

Request for Proposal

**Talbot County Public Schools
12 Magnolia St.
Easton, Maryland 21601
Phone 410-822-0330
Fax 410-820-4260**

Dedicated Leased Fiber Optic Wide Area Network

Proposal Posting Date: January 24, 2025
Proposal Due Date: 2/24/2025 4:00 p.m.

CONTACT: Steve Wilson
PHONE: 410-822-0330, EXT 128
Email: swilson@Talbotschools.org

Minority Business Enterprises (MBE's) are encouraged to participate.

The Talbot County Public Schools reserves the right to waive any informality in, or to reject, any or all proposals.

The Talbot County Public Schools does not discriminate in admissions, access, treatment, or employment in its programs and activities on the basis of race, sex, age, color, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation or other basis prohibited by law. Appropriate accommodations for individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request.

By order of Talbot County Public Schools

Sharon M. Pepukayi Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

**Talbot County Public Schools
12 Magnolia St.
Easton, Maryland 21601
Phone 410-822-0330
Fax 410-820-**

Fiber Optic Wide Area Network

Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS) is requesting sealed proposals from pre-qualified bidders until February 24, 2025, 4:00 p.m. at 12 Magnolia Street, Easton, Maryland 21601, for vendors to provide a dedicated leased Dark Fiber and/or dedicated leased Lit Fiber Wide Area Network (WAN) to distribute internet access to selected the Talbot schools, administration office and related sites listed below:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Easton High School | White Marsh Elementary |
| Easton Middle School | Chapel District Elementary School |
| Easton Elementary School | St. Michaels Middle/High School and |
| Talbot County Education Center | St. Michaels Elementary School |
| Tilghman Elementary School | |

The proposed solution is to provide the following buildings with a WAN at a minimum speed of 10 Gbps to all below sites using fiber optic cabling. All sites route to the Internet through the Easton High School: This RFP requires for a fully qualified E-Rate funded High Speed Data Communications Network. All proposals shall be hard copy; electronic or facsimile proposals shall be rejected. Proposals received after the designated date and time will not be accepted.

During the evaluation process TCPS may at its discretion, request any one or all firms to make oral presentations. Such presentations will provide firms with an opportunity to answer any questions the evaluators may have on a firm's proposal. Not all firms may be asked to make such oral presentations.

The ***Request for Proposals*** document may be obtained by contacting Stephen Wilson at the address noted above; telephone – 410-822-0330; email address swilson@talbotschools.org. The TCPS reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or to accept any proposal or portion thereof, and enter into further negotiations with one or more vendor when, in their reasoned judgment, the citizens of Talbot County will be better served thereby.

Sharon M. Pepukayi Ed.D.
Superintendent

Section 1- General Information to Vendors

1.1 Introduction

TCPS is requesting proposals for five-year contract to lease a dedicated leased dark fiber optic and/or dedicated leased lit fiber optic WAN linked all public schools and libraries. This RFP requires a fully qualified E-Rate funded Fiber Optic infrastructure. TCPS is soliciting pre-qualified contractors to submit an installation and provide ongoing service for a fiber optic Wide Area Network (WAN). TCPS will provide a router/firewall for all connecting sites (see below for connection speeds per site). The connection points at each site will represent the demarcation between TCPS-owned and provider owned equipment. All equipment outside the TCPS demarc will be owned and maintained by the awarded service provider with no option for transfer of ownership to the lessee.

It is the intent of the RFP, is to provide broadband access via fiber optic WAN connecting the campuses of St. Michaels, Easton Elementary, Easton Middle, Easton High School, Chapel District Elementary, White Marsh Elementary, Tilghman Elementary, The Talbot County Education Center and the point-of-presence for our internet provider's Talbot County Free Library (Easton Branch), Easton, MD 21601. Therefore, respondents to this RFP must include in their proposals the ability to seamlessly connect and integrate the proposed WAN with that of the above listed entities, to form a single Wide Area Network.

