

MILWAUKEE PUBLIC LIBRARY (BEN #132906)

E-RATE YEAR 2025-2026 RFP

Category 1 – Internet Access/Telecommunications

Hotspot Lending

E-Rate Form 470 Application

MPL RFP MPL-25-002

Submission Deadline – March 14, 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

Milwaukee Public Library (MPL) is seeking proposals for Wi-Fi hotspot services as part of its E-Rate Funding Year 2025 application. MPL as a City of Milwaukee department acting through the Board of Trustees, Milwaukee Public Library seeks proposals from qualified service providers. The Milwaukee Public Library (MPL or Library) system consists of the Central Library and twelve (12) branch libraries located throughout the City.

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals from qualified vendors to provide portable Wi-Fi hotspot devices that meet the specific requirements outlined in this document.

MPL aims to provide internet access to its patrons, staff, and community through a reliable and efficient Wi-Fi hotspot lending program. The proposed solution should be a single device, portable, and compatible with commercially available mobile wireless internet services. Equivalent services to existing devices or services will also be considered.

Proposers are required to submit a completed original proposal in accordance with the format provided in this solicitation to the Milwaukee Public Library through email at LibraryE-Rate@milwaukee.gov prior to 3:00 p.m. local time on March 14, 2025. Questions and requests for clarification related to this RFP should be submitted in writing via email to LibraryE-Rate@milwaukee.gov.

MPL looks forward to reviewing proposals from qualified vendors that can provide a reliable and efficient Wi-Fi hotspot solution that meets the needs of its community.

2. KEY DATES

The proposed project schedule for the Internet Access/Telecommunications Hotspot Lending service is as follows:

RFP Published/Form 470 Posted: February 13, 2025

Service Provider Questions Due: February 22, 2025

Addendum with Replies to Service Provider Questions: February 26, 2025

Service Provider Responses Due: March 14, 2025 prior to 3:00 p.m. local time

Service Start Date: July 1, 2025

Note: The service start date is expected to be around the beginning of the 2025 funding year, but the exact date will be determined based on the contract award and other factors.

All service providers are expected to adhere to these key dates to ensure a timely and successful implementation of the Internet Access/Telecommunications Hotspot Lending service for Milwaukee Public Library.

Timeline:

All bids must be submitted by March 14, 2025 prior to 3:00 p.m. local time to be considered. Late bids will not be accepted.

3. SERVICE PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be met by Service Providers submitting a proposal for Internet Access/Telecommunications Hotspot Lending services under this 2025 E-Rate RFP:

Service Providers must provide a valid Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN) at the time the bid is submitted, and the SPIN must be included in the response documentation.

Service Providers must be in good financial standing with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Service Providers must demonstrate a minimum of 5 years of experience in K-12 education, public libraries and/or city/county government markets.

Service Providers must demonstrate a minimum of 5 years of E-Rate LTE, mobile hotspots, or related experience.

Service Provider should demonstrate ability to administer applicable devices/services to be compliant with the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA). The Service Provider should indicate CIPA compliant technology measure and the cost must be allocated separately. MPL will consider though is not obligated to use this vendor provided service.

The Service Provider must be able to begin providing services by July 1, 2025.

The Proposer shall provide a billing procedure and information in compliance with the provisions established by the Schools and Libraries Division E-Rate program. Milwaukee Public Library may elect either the Billed Entity Reimbursement or Service Provider method of invoicing.

All components and associated labor not eligible for E-rate funding must be provided in a separate quote.

All ineligible and all ineligible allocations on eligible equipment and/or services must be clearly included in the proposal.

All vendors must provide documentation in the proposal about their hotspot management portal, including a link to the portal "demo" if available.

Any information contained in the proposal that is proprietary must be clearly designated. Marking the entire proposal as proprietary will be neither accepted nor honored. If any information is marked as proprietary in the proposal, such information will not be made public.

Vendors must contact Milwaukee Public Library by e-mail at LibraryE-Rate@milwaukee.gov for any questions, bids, and or proposals. For our protection, MPL staff do not talk with vendors by phone. Technical questions will be answered only by Milwaukee Public Library staff by written correspondence.

Service Providers are responsible for checking the EPC portal daily for responses to any questions received and any addenda posted for this RFP.

4. PROJECT AND CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS

Milwaukee Public Library is seeking a service provider to deliver Internet Access/Telecommunications Hotspot Lending services. This project is dependent on partial funding from the E-Rate program. All contracts entered into as a result of the posting of the Form 470/RFP will be contingent upon the approval of discounts and disbursement of funds from the Universal Services Administrative Company (USAC) and Milwaukee Public Library acceptance of the funding award. No part of this contract will be valid or executed outside of E-Rate timelines and approvals unless authorized by Milwaukee Public Library.

