

Introduction

The Maine School Administrative District 75 is seeking proposals from qualified vendors to provide Internet services to its schools and offices.

The Maine School Administrative District 75 provides high-speed Internet services to the 12 facilities of the school district. The network supporting Internet services spans the towns of Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Harpswell and Topsham, and is over 22 miles from end-to-end. It provides services to more than two thousand end-user workstations, servers and printers.

Maine School Administrative District 75 Network Services Request for Proposals

This request for proposals, is to be known as the "MSAD#75 Internet Services RFP", consists of one major components - Internet Connectivity to all sites across the district.

This document provides enough details to prepare appropriate responses. It outlines services needed, and illustrates how those services are being provided today. Vendors are encouraged to propose alternative solutions, which provide higher service levels than currently enjoyed by MSAD#75 Network users. There will be a mandatory bidders conference at the MSAD 75 District Office, 50 Republic Avenue Topsham, ME 04086 (Date and time to be announced.)

Potential vendors are invited to visit the MSAD#75 web site at <http://www.link75.org>
Electronic mail inquiries regarding technical issues may be sent to Michael Baker, Director of Technology: bakerm@link75.org

Inquiries specific to the terms, services and procurement process should be directed to the MSAD#75 Internet Services RFP Contract administrator Ron Lavender, Business Manager: lavenderr@link75.org

Questions will be answered within 21 days of posting FCC Form 470 to the School and Libraries Corporation Web Site (www.slcfund.org.) Vendors must have an FCC number and be approved for participation in E-rate.

Internet Performance

T-1 or greater Internet service to all 12 sites (exact number of sites to vary).

Minimum of 16 static IP Addresses

Authoritative name service for the link75.org domain.

Description of MSAD#75 Internet services today:

Access to the Internet is provided by Suscom via T-1 level of service using cable modem technology. Suscom provides 16 static Internet addresses for MSAD#75 servers. All new route requests, additional IP addresses, and any Internet related router arbiter database issues are the responsibility of Suscom. Current service is inadequate based on existing utilization. Proposals must include additional service options including a 3 Megabit Internet Data connection.

Internet Distribution to sites

Maintain existing 10 Mbps open protocol MSAD#75 WAN (Currently 9 sites, exact number of sites to vary)

There will be a maximum 2-hour response time for service interruptions. Compensation for loss of service beyond the two hours will be specified separately. The 10Mb connection presently available at the majority of sites will be maintained. There will be a provision for less bandwidth at some sites. Alternative methods

of achieving higher bandwidth will be considered. Specifically, all proposals should include either the existing capability and cost proposals to provide 1000Mb access throughout the MSAD#75 Network, or a demonstrated commitment or capacity to provide such access within twelve (12) months of such a request.

Description of the MSAD#75 Internet Delivery Network Today:

The first component of the Network is owned and operated by MSAD#75 staff connecting the Mt Ararat High and Mt Ararat Middle School with two office facilities. The physical fiber connection will continue to be supported by MSAD#75 staff and does not need to be incorporated into the proposal. The 3660 Cisco router support and maintenance supporting this first component is to be included in the proposal. See attached map for details. The second component of MSAD#75's wide area network connectivity is provided by a high-speed hybrid-fiber cable (HFC) network owned and maintained by Suscom Cable Television, Inc. This HFC network utilizes Bay Networks' LANcity bridge (cable modem) technology to provide 10 Mbps, dual channel symmetrical connectivity for each site. This 20 Mbps (aggregate) bandwidth has enabled MSAD#75 to deploy certain network applications to all sites from a single server. The LANcity equipment effectively provides a secure, private virtual network that is switched at the Suscom head end facility. The LANcity equipment utilizes the Unilink protocol that is very similar to ATM in that it is capable of carrying voice, video and data. The Unilink protocol is unique in that it optimizes the bandwidth usage. Unlike Ethernet, up to 95% of the theoretical bandwidth is available for data transfer. In addition, the LANcity bridges can be software configured to provide any bandwidth up to 10Mbps (per channel), from as little as 64kbps up to the full capacity, remotely, without the need to upgrade any customer premise equipment. This bridged service provides transparent transport for MSAD#75's IP, IPX, AppleTalk network. Segmentation across the WAN is accomplished through IP, IPX and AppleTalk routing utilizing Cisco 2514 routers at each site.