1.2 RFP Schedule and Contact information

| Fiber Optic Wide Area Network | |
|--|---|
| RFP Number | 25-0127 |
| RFP Contact Information | Stephen Wilson, Information Technology Manager swilson@talbotschools.org |
| RFP Release Date | January 24, 2025 |
| RFP Documents | Maryland e-Market place https://emaryland.buyspeed.com/bs/ Talbot County Public Schools http://www.tcps.k12.md.us/departments/Technology |
| RFP pre-Conference meeting Date - Time and building tour | February 6, 2025 1PM – RSVP by 2-03-2025 |
| Pre-Qualification Statements due Date | Statements are due February 10, 2025 |
| Email Questions/Clarifications or Register to receive responses | Stephen Wilson, Information Technology Director swilson@talbotschools.org |
| Last date to email questions | February 18, 2025 |
| Final question response date | February 19, 2025 |
| RFP Delivery | All submissions be will be efiled to TCPSfinance@talbotschools.org or the emaryland Marketplace (Emma) dropbox. |

| | |
|--|---|
| RFP closing Date – Time and Opening | February 24, 2025 4:00 PM E.S.T No RFPs will be accepted after this time |
| RFP Selection and Recommendation | Made By TCPS IT department and prior to Prior to USAC form 471 filing date |
| Award of contract | Contingent upon 1) TCPS BOE RFP approval March 19, 2025 2) Talbot County Budget funding approval May 30, 2025 3) USAC/SLD Funding approval June 2025 (approximately) |
| Contract Start date | July 1, 2025 |
| Contract End Date | June 30, 2030 |
| Delivery Time: | July 1, 2025 |

During the evaluation process TCPS may at its discretion, request any one or all firms to make oral presentations. Such presentations will provide firms with an opportunity to answer any questions the evaluators may have on a firm’s proposal. Not all firms may be asked to make such oral presentations.

The ***Request for Proposals*** document may be obtained by contacting Stephen Wilson, Information Technology Manager at the address noted above; telephone – 410-822-0330; email address - swilson@talbotschools.org . The TCPS reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or to accept any proposal or portion thereof, and enter into further negotiations with one or more vendor when, in their reasoned judgment, the citizens of Talbot County will be better served thereby.

1.2 Instructions to Vendors

Pre-qualification statements are required and must sent to Steve Wilson, Information Technology Director, swilson@talbotschools.org by End of day, February 10, 2025 via By Carrier or **Registered email**.

Questions concerning this RFP maybe submitted via email to Steve Wilson swilson@talbotschools.org: Subject - All questions must be in writing using email with RFP 25-0127 printed in the subject line. Verbal inquiries will not be accepted. Questions and submissions be will be accepted until end of day on February 18, 2025. Please note that all written questions and responses are, by law, public information and will be shared with all interested parties and vendors. Responses to question will be made by February 19, 2025

1.3 Indemnification and Institution Requirements

The successful vendor shall agree to indemnify TCPS, its Board, its Officers, and employees against loss or damage (including reasonable attorney’s fees and other costs of litigation) caused by the vendor’s negligent acts or omissions and the negligent acts or omissions of the vendor’s agents or employees. The successful vendor shall agree to defend any suit against The TCPS alleging injuries or damages arising out of the service provided; however, that nothing contained therein shall require the successful vendor to defend or indemnify TCPS for injuries or damages arising out of the negligence of TCPS, its agents, or employees. Contract Law: Any contract and /or purchase order(s) resulting from this RFP will be

subject to the laws of the State of Maryland and all other applicable statutes. The total contract and / or purchase order(s) will include only the negotiated and executed contract and / or purchase order(s) and this request for proposal.

1.4 Vendor Expense

TCPS will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by any vendor in the development of a response to this request including any onsite (or otherwise) interviews and/ or presentations, and /or supplemental information provided, submitted, or given to the school or its representatives. Further, TCPS shall reserve the right to cancel the work described herein prior to issuance and acceptance of any contractual agreement/purchase order by the recommended vendor even if the district has formally accepted a recommendation.

1.6 Proposal Format

In order to facilitate the analysis of responses to this request vendors are required to prepare their proposals in accordance with the instructions outlined in this request. Vendors are required to submit a pricing schedule similar to the RFP Form 1 - Internet Access Distribution Pricing Schedule. A spreadsheet is available upon request. Vendors whose proposals deviate from these instructions may be considered non-responsive and may be disqualified at the discretion of TCPS. Proposals should be prepared as simply as possible and provide straightforward responsive information. Expensive bindings, promotional material, etc., are neither necessary nor desired. Emphasis should be concentrated on accuracy, completeness and clarity of content. All parts, pages, figures and tables should be numbered and clearly labeled. The proposal should be organized into the following major sections:

Executive Summary (Section 1): Provide a brief narrative summarizing your company's ability to meet the requirements of this RFP. Please note that the executive summary should include contact information with a valid e-mail address, fax number and telephone number.