The following requirements must be met by the service provider:

Estimated Discount is 90% for Milwaukee Public Library.

Ineligible items and features must be clearly included in your proposal.

Any non-recurring costs must be submitted separately with cost explanation (i.e., installation, initial configuration, kitting, equipment).

All pricing must include taxes, shipping/handling, and all other eligible fees. Taxes and state electronic waste fees are not included in the capped amount and should be itemized on the quote. MPL is a tax-exempt organization and will provide a tax exemption certificate to the awarded provider during implementation.

Prices must be held firm for the duration of the contract or until all work associated with the project(s) are complete (including any USAC approved extensions).

Any implementation that is done prior to the funding award must be requested and approved in writing by Milwaukee Public Library.

Services covered by this contract cannot take place before the contract start date of July 1, 2025 unless requested by Milwaukee Public Library.

Existing equipment and/or services procured prior to the contract will be converted to this contract terms if requested by Milwaukee Public Library, contingent on USAC eligibility.

Compliance Requirements

All vendors must comply with Milwaukee Public Library, School, Local, State, and Federal contracting requirements including but not limited to:

- Prevailing Wage
- Insurance

Notice to Proceed

This project is contingent on funding from the E-Rate program. As such, the Milwaukee Public Library will not issue a Notice to Proceed until a copy of the approved Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) has been received from USAC and a Form 486 "Receipt of Service Confirmation" has been filed. Contractor will not be permitted to commence work, unless otherwise directed by the Milwaukee Public Library, until a Notice to Proceed has been issued. Milwaukee Public Library will not be responsible for costs incurred by the Service Provider prior to receiving a Notice to Proceed.

Reservation of Rights

Milwaukee Public Library reserves the right to award all, none, or select portions of this bid to one or multiple Service Providers. Milwaukee Public Library reserves the right to negotiate terms and conditions of the RFP as necessary, to reject any or all proposals, to increase quantities, and to waive any irregularities or informalities in the RFP or in this process.

Please direct any questions or concerns to LibraryE-Rate@milwaukee.gov.

Financial Stability

Following review of all proposals, the Library Director may request proof of financial stability from the Proposer. Such proof can take the form of a copy of its most recent audited or compiled financial statement, a bank reference, or a credit rating.

Expected Agreement

The successful responder will be expected to enter into an agreement on the form prepared by the City, which will be substantially the same as the Request for Proposal and Standard Terms and Conditions. In no event is the responder to submit its own standard terms and conditions as a response to this RFP.

Declaration of Default

The City of Milwaukee reserves the right to declare in default any contract as a result of the Responder's failure to promptly and effectively carry out the provisions of the contract.

Contact Information:

For any questions or concerns regarding the bid, please contact LibraryE-Rate@milwaukee.gov or EPC portal for more information.

Funding:

This project is funded by 2025 funds, and all bids must comply with the requirements and regulations of the 2025 funding program.

Terms:

Contract will be awarded for 1 year with option to extend for two 1-year term renewals under the same conditions of the original terms.

5. SCOPE OF SERVICES

MPL seeks to maintain an active collection of hotspot devices and services in alignment with patron need, sufficient funding, and USAC rules. Given this, MPL may acquire up to 1,000 hotspot devices and service lines.

Providers must be able to successfully meet the following scope of services and device specifications and outline these services in the RFP bid in addition to those identified in other sections of this RFP:

Service Specifications:

- 5G service

Device Specifications:

- Be 5G enabled
- Be handheld

- Be portable
- Be a single device (i.e., not a set of linked devices)
- Be for use with a commercially available mobile wireless internet service
- Be an eligible device under the USAC Wi-Fi hotspot lending program

CIPA Compliance:

- The Service Provider should indicate CIPA compliant technology measure.

