearly labeled RFP ***for Wide Area Network***. The Library will acknowledge receipt of a question via return E-mail. If a prospective Proposer does not receive an acknowledgement, he/she should assume the question was not received. All responses to questions will be posted on the B&ECPL’s website RFP page and uploaded to the FCC Form 470 #200000803 associated with this RFP.

* 1. **Due Date**

Three printed copies and one electronic copy (Microsoft Word/Excel and/or PDF format) of all responses to this Request for Proposal must be sent by U.S. mail or otherwise physically delivered, in a securely sealed envelope, to:

Kenneth H. Stone

Deputy Director, CFO

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library

Administration – 2nd Floor

1 Lafayette Sq.

Buffalo, New York 14203-1887

(716) 858-7170

The Library must receive the response by 3:00 PM US Eastern Time on Wednesday January 8, 2020. Any responses received subsequent to that time will not be considered. Proposals sent by fax or e-mail will not be considered.

**Section 3 – Vendor Qualifications**

The Library requires general information about the vendor submitting a proposal for the Telecommunications Wide Area Network. As a minimum, the following must be included:

* 1. **Vendor information**

Vendor shall submit information regarding their company, including description of ownership, history, time in the telecommunications industry and future direction. Publicly held companies may submit their annual report. Subsidiary corporations shall submit a corporate organizational chart indicating the parent company, other corporate subsidiaries and the subsidiary’s relation to the above.

* 1. **Business longevity**

How long have you been in business under the current name in New York State?

* 1. **References (Same Services)**

It is imperative that the Library know the awarded vendor is successfully supplying the services requested in this RFP to others customers.

List three (3) customers for whom vendor has installed a WAN at 30Mbps or greater bandwidth data network services per circuit with at least 20 separate circuits for at least six months. Contact, company name, address, and telephone number should be included.

* 1. **References (Similar, but Not Equal)**

The Library will entertain proposals from vendors whose proposal is different than the current network configuration as long as they can provide references for other customers who have had similar services in place for at least six months for similar networks no smaller than a WAN with 20 nodes. Contact, company name, address, and telephone number should be included.

* 1. **Requirement for References**

The Library will not entertain service proposals from vendors that cannot or do not provide three references as delineated in the above paragraph 3.3 “Same Service” references, or paragraph 3.4 “Similar, but Not Equal” references.

**Section 4 – Vendor Wide Area Network Description**

The Library requires a detailed description of the vendor’s proposed service offering that would meet or exceed the performance of the existing WAN, including the technical design and equipment specifications. The proposal should clearly demonstrate that the required service performance would be sustained or exceeded.

The complete proposal must address the following:

* 1. **Network Description**

**4.1.1 *Switch or router equipment type, model***

The Library may choose to use existing equipment. Any required changes must be clearly defined and specified. For example, if a new interface card needs to be added to the existing switch, the part number must be provided.

Additionally, if it is recommended that the existing switch equipment be replaced, the model and configuration must be supplied.

The Library could also choose to use vendor-supplied on-premise equipment. Separate pricing for this option should be included.

**4.1.2 *Network diagram***

**4.1.3 *Guaranteed delivery bandwidth in each direction***

**4.1.4 *Burst bandwidth parameters in each direction***

**4.1.5 *Network diversity, redundancy, self-healing provisions***

* 1. **Technical Support.**

**4.2.1 *Location and hours of your network operation center***

**4.2.2 *What are the automatic monitoring capabilities of your network support operation?***

**4.2.3 *Describe the troubleshooting and dispatch procedures***

**4.2.4 *Describe the escalation procedures***

**4.2.5 *What is your SLA (Service Level Agreement)? Uptime %?***

**4.2.6 What is the “*mean response time” to restore service after a disruption?***

* 1. **Partner Disclosure**

If the proposed service is provided by another carrier in whole or part from any B&ECPL library location to the Central Library Network Center, you must disclose the following for each service provider: 1) the name of all service providers; 2) a technical description of all the services provided; and 3) how you connect to that service. Provide any other information deemed pertinent.