Company Profile (Section 2): Describe your company. Including but not limited to, years in business, general markets serviced, number of clients using your hardware/software, and any distinction of your company relating to the school computing marketplace. Also, include a listing of installations at entities similar to Talbot County Schools by name and state, including appropriate contact information. The number of customers, distinguished by type if relevant, should also be included. Any material (including letters of support or endorsement from clients) indicative of the vendor's capabilities are also encouraged. Provide evidence that the vendor is a corporation; is in good standing and qualified to conduct business in Maryland. Please include copies of business licenses, professional certifications, proof of liability insurance and/or other credentials with relevance to this request.

References Please provide a description of your company's prior installs similar to the requirements specified here, preferably detailing projects in the public sector.

Section 2: Technical Requirements

WAN Backbone Requirements

The backbone uplink(s) will be routed through a core switch and central firewall gateway located at the Easton High School Server Room, 723 Mecklenburg Ave, Easton, Maryland 21601. The WAN will be

managed by the Easton High School hub and will connect to the Sailor network using an existing circuit. The bidder is NOT responsible for this core switch/gateway or the Internet uplink to the Sailor network.

Please see the table on page 9 for connection speeds required to each site. The WAN shall be for the exclusive use of TCPS no other user shall be permitted to use any of the WAN facilities without the express written consent of TCPS and Sailor. **The leased fiber is not to be shared with any other users including the provider themselves, except for provider support and monitoring.**

Each end of the fiber optic cable will be available through a pair of SC fiber optic terminators or a demarcation Ethernet switch that will convert 10GBASE-T connection in the 10Gbps sites, respectively. The sites requiring 40Gbps will need to have 40GBASE-LR connections. The cable is to be the equivalent of a single direct connection; the fiber cable may be jumped at distribution points where necessary, but will not connect to any routing, terminating, re-transmitting, or other electronic monitoring equipment.

The service provider shall be responsible for supplying all necessary network infrastructure and associated data electronics to maintain all links to this WAN backbone. All associated WAN electronics must be protected from short-term power outages and voltage fluctuations by connection to UPS backups. All equipment located outside of the building envelope will be the responsibility of the service provider to provide the UPS backup. Equipment located within TCPS buildings will be backed up by TCPS equipment.

The Talbot County Free Library (TCFL) serves as the Sailor Network Point of Presence (PoP) for all Talbot County entities and agencies, including the Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS).

Service Providers providing intermediate layer 1 or 2 services and require access to the Sailor PoP, at the Talbot County Free Library – Easton Branch, will provide assurance that no traffic, un-authorized, by Sailor will be introduced onto the Sailor network via a third party's intermediate transport and connection (e.g., VPN or GRE tunnel between the Sailor PoP and TCPS PoP). Sailor's Operation Center will allocate Sailor IP for these connections. In addition, commercial traffic is not an authorized use of the Sailor network.

Service Providers are responsible for obtaining all required permissions and permits from applicable state, county, and local agencies associated with this project prior to installation.

The service provider shall provide a monitoring/notification service to the TCPS Technology staff for use in assessing the status of each WAN link including all necessary software and training. The service should provide an email and/or cell phone notification of any WAN performance lags or complete outages. Sideband monitoring technology should be used on Licensed Wireless links where possible.

The service provider shall provide a 3-hour response during normal business days and a 6-hour response on weekends and school holidays, to WAN outages and a maximum total down time of 24 hours, once conditions of the facilities and towers allow for safe access to the equipment. For purposes of this RFP a response is defined as a complete diagnosis of the problem and a proposed strategy and timeline for repair.

Each site's termination locations must be coordinated with the TCPS Technology Department prior to work commencing.

Any WAN construction work should not interrupt existing network operations. Any new links must be constructed and tested independently without interruption of current network services during normal TCPS hours of operation. Any outages required for service cut-over must be approved by the TCPS Technology Department and the TCFL network administrator.

All vendors shall be registered as a service provider with the Universal Service Administrative Company–School and Libraries Division (USAC-SLD) for the E-Rate Program. Bidders agree to comply with all requirements of the E-Rate Program for service providers. All bidders shall furnish their Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) on their bid form.

