**Request for Proposal(s)** Posted on: Friday November 6th, 2020

**NOTICE TO BIDDERS**

Alaska Gateway School District, (hereafter also referred to as “Owner”, or “the district”) is now accepting bids for Internet Access at school and buildings outlined in the specifications enclosed. Bids will cover the period of July 1st, 2021 to June 30th, 2024. All bids must contain an option for this three-year contract as the base, but the district will also consider options to extend the contract to five years either through the initial agreement, or the exercise of extension options within the contract.

**INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS**

Although the lowest bid will not automatically be awarded the contract for services, cost is the primary factor, (30% of total points), that will be used to decide on a winning bid. Also of great importance is the bidders’ experience and capacity to provide the services required, quality of proposed services, financial capacity of bidding organization to deal with long E-Rate funding delays, ability of the bidding organization to bill for services accurately and in a timely fashion, and ability of bidding organizations to adequately support and maintain the Internet infrastructure. Vendor’s ability to bill at a discounted rate prior to receipt of funding commitments will be a factor in the evaluation and scoring process.

Bids should be delivered in a sealed envelope plainly marked:

“**INTERNET SERVICES PROPOSAL”**

The district would appreciate bids also being provided in PDF format to allow for easy digital transmission when answering requests for information from USAC. If your organization lacks the capacity to provide bids in this manner, the district will still consider the bid on equal terms with other bidders. All bids must be provided in paper format regardless of whether they are also being provided in digital format. The district anticipates, but does not guarantee, that the selection committee will consist of seven individuals. If bidders would like each individual on the committee to review a full color proposal they should provide an appropriate number of copies.

Address all bids to:

Brenda Overcast

Alaska Gateway School District

PO Box 226 Milepost 1313.5 Alaska Highway Tok, Alaska 99780 Phone: (907) 883-5151 Fax: (907) 883-5154 Email: bovercast@agsd.us

Bids will be received until 3pm on Friday December 19th, 2020. A contract award decision is not expected to be made any earlier than mid January, 2021. Bidders wishing to make an in-person presentation with their bid submittal should contact Brenda Overcast at bovercast@agsd.us to make arrangements.

Bids must include a written statement that “The bid is firm and will not be withdrawn for a period of ninety (90) days, or before 5pm on March 19th, 2021, whichever comes later.”

Each bidder may submit suggested changes in the specifications. These proposed changes must be submitted separately in writing, must include the cost, and must include a listing of specifications for the proposed changes. These changes should be submitted in addition to a response that follows the specifications of this RFP, rather than in place of a bid that complies with the request.

The bid offer acknowledges the right of Alaska Gateway School District (“Owner”) to accept or reject any or all bids, and to waive any informality in any bid received. It declares that the bid is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud, and that no member of the school board or officer of the school district, or any person employed by the district, is directly or indirectly interested in the bid, or in any portion of the profits that might result from the bid. The bid offer also acknowledges the right of the Alaska Gateway School District to repost this RFP with clarifications or corrections within the bid window, and to extend the bid window if the district deems it necessary for any reason.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any bid if an investigation of the bidder fails to satisfy the Owner that such bidder is properly qualified to carry out the obligations of the contract.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any bid if that bid offers to provide services or conduct activities which are in any way in violation of E-Rate rules and regulations. All bidders must certify that they have obtained a SPIN under the USF program rules, and have filed their annual SPAC.

The successful bidder may be requested to furnish a performance and payment bond in the full amount of the contract price as security for the faithful performance of the contract. The surety on the bond shall be satisfactory to the Owner. The bond shall be so conditioned that the surety will fully reimburse and repay the Owner all costs, damages, and expenses which the Owner may incur in making good any default by the contractor.

**Award of this proposal is contingent upon the approval of funding from the Schools and Libraries Universal Service Program. The successful bidder agrees to receive a portion of the payment for the provision of goods and services described herein directly from the Universal Service Fund (“USF”), and/or its agents, the National Exchange Carrier Association (“NECA”), and/or the School and Libraries Corporation (“SLC”). Alaska Gateway School District and the successful bidder will act in a reasonable manner and comply with any and all School and Libraries Universal Service Fund Program requirements, and other applicable Federal, State, and local requirements.**

***District Information***

Alaska Gateway School District is located in Interior Alaska, approximately 200 miles east of Fairbanks. The district serves approximately 2500 residents and 400 students in an area that is 22,000 square miles. The district hub is Tok, located on the Alaska Highway. In the winter, one of our sites is accessible only by air transportation

***Current Internet Capacity:***

The district currently receives service at sites at the following speeds and delivery methods: Dot Lake School: 25mbps up/down via terrestrial connection. Eagle Community School: 25mbps down, 3mbps up via satellite. Mentasta Lake School: 25mbps up/down via terrestrial connection. Tetlin School: 25mbps up/down via terrestrial connection. Tanacross School: 25mbps up/down via terrestrial connection. Walter Northway School: 25mbps up/down via terrestrial connection. Tok School and District Training and Administrative Center are 100mbps up/down via terrestrial connection

**Site and Minimum Bandwidth Expectations:**

*Eagle Community School* – 25mbps up/down or equivalent. Please include higher bandwidth options starting at 25MB/s, and providing an option up to at least 50mbps as well. Please include options specifically for 10/3mbps download/upload, and 25/3mbps download/upload. If the site will be served via terrestrial connection, matching upload/download speed is acceptable as well.