* 1. **Number of Technical and Support Personnel located in Western New York**
  2. **Describe disaster recovery provisions**
  3. **Number of miles of fiber optics installed in Erie County, NY**

**Section 5 – Terms and Costs**

* 1. **Contract Term**

The Library intends to enter into a three-year agreement, with two one year voluntary extension options that does not preclude the Library from upgrading technology or increasing bandwidth. The term would commence July 1, 2020 and, regardless of the actual service start date of individual locations, the initial term for all service would end thirty-six (36) months later on June 30, 2023 (coincident with the e-Rate funding year). Should both voluntary extension options be exercised, the contract would extend to June 30, 2025. The agreement would commence by covering services connecting the Central Library to thirty six (36) library locations shown in Exhibit A, effective July 1, 2020. The Library at its option could choose to relocate or discontinue service at up to four (4) locations during the term of the agreement without penalty.

All vendor provided on-premise equipment shall remain the property and responsibility of the vendor and be used solely for the vendor provided Category One services in compliance with e-Rate rules and regulations.

* 1. **Itemized Costs**

All costs must be itemized in Appendix C, the *Wide Area Network Circuit Pricing Form*, and **must be inclusive of all fees, taxes, access or other charges (i.e. the total bill).**

Proposer must provide separate costs by library for the following:

• Monthly recurring charges (breaking out and describing all charges, taxes, fees, surcharges that would be assessed);

• Special construction charges (identify and describe, if any);

• Basic installation charges (identify and describe, if any);

• Charges for Network Equipment, i.e., modulating electronics and other equipment necessary to make a Category One service functional (identify and describe, if any).

In addition, Proposer must provide any one-time charges to upgrade the bandwidth. monthly cost will increase according to the costs supplied on the monthly service cost schedules of the pricing form.

Understanding that the Library will select a maximum of two vendors and two transport media or protocols, Proposer may:

* choose to offer services in either a full or partial award (utilize both the full and partial award pages of the pricing form)
* choose not to offer services in a partial award (utilize the full award pages of the pricing form, leaving the partial award pages blank)
* choose not to offer services for all libraries (utilize the partial award pages of the pricing form, leaving the full award pages blank)

Proposer may offer a further discount if selected as the only Proposer to be awarded a contract for all services requested in this RFP (by listing the discounted pricing in the full award pages of the pricing form – if there is no difference between partial and full award pricing, list the same pricing in both the partial and full award pages).

**Proposer certifies that the pricing proposed on the *Wide Area Network Circuit Pricing Form* (Appendix C) constitutes the entirety of charges to the library, including any and all special construction charges, basic installation charges, taxes, access fees or other charges.**

Contract pricing shall not increase during the term of the agreement. Should the Proposer at any time attempt to charge more than the amounts shown on the above Pricing Schedule (exclusive of increases in governmental taxes/fees or governmental charges imposed by the Federal or New York State government subsequent to this agreement), the library at its discretion may terminate the agreement without penalty and without liability for payment of said higher charges.

Proposer further certifies that the person signing the RFP Response is authorized to commit the Proposer to these terms and conditions and by SIGNING, does so commit the Proposer.

* 1. **Vendor terms and conditions**

All terms and conditions must be cited.

* 1. **Library Penalties**

Information on any termination penalties, with related dates and contract requirements, must be provided**.** If none is provided, there shall be no such charges.

* 1. **Price Stability**

Vendor shall not increase the monthly and installation costs quoted in the original proposal for the term of the contract. Further, if for any reason during the term of the contract, the Vendor reduces the pricing for similar services to a federal, state or local government (similarly situated entity), the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library shall receive an equivalent reduction in pricing for the services or products delivered to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.

* 1. **Billing Requirements**

Vendor must provide a single master bill for all services that includes detail charges by location, with electronic access to this detail preferred. Vendor must state its methods for applying and transmitting any and all eligible telecommunications discounts (e-rate discounts), specifically the use of direct discounts or the BEAR process. The Library prefers direct discounts of any and all eligible telecommunications discounts (e-rate discounts) from said bill to the Library (discount share billed directly to the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) with the balance billed to the Library). The Library realizes that the direct discounting may not begin until after the related e-Rate funding commitment decision is made in any given funding year.

