

E-Rate Best Practices

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ESC 12/E-Rate Best Practices Workshop/July 2009/Financial Svcs - TPESC

Agenda



- Resources to Remember
- Steps to Take to be an E-Rate WINNER

Resources to remember



- SLD web site: www.universalservice.org/sl
- SLD Help Desk: 888-203-8100
- Texas E-Rate Listserv
 - Submit form: <http://tpesc.esc12.net/eratedata/maillist.aspx>
 - Read messages
- Texas E-Rate website: <http://tpesc.esc12.net>
- Texas E-Rate Questions – erate@esc12.net

Best practices as they relate to:

- Calculating Discounts
 - ✕ FCC Form 470
 - ✕ FCC Form 471
- Competitive Bidding
 - ✕ PIA reviews
 - ✕ FCC Form 486
- Technology Plans
- Contracts
- Document Retention



Calculating Discounts

- Review current schools and NIFs for accuracy
- Add new schools and NIFs
- New school
 - If you know student population – use exact numbers
 - If you do not know – use district discount
- File on-line for discount accuracy
 - **Schools** – individual calculation
 - **Districts** – weighted discount
 - **NIFs** – If you file on-line – check “Non-matrix discount” and enter district discount



Calculating Discounts



- Valid data to use:
 - TPESC website – (previous year data on TPESC website)
<http://tpesc.esc12.net/erate/nsldata.html>
 - Your current year PEIMS data submitted to TEA
 - Another formal data system for which your district uses
- PIA will ask questions if you do not use the TPESC data
- Data submitted will need to be on a formal report to be accepted by PIA

Competitive bidding



- Vendors respond and submit bids
- Open and fair – all have same info at same time
- Must specify why bids are disqualified
- Can close process after 28 days
- Evaluate, choose bid

Competitive Bidding

- If using an RFP: (equal access to all vendors)
 - Create an online Q&A website for all vendors to review (indicate this URL in the 470 Block 2, Item 13a)
 - Post all Questions and Answers on this site
- To make sure all your vendors bid:
 - Create a vendor listserv to advise everyone that you've posted your 470
- Most cost effective vendor: Price is most heavily weighted over all other criteria. Use evaluation matrix

Bid Evaluation Matrix (Points Based) SAMPLE						
<p>There have been many requests for USAC to provide guidance with respect to what information should be included as you conduct your bidding process. Below is an example of information that may be helpful. In addition, retaining this type of information will be very helpful if USAC requests this information in the future. This example is not mandatory or intended to serve any other purpose than to respond to requests for guidance.</p> <p>In this example, each factor is worth the same number of points as the weighting percentage. Vendors are rated on how well they met each factor. The entries for all factors are then totaled for each vendor. The winning bidder is the one with the highest number of total points. The cost of the eligible goods and services must be weighted most heavily.</p>						
No	Factors	Total Points Available	Vendor 1 143xxxxxx ABC Inc.	Vendor 2 143xxxxxx DEF Inc.	Vendor 3 143xxxxxx GHI Inc.	Vendor 4 143xxxxxx JKL Inc.
1	Cost of the Eligible Goods and Services	40 *	38	25	38	0
2	Experience	20	18	17	20	0
3	Availability	10	10	8	7	0
4	Minority Business Status	10	6	9	9	0
5	In State Preference	10	3	7	10	0
6	Cost of the Ineligible products	5	4	1	5	0
7	Project Management Expertises	5	2	1	5	0
Total Points		100	81	68	94	0

* This number must be higher than all of the other numbers in this column.

Winning Bidder:
Vendor 3 (GHI, Inc.) is the winning bidder because it has the highest total points.

Disqualified Bidders:
Bidder Reason for Disqualification

JKL Inc. All interested bidders received two weeks' notice of a required pre-bid conference.
JKL Inc. did not attend this conference and did not provide a reason for its absence.

Revised 3/2008

Tech Plan – before you begin!



- **STaR Chart**
 - Wise to complete at beginning of school (before students arrive)
 - Campus charts must be completed before you can update or submit tech plan
- **Tech plans (TP)** need to be either updated or submitted for approval BEFORE the 470 is submitted to make sure you have everything up to date

Technology plan



ePlan System

- Every year – must either update or submit a new plan prior to submitting 470
- Once ePlan is submitted for approval, you MUST fax, email, or mail the **ePlan certification** page to TPESC
 - TEA will not approve prior to getting this certification
- The ePlan builder is notified via email when the certification has been received. LOOK FOR THIS EMAIL!