LANcity Data-over-Cable Equipment

Vendors should be aware that the LANcity bridges are transparent to MSAD#75 Ethernet traffic. MSAD#75 staff neither monitor nor manage the bridges - that function is performed by SUSCOM. The founders of the MSAD#75 network had opted to purchase rather than lease the LANcity bridge equipment. Therefore, bidders must provide appropriate service contracts for the existing equipment or sufficient spare inventory to assure rapid turn-around time for any potential LANcity equipment failures.

Ethernet Routing

Routing of traffic within MSAD#75 is provided by Cisco routers at every site. These routers provide WAN routing for IP, IPX and AppleTalk protocols. IPX traffic is dynamically routed via Cisco's EIGRP, AppleTalk tunneled, and IP via static routing.

WAN Monitoring

MSAD#75 continuously monitors every router via SNMP. Utilizing Castle Rock's SNMPc software, each node is probed every 10 seconds, and a history log retained.

History log information is utilized to determine bandwidth utilization trends. The successful vendor must provide monthly bandwidth utilization reports for all sites to enable MSAD#75 to manage telecommunications expenses.

Minimum Requirements for all vendor proposals:

Services will be offered in a spec-compliant, open protocol, team-based environment.

Vendors must submit detailed monthly cost breakdowns for each site serviced by the MSAD#75 network today. This breakdown must include the bit-rate WAN speed (in Mbps), the WAN backbone cost and the Internet access, per site.

Vendors must state specifically if the Internet component of the services proposed is a shared resource. Vendors proposing to provide Internet access over a shared resource must state so, and provide adequate assurances that the stated bandwidth proposed will indeed be delivered.

Vendors must, at a minimum, provide monthly trend analysis reports for each site. Additionally, the vendor must provide additional ad-hoc trend analysis reports as requested for every site connected via router.

Vendors must state clearly all service commitments and/or maintenance contracts that will be continued, or entered into, to support the WAN network components including, but not limited to routers, bridges, CSU/DSU(s), servers and any other equipment currently owned and operated by the MSAD#75 network.

Vendors must warrant that all equipment and associated software will be properly licensed and paid for as required by the applicable manufacturers.

Vendors must propose minimum network availability standards for each site, and provide a mechanism for financial compensation to MSAD#75 should the standards not be met. At a minimum, the network is expected to up and available between the hours of 6:00 AM and 9:30 PM Monday through Friday, year round, ninety eight percent (98%) of the time. Availability will be measured monthly. Outages will be accumulated and compared with minimum availability percentages on a monthly basis, and reset to zero at the beginning of each month. Any scheduled network maintenance and upgrades, server maintenance and upgrades, software installations, upgrades and modifications must be scheduled between the hours of 9:30 PM and 6:00 AM. Modifications and upgrades initiated to resolve network interruption or loss of service may take place at any hour of the day pending notification (by voice, electronic mail, or writing) of appropriate school administrators.

Vendors must specify which services they will and will not support with respect to Internet-related items including, but not limited to:

- * IP address space (additional CIDR address requests)
- * Host name requests
- * Route change requests
- * Router filtering and or configuration change requests.

Vendors should include items from the list below either in their blanket proposals or as separate priced services, being clear as to what will or will not be supported:

- * Monthly usage reports (statistics)
- * File/permissions maintenance
- * Configuration and tuning
- * Domain Name services
- * New Domain Name Registration requests
- * Domain name registration renewals
- * End-user support (vendors are advised to be very specific as to the range and scope of support being proposed)
- * Any additional "value-added" services deemed appropriate by the vendor

Proposal Components and Format

Vendors must submit two parts: Technical Proposal, and a Cost Proposal.

The technical proposal must contain the vendors proposed solution and any information deemed necessary to assist MSAD#75 in assessing the vendors understanding of the needs of MSAD#75.

