Marion County E-Learning RFP #2
Dedicated E-Learning Private Network
May 1, 2020

Overview

The 11 public school districts and 50 public charter schools in Marion County (by far Indiana's most populous county) serve approximately 152,000 students and are interested in collectively procuring hotspot devices and a private e-learning network. The Indianapolis E-learning Fund -- acting in the best interest of and in collaboration with the school districts and charter schools -- will issue two RFP's: the first (which was released on April 24, 2020) sought partners who could supply hotspot devices; the second (below) is seeking partners to supply/build and/or operate/maintain a private network for e-learning. The hope and expectation of the school districts and charter schools is that this collective purchase will result in earlier, higher-priority delivery; a more efficient and transparent process; lower cost and more efficient use of public funds; access to additional funding streams; and more uniform compatibility with the private network solution to come. This "Marion County E-Learning RFP #2" requests proposals for procurement of a private dedicated e-learning network for full Marion county deployment.

Mission

The Indianapolis E-Learning Fund Members (in collaboration with the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation) are seeking to support Marion County public schools (traditional public and public charter) with addressing technical barriers that hinder many students' access to quality education in an e-learning environment, otherwise known as the "homework gap." The homework gap remains a long-standing critical issue for our community that has recently been exacerbated by the subsequent, rapid shift to e-learning due to the social distancing orders associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many Marion County students need our help. A large portion estimated at 39,000 students (as of April 27) lack an adequate high-speed internet connection for e-learning at their residence. Furthermore, some 44,000 devices (laptops, tablet, e-readers) will also be required for students to utilize for e-learning. While some students have access to the internet through a mobile phone, that mode of connection cannot consistently support completion of e-learning assignments. Even after implementing the various subsidized and unsubsidized connectivity programs available to K-12 schools, many students are still without a connection. To close this gap and provide all students with an equitable opportunity for education, our school corporations need reliable, cost-effective solutions for providing adequate and managed e-learning connectivity directly to each student.

Our mission through a multi-phased RFP is to provide an effective collaboration, utilizing teamwork and technical oversight to ensure a set of procurement processes that are solutions based, timely, cost effective, efficient, and in accordance with security and usage policies required by each represented school district and charter school. This Phase 2 RFP seeks proposals for full wireless connectivity of the entire Marion County school's student population for ongoing and sustained e-learning curriculum. This platform is intended to establish learning beyond the classroom with virtual capabilities and access that provides a rich multi-media experience combined with a simplified management approach. The ideal solution(s) (i.e., virtual private networks over LTE, Wi-Fi, or other network methods as proposed) will ensure schools can provide all students with internet access that is set to e-learning, is CIPA compliant, and restricts personal internet usage (i.e., gaming, streaming movies, non-curriculum content).

Vision

It is our duty to conduct an open process in an ethical manner that builds public and group confidence, preserves the integrity of an open and fair procurement process, and is open to multiple technical solutions. As this is a public procurement, we must set the example and build opportunities for cooperative purchasing to ensure public and philanthropic funds are expended in a manner that provides maximum benefit to public school students in Marion County.

Organization

For the purposes of this RFP process, the Richard M Fairbanks Foundation is serving as the facilitator for the needs of the Indianapolis E-Learning Fund and public schools in Marion County, overseeing the collection of proposals and distribution to the schools for their consideration, as well as aggregating responses to each proposal submitted and communicating these responses back to each respondent. All purchasing decisions will be made by the Marion County public schools. To accomplish this task, we are organized as shown in the following set of supporting entities: all eleven school districts (Beech Grove, Decatur, Franklin, Indianapolis Public Schools, Lawrence, Perry, Pike, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Speedway) and the Center for Innovative Education Solutions, representing 50 public charter schools in Marion County. If you have any comments, concerns or questions about the RFP information contained herein, please feel free to contact Claire Fiddian-Green, President & CEO, Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, at fiddian-green@rmff.org and 317-663-4186. The following requirements should be considered and included in your proposals.