This proposal is for services to begin on July 1, 2025 and end on June 30, 2030 and should include monthly pricing. Pre-qualification statements are included in the bid package. Minority business enterprises are encouraged to participate.

TCPS reserves the right to award the contract (subject to funding) to single or multiple vendors who offers the best solution in the sole opinion of the school system.

The Talbot County Board of Education does not discriminate in admissions, access, treatment, or employment in its programs and activities on the basis of race, sex, age, color, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation or other basis prohibited by law. Appropriate accommodations for individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request.

RFP Description:

Implementation of this service is expected to commence as soon as funding is secured, no later than July 1, 2025.

For this service to be financially feasible, it will be essential to qualify and receive funding for the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD). Any vendor to be considered for the award for this project must provide an Internet solution on a rental basis or lease basis, meeting all the criteria necessary to provide a functional system, as well as the criteria for Internet Access as required by SLD.

The TCPS reserves the right to award the contract subject to funding to the vendor(s) who provides the best solution in the sole opinion of the school system.

The applicant intends that the Form 472 Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement (BEAR) method for reimbursement of eligible Category 1 E-Rate funds.

Miscellaneous

1. Ownership of the provided equipment will not transfer to the school in the future, and the relevant contract or lease does not include an option to purchase the equipment by the school.
2. The equipment will not be used by TCPS for any purpose other than the receipt of eligible telecommunications or Internet access service of which it is part (if applicable).

3. Responsibility for maintaining the WAN equipment rests with the service provider, not the school (if applicable).
4. Must assure that products and service is HIPPA and CIPA compliant (if applicable).

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The vendor shall provide all labor, materials, equipment and services necessary for and reasonably incidental to installing the network.
2. There are to be no product substitutions without written permission from TCPS.
3. All TCPS related site work is to be coordinated with Steve Wilson, TCPS' Technology Manager and respective School Managers at each school. All site-work involving TCFL will be coordinated Robert Long, TCFL Network Administrator.
4. Any damage will be the responsibility of the vendor to repair.
5. Dumpsters are not to be used unless the vendor makes arrangements to have them emptied, with billing directly to the vendor.
6. Steve Wilson, Technology Director, or his designated representative will administer this contract.
7. The successful vendor will be required to provide trained full-time supervision for this contract. Additionally, the vendor shall provide documentation stating that the specific installation crew is trained for installing approved products.
8. Per state law, there will be no smoking in any TCPS or TCFL owned facility *or* on its grounds.
9. Vendor facility access is strictly limited to locations of contracted work. Failure to abide by this, is the sole opinion of the contract administrator, will be deemed a breach of contract. This may lead to termination of the contract, replacement of the vendor personnel, additional vendor expense and/or removal of bidding privileges.
10. The contractor is responsible for the proper scheduling and:
 - A. No material shall be delivered to the site until job conditions are approved for installation.
 - B. Old equipment shall not be removed before new equipment is ready to be installed.
 - C. Service shall not be disrupted during the transition for more than 6 hours at a time and only as pre-scheduled with TCPS Tech Staff.
 - D. Materials shall be delivered as new equipment which shall carry the manufacturer serial number and model number.
 - E. Materials shall be stored in dry, well ventilated and secured spaces.
 - F. Work will need to be scheduled to prevent any down time during the student day, unless approved by the Technology Manager.

11. Clean Up: Debris resulting from this work shall be removed from the site at the vendor's expense. The inside project areas are to be swept daily. Waste and debris is to be removed in a timely manner. Site is to be restored to its pre-contractor condition.

Evaluation

| Criteria for Fiber Optic Wide Area Network | Points |
|---|---------------|
| Price of the eligible products and services | 40 |
| Prior experience with Reseller/or installer | 35 |
| Meets technical requirements | 25 |
| Failure to provide equivalent product or service specifications may disqualify proposal | 100 total |