The technical proposal must include a letter of transmittal signed by a representative of the vendor authorized to commit the vendor to the terms and conditions of the proposal. In no circumstance should the technical proposal contain pricing information.

Only after vendors have successfully demonstrated their ability to meet the technical requirements of this RFP will vendor pricing be assessed.

In a separate, sealed envelope marked MSAD#75 Internet Services RFP COST PROPOSAL - DO NOT OPEN, vendors must include their cost proposal. Those offering multiple service levels should break down costs as specifically as possible, clearly indicating the services provided for the corresponding cost.

Transmittal Letter

The transmittal letter must be written on the vendor's official business stationery and signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor. It must include the following:

- an itemization of all materials and enclosures submitted in response to the RFP,
- a reference to any RFP amendments received by the vendor. If none have been received, a statement to that effect must be included;
- a statement that the vendor believes that the proposed solution meets all the requirements set forth in the RFP;
- an unequivocal statement which acknowledges and agrees to all the rights of MSAD#75 including the procurement rules and procedures, terms and conditions and all other rights and terms specified in this RFP;
- an unequivocal statement of the vendor's willingness to enter into an agreement with MSAD#75, which includes the terms and conditions as stated in the RFP;
- The vendor's federal tax number;
- a statement that the proposal submitted was developed without MSAD#75 collusion;
- a statement that the vendor is experienced in certifying that the solution proposed meets the requirements set forth;
- the vendor's assurance that the proposal as submitted shall remain in full force and effect for a period of time not less than 120 days from the proposal due date specified in the RFP.

The vendor may include other topics in the letter as deemed appropriate.

The Executive Summary

The executive summary shall condense and highlight the contents of the proposal in such a way as to provide the selection committee with a broad understanding of the vendor's proposal. No evaluation point will be awarded the executive summary.

Vendors must present their understanding of the problems and opportunities addressed by this RFP and the objectives and intended results of the project. Each vendor should summarize how its proposal meets the requirements of the RFP and why the vendor is best qualified to supply the equipment and perform the work required herein.

Vendors must describe their understanding of the selected vendor's responsibilities for this project.

Vendor Identification and Information

In response to this section of the RFP, the vendor shall:

- state the organization's full or corporate name and the address of the organization's headquarters;
- specify how the vendor is organized (proprietorship, partnership, corporation);

- specify the state in which the vendor is incorporated or otherwise organized to do business;
- specify the year in which the vendor was first organized to do business and whether or not the form of the organization has changed in the interim and if the name has changed. The intent of this requirement is to ascertain the longevity of continuous operation of the vendor;
- Provide its employer identification number

Financial Statement

If the vendor is a publicly held corporation, it must enclose a copy of the corporation's three most recent years of audited financial reports and financial statements, as well as the name, address and telephone number of a responsible representative of the vendor's principal financial or banking institution. It must also submit a complete Dunn & Bradstreet credit report dated not more than 21 days prior to the proposal submission.

Vendors must also disclose any and all judgments, pending or expected litigation, or any real or potential financial reversals, which might materially affect the viability of stability of the organization. In the absence of same, the vendor must warrant that no such conditions are known to exist.

If not a publicly held corporation, the vendor may either comply with the previous paragraph or describe the organization, including size, longevity, client base, areas of specialization and expertise, and any other pertinent information in such a manner that the proposal evaluators may reasonably formulate a determination about the stability and financial strength of the organization;

- provide a banking reference;
- provide a complete Dunn & Bradstreet credit report dated not more than 21 days prior to the proposal submission, and
- disclose any and all judgments, pending or expected litigation, or other real or potential financial reversals, which might materially affect the viability or stability of the bidding organization; or warrant that no such condition is known to exist.

Contract Performance

If the vendor has had a contract terminated for default during the past five years, all such instances must be described as required below. Termination for default is defined as notice to stop performance delivery due to the vendor's nonperformance or poor performance and the issue was either not litigated due to inaction on the part of the vendor; or litigated and such litigation determined the vendor to be in default.

It is mandatory that the vendor submits full details of all terminations for default experienced by the vendor during the past five years, including the other party's name, addresses and telephone number. The response to this subsection must present the vendor's position on the matter. MSAD#75 will evaluate the facts and will score the vendor's proposal accordingly.