Dedicated e-Learning Network Solutions Guidance

Solutions proposed should consider the following:

- o The solutions should provide 100% coverage for students residing in Marion County.
- o The solutions must allow for reasonable ease of deployment and should be validated and connected by the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. The in-service date would be no later than July 1, 2021. Equipment, network setup, and validation by districts and schools would be conducted before this date, and fully operational.
- o The solutions response shall clearly spell out: hardware pricing, annual operation and maintenance costs (if applicable), bulk price breaks, contract requirements (if applicable) including length and severability, along any other restrictions and/or stipulations.
- o The solutions shall clearly state the lead-time, and associated roll-out timing (including any required activation/validation) with detailed Gantt chart and milestones.
- o The solutions ideally should allow for open format (unlocked/non provider specific/ software defined); if hardware is carrier specific this must be stated.
- o Solutions must allow for the districts and schools to govern, monitor, and limit access to only e-learning and/or approved content along with being fully CIPA compliant. Solutions must also allow for the districts and schools to restrict access to only currently enrolled students (i.e., districts and schools will need the ability to end service for students who leave the district or school and are no longer enrolled). Proposals must clearly stipulate the type of access, how access is approved and terminated, and any available/optional controls.
- o The solutions should allow for a zero-touch provisioning system and remote device administration (i.e., configuring SSIDs).
- o The solutions should meet the FCC definition of a broad-band connection, with nominal data connection speeds of 25Mbps/3Mbps, along with at least 20GB per line/device per month to support high-throughput activities associated with comprehensive e-learning curricula.
- o The solution(s) response should note any methods to track performance to better optimize the curriculum delivery.

- o The solutions should consider both types of end user devices composed of Wi-Fi (primary) and Cellular (secondary) that the districts and charter schools already have deployed. Any device restrictions should be stated.
- o There is an interest in solutions that are CBRS Band 48 or EBS Band 41 ready/capable.
- o Additionally, there is an interest in 5G network compatibility/readiness.
- o Roaming end-user capability should exist, allowing for students to use resources anywhere on the overall series of the network.
- o Solutions shall clearly designate the deployment; validation; ongoing service responsibility; and network management expectations including expectations, roles, and responsibilities.
- o Responses shall clearly articulate upgrading capabilities for the solutions that would enable the districts and schools to adapt to changing technological requirements, demand on networks due to evolving e-learning needs, and other technological advancements that result in increased throughput demand during the term of the contract.
- o A coverage map showing anticipated coverage areas.
- o A network layout with description of the hardware, range, expectations, and infrastructure requirements (i.e., power, connections, end user devices).
- o Any parallel opportunities for usage of the network for related commercial services by schools.
- o Clearly list any project and/or technology partners/providers.

Proposed Solutions Pricing Guidance

Proposal pricing should include the following:

- o A break-out of hardware, associated capital expenditure, annual operational and management costs, warranty options, and any associated termination fees (if applicable).
- o Expected useful life of the network and warranty(ies).
- o Recommended network refresh model and associated financial implications.
- o If applicable, the cost for filters, management, or internet content control.
- o Clear explanation of any time-restricted discounts that may be tied to Covid19 and or vendor pricing incentives.
- o Timeline for procurement, noting any anticipated supply chain delays.
- o Solutions eligibility for any Federal/State/Local incentives, for example Federal E-Rate funding, USDOE grants, among others.
- o Description of how any pricing may be impacted by income levels of student families (i.e., percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches or families on SNAP).
- o Additional opportunities for commercial utilization of network assets for cost offset.
- o Pricing should be listed out to support for (30,000); (50,000); (100,000); and (150,000) end user devices.

Response Format and Timeline

Prospective vendors should respond with all available solutions and any recommended options per the above guidance. Responses should be no longer than eight (8) pages and should not include more than ten (10) pages of supporting materials (i.e., graphics, charts, hardware and network components, coverage maps). PDF format is preferred. **Responses are due by 6:00pm EST on May 26, 2020**, to allow for review and next procurement steps. **Responses should be returned via email to Claire Fiddian-Green at fiddian-green@rmff.org.**