**Section 6 – Implementation**

* 1. **Implementation Plan**

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library requires all Proposers to provide an implementation plan. The plan should specify whether the Proposer intends to cutover all thirty-six remote libraries simultaneously or if the Proposer plans to install the telecommunications circuits library by library.

The Proposer must indicate all responsibilities of the Library, including network engineering. The Proposer should offer to provide, as an option, all network engineering, including any on-site programming and/or hardware re-configuration of switching equipment. If the option is selected by the Library, the Vendor must work under the direction of the Library’s Information Technology Administrator.

The Library’s Information Technology Administrator and Deputy Director - CFO reserve the right to approve all implementation plans.

* 1. **Implementation Process**

Describe in detail the procedures that will be followed to migrate the existing fiber lines to the new circuits. “Fallback” procedures must be provided in the event the cutover is not successful.

If the implementation will be done library by library, the Proposer should plan to complete the first migration as “pilot,” working with the Library’s staff to achieve a successful cutover, before undertaking cutover activities for additional locations. Upon approval of the Library’s Information Technology Administrator (Project Manager), the migration of the remaining libraries will take place expeditiously based on a schedule jointly developed with the Library and Vendor.

The description should include when and how long the process will take.

* 1. **Projected Timeline**

Key to the development of a timeline will be minimal disruption to library service. Downtime should be avoided during hours that a library is open. Library hours vary by location but begin as early as 8:30 AM and end as late as 9:00 PM. The Library’s web site contains updated “Hours of Service” information and should be consulted for any schedule planning:

<http://www.buffalolib.org/content/library-locations>

A timeline for the migration from the date of award to cutover should be provided. The timeline should include all steps and procedures. Realistic circuit ordering and provisioning estimates based on prior installations, which can be independently confirmed, should be used.

* 1. **Actual Timeline**

All fiber circuits under this agreement must be in place and operational as of July 1, 2020.

Once the contract award is made, the projected timeline should be updated with “real” or actual plan dates to create the final schedule. The plan date for start of recurring services shall be July 1, 2020. This final schedule should be submitted to the Library’s Information Technology Administrator for approval at least two weeks in advance prior to the first installation. However, with the exception of special construction and/or basic installation (discussed below) billable recurring services shall not commence prior to July 1, 2020.

Should a Proposer’s response involve special construction charges pursuant to e-Rate Program rules, said construction shall be first approved by the B&ECPL Deputy Director – CFO and shall commence no sooner than the later of the contract award date or January 1, 2020, provided that the Proposer certifies that Category One recurring service depends on the installation of the infrastructure.

Should a Proposer’s response involve basic installation charges pursuant to e-Rate Program rules, authorization to begin installation shall be first approved by the B&ECPL Deputy Director – CFO and shall commence no sooner than the later of the contract award date or January 1, 2020.

The B&ECPL realizes that by starting basic installation and/or special construction prior to receiving a Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) approving a special construction funding request, the B&ECPL assumes the risk that the funding request may be denied or reduced.

* 1. **Vendor Non-Performance Penalty**

Should the Vendor not provide services by the actual plan date, Vendor shall reimburse the Library for all costs of extending the Library’s existing service beyond the actual plan date until the Vendor provides operational service. This section shall not apply to that portion of delays resulting from Library requested implementation changes pursuant to Section 6.6.

* 1. **Implementation Changes**

The Library reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to make whatever project changes are necessary to provide satisfactory service to library staff and patrons. The implementation timetable will be at the complete discretion of the Library, notwithstanding installation scheduling of the Vendor.

**SECTION 7– Performance Reports**

The Vendor must provide the Library with comprehensive and actionable Performance Reports for each link, path and end-to-end service.