If no such terminations for default have been experienced by the vendor in the past five years, so declare.

Vendor's Qualifications and Experience

In this section, the vendor is required to describe its experience within the last three(3) years directly related to the proposed contract. Vendors shall provide information relating to experience with telecommunications network experience, experience with an educational environment, and experience with hardware capacity, planning, sizing and installation.

Technical Component

This section must, at a minimum, cover the following:

- Understanding of the project requirements
- Environmental requirements,

- Proposed rationale for selection
- WAN plan

Cost Proposal

Vendors must provide a complete, itemized cost schedule reflecting all components, services, and ancillary costs associated with delivering, installing, and certifying the delivery of the Wide Area Network as described by the RFP.

Evaluation Criteria

MSAD#75 encourages vendors to apply their expertise and experience in drafting and proposing a package of services, which will best serve the needs of MSAD#75. Proposals will be evaluated based upon the overall package of services offered, the vendors experience in supporting a network of a similar size and configuration, as well as price. This RFP is not a request for quotation, but rather a "request for solutions". Vendor proposals will be based on a number of criteria, including:

- * Technical merits
- * Vendor experience
- * Oral presentation
- * Price

Vendors whose proposals satisfactorily address the technical requirements will be notified in writing by the Contract Administrator. At the sole discretion of the Contract Administrator, vendors may be requested to answer questions and make an oral presentation of their proposal.

MSAD#75 reserves the right to reject any or all proposals that contain material deviations from the requirements of this RFP. All proposals, whether rejected or not, will become part of MSAD#75's official file.

This RFP does not commit MSAD#75 to award a contract, or pay any cost incurred in the preparation of a proposal for this request. MSAD#75 reserves the right to reject all proposals, AND at its discretion may withdraw or amend the RFP at any time.

MSAD#75 reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received for specific reasons, which include but are not limited to non-compliance with the RFP.

Vendors whose proposals are not accepted will be notified in writing after the award of the contract.

MSAD#75 will select the successful vendor through a formal evaluation process. Consideration will be given to capabilities or advantages, which are clearly described in the proposal AND verified by reference sources contacted by MSAD#75.

MSAD#75 reserves the right to contact individuals, entities or organizations who have recent dealings with the firm proposed whether identified by the vendor as references or not.

A selection committee established by MSAD#75 will evaluate proposals. Final selection of a vendor will be based upon considerations from all phases of the evaluation process. Items that do not lend themselves to strict numerical evaluation will be assigned ratings based upon MSAD#75 staff collective opinion and experience of the selection committee.

Initial screening will consist of the rejection of any proposal that does not meet the mandatory requirements of the RFP. Proposals not rejected in this step will be more closely evaluated in the second screening.

Proposals passing initial screening will be evaluated for both technical merit and cost. Costs are to be an accurate representation of any and all goods and services to be provided.

The evaluation will result in the selection of a proposal, which is in the best interests of MSAD#75 and is understood by all parties that the award decision shall be final. The RFP and the proposal of the successful vendor shall be incorporated into and form the basis of a legal contract.

There are certain requirements established by MSAD#75 with respect to proposals submitted in response to the RFP. The words "shall," "must," and "will" shall be considered as indicative of a requirement of this RFP. Such requirements are considered to be material to this procurement.

Evidence of adequate financial stability is a prerequisite to the award of a contract regardless of any other considerations. Vendors must include in their proposal such financial documentation to demonstrate their financial stability. MSAD#75 reserves the right to request any additional information to assure itself of a vendor's financial status.

The project defined in this RFP represents a significant undertaking of MSAD#75. Consequently, conformance to the requirements of the RFP are of paramount concern to MSAD#75. Should the selected vendor fail to meet its obligations as defined in the RFP, proposal and contract, the penalties/damages defined in the RFP will be applied.

The vendor shall include an affirmative statement in the proposal agreeing to a retainage of ten percent (10%) of the total contract amount.

No compensation or payments of any nature will be made in advance of services actually performed.