Technology plan



- Goals and strategies
- **Professional development** – make sure you have a log of all training for the year
- **Needs assessment** – have a tracking system
- Evaluation process
- **Sufficient budget** – this may be a draft

Contracts

- Recurring – Month-to-month or tariffed services
 - if signature required on service contract, it's a contracted service
- Non-recurring
 - Make contract end date September 30th
 - Communicate regularly with SP for delays
 - Approved service delivery does not automatically extend contract
 - Form 500 does not automatically extend service delivery



Contracts

- Cannot sign prior to 29th day
- Acceptable standards for applicant signature and dated contract:
 - Applicant handwritten signature and signature date,
 - Date contract awarded may be contained in the body of the contract, or
 - Date contract awarded may be in the opening statements of the contract



Contracts should include:

- A beginning and end date
- Listing of services
- Listing of all charges for services
- Signed and dated contract



Contracts could include:

- An 'out clause'
- Allowable extensions (must be in RFP too)
- Specify discounts or reimbursements
- Payment schedule, if any



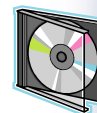
Document Retention

- Applicants and service providers must maintain program documentation for five years after services are received. For example:
 - Pre-bid meeting(s)
 - Contracts
 - Application process
 - Invoices
 - Faculty Development
 - Asset Tracking
 - Tech plan approval
 - Etc.



Document Retention

- Current year documents:
 - Paper copies
 - Database information
 - Etc.
- Past year documents:
 - Scan all documents/files and save to server and/or,
 - Burn CDs
 - Have off site storage (disaster recovery plan)



FCC Form 470

- File on-line
- Check your TP for accuracy
- If RFP, must be posted for 28 days
 - Have proof of RFP posting date
- Texas bidding information:

www.tea.state.tx.us/school.finance/audit/resguide12/purchase/

- Block 1, Item 6, check 'e'- allows email address
- Block 2, Item 7, check 'a' and 'b'



FCC Form 470

- When listing services and quantity, leave open-ended:
 - 'faster'
 - 'more as needed'
- RNL: read carefully and make corrections, if needed

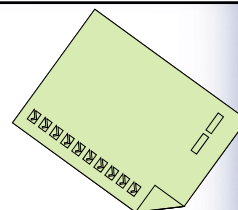


FCC Form 471



- File on-line
- Wait 28 days – only evaluate on **29th** day or after
- Double check each school or NIF, Block 4 for accuracy – every entity **MUST** be in Block 4
- P2 – special note:
 - Internal connections – devices and warranty charges
 - 2 in 5 applies here
 - Basic maintenance – maintenance on eligible products; does not cover warranty here
 - 2 in 5 does not apply here

FCC Form 471



- Multi-round evaluation selection process:
 - Each round must have price as most heavily weighted criteria
- Have one form that represents the entire evaluation process. Use USAC's template
 - May use final eval to notify all bidders of awards
- Only submit 471 **AFTER** all contracts are signed

Application review - PIA

- Reviews for app. compliance
- Checks discount levels (Block 4)
- Checks requests against ESL
- Your opportunity to make any changes needed
- Tells you about errors if any
- FCDL is issued from requests submitted
- Review FCDL carefully – appeal if you don't agree



PIA reviews

- You can help speed up application reviews by:
 - Submitting a complete Form 471 including required certifications and Item 21 Attachments for each funding request
 - Responding to requests for additional or clarifying information within 15 days
 - Verifying that USAC has correct contact information



PIA reviews



- Item 21 attachments
 - Make language identical to the ESL as much as possible – reduces calls from PIA
 - Use on-line process only if it's an easy FRN; like P1
- RAL – Read carefully; make necessary changes

Post 486

- Posted once services are started
- Cannot submit until:
 - TP is approved
 - CIPA is in compliance
- Deadline
 - 120 days after SSD
 - OR
 - 120 days after FCDL – **whichever's later**



Contact Information

- E-Rate Support
erate@esc12.net 254-297-1123
- Technology Planning
techplan@esc12.net 254-297-1275
- STaR Chart Support
starchart@esc12.net 254-297-1275

Questions?