*Dot Lake School* – 25mbps up/down or equivalent. Please include bandwidth options starting at 5MB/s, and providing an option up to at least 50mbps as well. Please include options specifically for 10/3mbps download/upload, and 25/3mbps download/upload. If site will be served via terrestrial connection, matching upload/download speed is acceptable as well.

*Mentasta Lake School* – 25mbps up/down or equivalent. Please include higher bandwidth options starting at 10mbps, and providing an option up to at least 100mbps as well. Please include options specifically for 10mbps and 25mbps. If the site will be served via satellite, lesser upload speeds are acceptable as well.

*Walter Northway School* – 25mbps up/down or equivalent. Please include higher bandwidth options starting at 10mbps, and providing an option up to at least 50mbps as well. Please include options specifically for 10mbps and 25mbps. If the site will be served via satellite, lesser upload speeds are acceptable as well.

*Tanacross School* – 25mbps up/down or equivalent. Please include higher bandwidth options starting at 10mbps, and providing an option up to at least 50mbps as well. Please include options specifically for 10mbps and 25mbps. If the site will be served via satellite, lesser upload speeds are acceptable as well.

*Tetlin School*- 25mbps up/down or equivalent. Please include higher bandwidth options starting at 10mbps, and providing an option up to at least 100mbps as well. Please include options specifically for 10mbps and 25mbps. If the site will be served via satellite, lesser upload speeds are acceptable as well.

*Tok School* – 100mbps up/down or equivalent. Please include higher bandwidth options starting at 50mbps, and providing an option up to at least 200mbps as well. Please include an option that matches the current 100mbps bandwidth. If the site will be served via satellite, lesser upload speeds are acceptable as well.

*Training/Administrative* district center in Tok – 100mbps up/down. Please include higher bandwidth options starting at 50mbps and including up to at least 200mbps. If the site will be served via satellite, lesser upload speeds are acceptable as well. Please include an option that matches the current 50mbps bandwidth shared with Tok School as well.

These service levels should be considered as mandatory as we are a part of the state BAG grant program to have all our schools at 25mps . The district will also need the cost of 10mbs if this program is eliminated and we have to decrease back to the 10mps. Bidders are encouraged to provide as many options for bandwidth and pricing as possible, with costs for bandwidth increases mid-contract clearly spelled out. If options exist for corporate or bulk rate discounts, vendors are encouraged to present bids that take advantage of these rates to provide the highest rates of service for the best possible prices. Lowest Corresponding Price, (LCP), is an expectation for all bidders.

The district would like to have the capacity to deploy a mixture of bandwidth options at sites to best meet needs as well as provide for cost effective service. As such, pricing for both shared and dedicated bandwidth for each site would be appreciated. Vendors are encouraged to provide options that group sites together for shared bandwidth to take advantage of bulk bandwidth rates if possible.

**Lease of Broadband Internet/Distance Learning Circuits and Related Equipment**

Bids should include descriptions of Internet service connecting each listed location above. Whenever possible, a variety of bandwidth level options should be included with any costs for increasing bandwidth to meet increasing needs over the course of the contract clearly delineated. The architecture of this service may be any setup that is capable of delivering the service reliably. The district recognized that some sites can only be effectively served via satellite, but prefers low latency solutions wherever they are possible, reliable, and effective. The district is very interested in seeing innovative designs that will provide the district with low-latency, and high-bandwidth at reasonable cost. Bidders should clearly describe whether the proposed service and architecture will support remote access between site computers utilizing programs such as Remote Desktop.

Each proposal will clearly delineate required equipment and connection and lease costs, and provide a timeframe for installation that will provide for a fully operational infrastructure no later than July 1st, 2021. Each proposal should provide a menu of options and bandwidths for each site that includes all costs. The district would like the ability to increase or decrease available bandwidth and service levels on a site-by-site basis as needs dictate over the course of the contract.

Each proposal should clearly describe how long funding delays would be dealt with in terms of billing and expectation of non-discounted payment from the district. Proposals should also describe how loss of funding would be handled in the event that the E-Rate or BAG grant program ceases to be funded, or the district is denied funding.

Each proposal should discuss whether the vendor is capable of offering the optional services of web content filtering, and advanced firewall services. If the vendor is capable of providing these optional services with a detailed list of these services the bid should discuss how they will be handled if it is as a bundle in the cost, and/or what the cost for those services will be. Proposals should also discuss if the organization is capable of filtering https traffic, and, if so, how that would be accomplished, including any white/blacklists utilized, and any necessary installation of protocols or settings on end-user devices. Discussions of filtering should include what the bidders’ current capacity is, in addition to any future plans. Proposals shall separately itemize the cost of E-rate eligible and ineligible products, and separate installation costs, if any. To determine what items are eligible, visit the E-rate Eligible Services List at: http://www.usac.org/sl/

Eligible and ineligible items should be broken out separately and individually on the bid., and must be clearly identified as eligible or ineligible. Ineligible items must not be bundled with any eligible items.