**SECTION 8 – e-Rate Compliance**

**8.1 General Compliance**

The proposal must be e-Rate compliant in terms of timing, billing requirements and contractual requirements. To this point, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library posted **Form 470 #200000803** under the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library **Billed Entity #124851** to notify service providers of the Library’s telecommunications needs and to request their response. For information on how to participate in the process and view the Form 470, service providers may go to <https://www.usac.org/sl/service-providers/default.aspx>

To be considered, Proposer must certify that they are a company eligible to provide these services under the universal service support mechanism (e-rate); must have an FCC Registration Number; and must have a valid Service Provider Information Number (SPIN). Further, Proposer shall certify services provided are e-Rate eligible services as shown on the Eligible Services List found by using the following URL: <https://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/beforeyoubegin/eligible-services-list.aspx>. Further, Proposer agrees that if notified of the Library’s intent to award services, the Proposer will promptly work with the Library to negotiate and execute an agreement no later than two weeks prior to the e-Rate filing Form 471 filing deadline for the funding year commencing July 1, 2020.

**8.2 On-Premise Equipment**

If the Proposer provides costs for “On-Premise” equipment, the Proposer must certify that it qualifies as “Category 1” funding as it is necessary to make a Category One broadband service functional.

**8.3 Initial Capital Costs**

Initial capital (basic installation and/or special construction) costs proposed must comply with e-Rate rules. Service providers must provide lit fiber connections to each location’s demarcation point (DMARC). DMARC locations by library are described in Appendix D. All installation and/or special construction charges must be listed in the appropriate One-time cost page(s) of the Appendix C pricing form. All initial capital costs shall be clearly listed and shall be not-to-exceed total cost by location. The Library shall not be responsible for paying any initial capital costs above those listed in Appendix C for any location. By submitting a proposal, Proposer certifies that all initial capital costs are disclosed and the Library shall not be subject to any said costs above those listed in Appendix C.

**8.4 Timing**

The services requested are intended to be included in an application for Universal Service Fund Discount for the next funding year, July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, and every year after for the life of the contract. Billable recurring services may not commence prior to July 1, 2020 unless otherwise authorized by the Library’s Chief Financial Officer.

**Section 9 – Evaluation and Awards**

The goal of the Library is to provide the fastest network service to the staff and patrons of the B&ECPL at the lowest overall cost. After careful consideration of the additional network administration and support that may be required to maintain multiple vendors and multiple transport media or protocols, the Library will select up to two vendors who may offer different transport media or protocols and award up to two contracts.

The Library will evaluate vendor proposals on the following criteria, with price of e-Rate eligible goods and services being the primary factor:

Points

1. 30 Total cost of one-time and monthly e-Rate eligible services to the Library

over the contract term, including future bandwidth upgrades over the contract term (while the B&ECPL recognizes that changes in use patterns and information provision could require varying bandwidth increases beyond current expectations, we are presently planning on initially maintaining existing bandwidth levels, with the potential to increase outlets to up to 100 Mbps each along with an increase in bandwidth to the Central Library to accommodate the changes in outlet bandwidth, over the term of the agreement);

1. 10 Total cost for ineligible services, products, and fees needed to be incurred

by the Library to provide the requested services over the contract period;

1. 15 Vendor’s demonstrated ability to:
   1. provide the network services required and to deliver the entire package of services requested;
   2. control, monitor and maintain services proposed;
   3. deliver the required public service level including vendor’s SLA; and
   4. supply performance reporting.

*Checks of references provided pursuant to Section 3 and Proposer responses to Section 4 will be important components of this evaluation factor.*

1. 15 Proposed implementation plan/process (Section 6) and the ease of

migration from current to new service provider;

1. 15 Vendor’s demonstrated ability to comply with e-Rate requirements,

noted in Sections 5 and 8, as *an eligible provider of the services requested in this RFP*;

1. 15 Vendor willingness to negotiate and execute an agreement at least two

weeks prior to the e-Rate filing deadline for the funding year beginning July 1, 2020 and to provide the B&ECPL with the proposed WAN services effective on July 1, 2020.

The Library evaluation team will review proposals and may conduct interviews of vendors to discuss proposals and services in greater detail.

**Section 10 – Partial Award**

The Library reserves the right to award all or part of the services. In addition, the Library reserves the right to reject all proposals.

**Section 11 - Acceptability**

The installation will be deemed acceptable when all components of the installation have been proven operational.