Device/Service Management, Reporting, & Billing:

- Service providers must provide applicants with reports regarding Wi-Fi hotspot data usage for off-premises use in machine-readable digital format so that information lines can be read and sorted, clearly identifying the lines that are not being used across billing periods and the lines that have been terminated pursuant to the non-usage rules.
- Service providers are required to provide data usage reports at least once per billing period. Milwaukee Public Library reserves the right to collect these reports more frequently.
- Reports must be in machine-readable digital format so the lines can be read and sorted, clearly identifying the lines that are not being used across billing periods or that will be or have been terminated due to non-usage.
- Service providers are required to notify applicants of each line that goes unused for 60 days and to provide applicants 30 days for the hotspot to be used before terminating the line of service.
- Service providers may not charge early termination fees for lines of service associated with Wi-Fi hotspots that are lost, broken, or unused.
- Service providers are not permitted to bill applicants for unused lines of service that are discontinued.
- When terminating a line of service, the service provider cannot bill the applicant for the balance that was not paid for by the E-Rate program.
- Milwaukee Public Library reserves the right to suspend, cancel, and terminate lines of service as needed to administer the hotspot device program for the Milwaukee Public Library and patrons.
- Service providers must provide the Milwaukee Public Library access to an administrative portal for the purpose of reporting, device service management and tracking, billing, invoicing, managing orders, and other applicable access for the purpose of administering the hotspot device program for the Milwaukee Public Library. Access to the portal will not have limits on the number of accounts the Milwaukee Public Library requires to maintain the hotspot program.

Contacts & Implementation

Implementation shall begin in alignment with program eligibility and confirmation of E-Rate funding.

The Library will provide a single point of contact for implementation. The Library will provide oversight, direction, and guidance for implementation process.

At the time of the contract award, the service provider shall establish points of contact and dedicated personnel within its existing organization that shall be charged with planning and implementing the contract. The Proposer shall:

- Provide the name, email address, and telephone number of a single point of contact for planning and implementation.
- Administer all plans, policies, and specific transition of contract activities.

The Proposer shall submit, no later than 30 calendar days after contract award, an Implementation Plan. This Plan shall contain specific schedules and procedures for the implementation of hotspot program equipment and services, including:

- General structure of the team, organizations involved, an approximate number of personnel, tasks assigned by the organization, reporting structure, approximate time frames for activities and implementation procedures.

- Process for test and acceptance for the equipment, including settings verification compliant with library needs and procedures for delivering the results to the Library.

6. BIDS DISQUALIFICATION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used to disqualify bids for the Internet Access/Telecommunications Hotspot Lending service:

Bids that are deemed "SPAM" or "Robotic" in nature will not be considered valid and will be disqualified.

Only bids that provide a complete solution for the Internet Access/Telecommunications Hotspot Lending service will be evaluated. Partial bids will not be considered and will be disqualified.

Bids that do not include all of the requested services, term of services, and ineligible items will be disqualified.

Bids that do not meet the requirements for multi-functional devices, such as smartphones, PCs, notebooks, tablets, customer premises equipment, routers or switches, and wireless access points, will be disqualified.

Bids that do not meet the requirements for wireless services, including delivery to broadband-enabled end user devices, fixed wireless connections, private 5G/LTE networks, fiber, and network expansion or construction, will be disqualified.

7. PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Milwaukee Public Library will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria to determine the most cost-effective and beneficial offer for Internet Access/Telecommunications Hotspot Lending services. The evaluation process will consider the following key factors:

1. **Price:** The cost of the proposed Internet Access/Telecommunications Hotspot Lending services, including all applicable fees and charges.
2. **Prior Experience:** The provider's experience in delivering similar services, including the number of years in operation, client references, and success stories.
3. **Understanding of Needs:** The provider's ability to understand the specific needs of the **Milwaukee Public Library**, including the ability to meet the requirements outlined in this RFP.
4. **Compatibility with Existing Infrastructure:** The provider's ability to ensure compatibility with the
5. **Milwaukee Public Library** 's existing infrastructure, including hardware, software, and network systems.
6. **Completeness of Response:** The completeness and thoroughness of the provider's proposal, including the provision of all required information and documentation.

The evaluation team will review and score each proposal based on these criteria. The provider with the highest total score will be considered the most cost-effective and beneficial offer for Milwaukee Public Library. In the event of a tie, the Milwaukee Public Library reserves the right to request additional information or to conduct further evaluation to determine the winning proposal.

Proposals will be evaluated by a team of Milwaukee Public Library representatives, and the evaluation process will be conducted in a fair and impartial manner. The Milwaukee Public Library reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or to negotiate with one or more providers, if deemed necessary.

Please submit any questions or concerns regarding the proposal evaluation process to LibraryE-Rate@milwaukee.gov by February 22, 2025.

Award of Bid:

Only one bid will be awarded for the Project, or based on the project need, multiple vendors will be awarded. The award of the bid will be based on the evaluation of complete and eligible bids that meet all the requirements for the Internet Access/Telecommunications Hotspot Lending service.