Proposals should include bandwidth range possibilities for each site. In the event that a site needs to be closed for any reason, including insufficient enrollment, the pricing structure must make clear how closing of each site would affect the overall cost as well as relative cost at other sites if applicable. Bids must describe how the service provider will handle a site needing to be closed mid-contract, and any ongoing costs that the district would be expected to pay after the closing of a site.

**Lower bandwidth costs other than those discussed may be included to provide for contingencies in the event of loss of funding, but will not be considered in the scoring process.**

The district reserves the right to pick from bandwidth options on a site-by-site basis for the final contract. Bidders are encouraged to provide prices for the full range of possibilities for each site in terms of bandwidth options.

All signed contracts must contain the clause that the terms of the contract are contingent upon Universal Service Fund, (USF), funding. Bidders are required to state their willingness to comply with this requirement in their proposals.

**Vendor Question and Clarification Process:**

The district requests and requires that any questions be submitted in writing to Brenda Overcast, bovercast@agsd.us, by 5PM Alaska time on the 4th of December. Questions and answers will be posted on line at <http://alaskagatewayak.apptegy.us/o/agsd/page/agsd-e-rate-470-qa-to-rfp> from all vendors and bidders when they come in and no later than 10th of December at 5pm Alaska time. An additional audio conference might also be arranged with all bidders if the district feels it is necessary or beneficial based on questions received. Answers will be sent out to bidders all on the web site. In order to assure that interested bidders receive written answers in a timely fashion, the district requests that all interested parties contact Brenda Overcast as soon as possible after this RFP is posted to make their interest in bidding known.

**When in doubt about what the district preference might be, it is recommended to present the district with options.**

**Bid Acceptance: *Subject to the terms and conditions herein, and any others by reference to additional contracts, invoices, or other documentation, we accept the bids for the services as described.***

**Selection of Winning Bid:** The committee will score bids. Each committee members’ top scoring bid will be considered their “vote”. The bid with the most votes will be the one selected by the committee. In the event of a tie, a re-analysis using just the tied vendors will be conducted to generate a new vote. The selection committee will utilize the following scoring rubric:

***Bid Scoring Rubric: Provider: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Scorer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

**1. Eligible Costs Value 30 points** Cost effectiveness of solution within the needs established in the request for bids. Evaluate the monthly recurring and non-recurring charges and installation fees. Prices will be compared over a three-year period. Comparisons will include installation and recurring charges. Only eligible costs will be considered in this category.

Value 0-30 points: \_\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Services and Support Value 20 points** Proposal describes the Internet access and application services provided. Identifies the service levels included in the Internet access including how outages and loss of services are dealt with. Is there a guaranteed percentage of uptime? Are technical support services included in Internet services and guaranteed to be available 24/7? The proposal outlines the types of support services and Help-Desk services available, hours of availability and technical level of support staff available.

Value 0-20 points: \_\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Design and Technical Execution Value 15 points** Proposal includes information about the design’s technical ability to provide an effective and cost- efficient telecommunication solution. Describes the make/model, software and capabilities of on-site and off-site equipment. Includes resources available to achieve the project, and how the project utilizes the best and most cost effective solution to answer the district’s needs. Identifies where similar installations are in place and the contact person and phone number for verification of quality of implementation.

Value 0-15 points: \_\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Other Costs Value 10 points** Examines cost to the district beyond eligible items. The district will examine the costs of ineligible items that would be likely to be required by the district.

Value 0-10 points: \_\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Financial Flexibility and Stability Value 10 points** Determine the flexibility of the contractor to provide services at the estimated E-Rate subsidized level for the portion of the funding year prior to the actual receipt of approved E-Rate funding commitments. Also factor in the contractors plan for how to deal with a loss of funding in various situations such as the E-Rate program ceasing to exist, or the district being non-funded:

Value 0-10 points: \_\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Experience Value 10 points** Proposal demonstrates the provider’s ability to deliver comparable services to similarly sized customers with parallel needs. Includes references from at least 2 current customers. Includes descriptions of key personnel’s qualifications.

Value 0-10 points: \_\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Proposed Installation and Operation Delivery Value 5 points** Proposal describes the plan for implementation that includes having the Internet and all associated services online at all sites on the 1st of July, 2024. Vendors are encouraged to provide a contingency plan for failure to meet this timeline including plans for how service will be provided until their system is in full operation, and what financial guarantees and ramifications are associated with the vendor failing to meet the July 1st deadline.

Value 0-5 points: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Scoring Summary:**

Eligible Costs: \_\_\_\_/30

Services and Support: \_\_\_\_/20

Design and Technical Execution: \_\_\_\_/15

Other Costs: \_\_\_\_/10

Financial Flexibility and Stability: \_\_\_\_/10

Experience: \_\_\_\_/10

Proposed Installation and Delivery: \_\_\_\_/5