| Building | Transmission rate provided by TCPS | Transmission rate provided by WAN Contractor |
|--|---|---|
| Easton High School (WAN Link) 723 Mecklenburg Ave Easton, MD 21601 410-822-4180 | 40 Gbps | 40 Gbps |
| Easton High School (School Router Link) 723 Mecklenburg Ave Easton, MD 21601 410-822-4180 | 40 Gbps | 40 Gbps |
| Easton Middle School 201 Peach blossom Dr Easton, MD 21601 410-822-2910 | 10 Gbps | 10 Gbps |
| Easton Elementary School 307 Glenwood Rd Easton, MD | 10 Gbps | 10 Gbps |
| Chapel District Elementary School 11430 Cordova Rd Cordova, MD 21625 410-822-2391 | 10 Gbps | 10 Gbps |
| White March Elementary School 4322 Lovers Lane Trappe, MD 21673 410-476-3144 | 10 Gbps | 10 Gbps |
| St Michaels HS MS ES Campus 200 Seymour Ave St. Michaels, MD 21663 410-745-2852 | 10 Gbps | 10 Gbps |
| Tilghman Elementary School 21374 Foster Ave Tilghman, MD 21671 410-886-2391 | 10 Gbps | 10 Gbps |
| Talbot County Education Center 12 Magnolia St. Easton MD 21601 | 40 Gbps | 40 Gbps |
| Talbot County Free Library –Easton Serves as The State Library Network SAILOR ISP POP 100 W. Dover St, Easton MD 21601 | 10 Gbps | 10 Gbps |
| | | |
| ISP Link from Talbot County Free Library –Easton To Easton High School MDF | 10 Gbps | 10 Gbps |

**THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF TALBOT COUNTY
CONTRACTOR'S PRE-QUALIFICATION STATEMENT**

IMPORTANT

This questionnaire is intended for establishing the qualifications of vendors for providing Information Technology Services under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education.

If the vendor has not filled in such a questionnaire and turned it over to the local educational agency having jurisdiction setting forth its qualifications to the satisfaction of the Superintendent of Schools, he/she (the vendor) shall not be eligible to receive consideration for the bidding of vendor services through the Board of Education. Certification shall be valid for one calendar year only, and renewal must be applied for before January first of each succeeding year.

General:

PQ-1 – Legal Title and Address of Organization:

PQ-2 Maryland Representative's Name, Title and Address:

PQ-3 – Please Check One:

Corporation Co-Partnership Individual Other

PQ-4 – Capital Paid Cash: \$ _____ Date of Incorporation: _____

State in which Incorporated: _____

PQ-5 – Have you or your firm ever failed to complete a project? If yes, explain (use additional sheets as required).

PQ-6 – Is any member of your organization employed by the County or in any way officially connected by the local government? If yes, explain.

PQ-7 – Have you or your organization ever been a party or criminal litigation as a result of installation methods, etc.? If yes, explain (use additional sheets as required).

PQ-8 – Please describe how your Internet solution meets requirements set by the Schools and Libraries Division for priority 1 E-Rate reimbursement.

My company, _____ is authorized to lease
Fiberoptic cable and has a Service Provider Application Number (SPIN).

Authorized Signature

_____ Date _____

Name Printed

Email

Phone _____

Company Address _____

USAC Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN)

**Talbot County Public Schools
 Bid Form, Dedicated Leased Dark Fiber
 RFP 25-0127-TCPS-WAN**

_____ Company Name _____ SPIN

| Description of Service Requested (by Site if applicable) | One-Time Charges | Monthly Cost | | | | |
|--|------------------|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Cost of Maintenance & Operations (M&O) charges | | | | | | |
| Cost of Eligible Network Equipment (furnish detailed list) | | | | | | |
| E-Rate ineligible items, if any (furnish detailed list) | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | | |

Use Additional Bid Form Sheets as needed.

Attach a detailed listing of all subcontractors, equipment and software organized by site. Additional information that the vendor wishes to provide shall be attached to this bid.

_____ Authorized Signature

_____ Date

_____ E-Mail

_____ Printed Name & Title

_____ Phone

Talbot County Public Schools
 Bid Form, Dedicated Leased Lit Fiber
 RFP 25-0127-TCPS-WAN

_____ Company Name

_____ SPIN

| Description of Service Requested (by Site if applicable) | One-Time Charges | Monthly Cost | | | | |
|--|------------------|--------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Cost of Maintenance & Operations (M&O) charges | | | | | | |
| Cost of Eligible Network Equipment (furnish detailed list) | | | | | | |
| E-Rate ineligible items, if any (furnish detailed list) | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | | |

Use Additional Bid Form Sheets as needed.

Attach a detailed listing of all subcontractors, equipment and software organized by site. Additional information that the vendor wishes to provide shall be attached to this bid.

_____ Authorized Signature

_____ Date

_____ E-Mail

_____ Printed Name & Title

_____ Phone

Proposed Physical Network Diagram--TCPS WAN

