

OAK RIDGE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

CATEGORY 2: Firewall

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

February 13, 2026

SECTION I – SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENT	DATE
FCC Form 470 Posted/RFP Released	February 13, 2026
Questions from Bidders Due (in writing)	February 27, 2026 3:00 pm EST
Bid Due Date	March 13, 2026 3:00 pm EST
Contract/Service Start Date	July 1, 2026

SECTION 2 – REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION

From the time of receipt of this RFP until the awarding of the contracts, bidders are hereby auctioned to limit any communications with the District to the email addresses named below. Any attempt to circumvent the RFP process by contacting personnel at this institution could result in the disqualification of the bidder.

All questions regarding this Request for Proposal (RFP) should be submitted in writing to Travis Ferguson at vtferguson@ortn.edu with a cc to Beth McConnell at beth@ffadvisors.net by **February 27, 2026 at 3:00 pm EST.**

SECTION 3 – SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals are due no later than March 13, 2026 at 3pm EST. Late responses may not be considered.

Sealed bids need to be sent to Oak Ridge City Schools:

Oak Ridge Schools – Technology Department
Susan Dundore
304 New York Ave
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

All submitted proposals will be considered the property of Oak Ridge City School District.

This RFP does not commit Oak Ridge City Schools to any specific course of action. Oak Ridge City Schools reserves the right to not select any vendor or purchase any goods or services resulting from this RFP.

SECTION 4 – RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL QUOTES

Oak Ridge City School District reserves the right to accept or refuse bids based on completeness, timeline, price, and meeting of required specifications. The district also reserves the right to negotiate the terms of any proposal.

Oak Ridge City School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in admission to its programs, services, or activities, in access to them, in treatment of individuals, or in any aspect of their operations. Oak Ridge City School District is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

In addition, the District reserves the right to fund, (proceed with project or purchase) or not to fund, regardless of E- rate approval.

SECTION 5 – TRADE NAMES AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposals are requested on products that are the functional equivalent or comparable to the brands or items listed in this document. References to brand names, trade names, model numbers, or other descriptions are made to establish an approximate level of quality and functional capabilities and are not intended to exclude other products of similar capabilities. Specific names of products listed in this document are intended to convey the type of equipment sought. Bidders should submit current equipment specification sheets from the manufacturer of all hardware included as a part of a proposal. The District reserves the right to be the sole determiner of functional equivalency and to select the proposal it believes to be in its best interest.

SECTION 6 – EVALUATION CRITERIA

It is the intent of the District to award a Contract to the most cost-effective provider based on the Evaluation Criteria below. Per FCC guidelines, cost will carry the greatest weight but other factors important to the District will be considered.

FACTOR	POINTS
Cost of E-rate Eligible Goods and Services	30
Cost of E-rate Ineligible Goods and Services	10
Experience, Qualifications, and Stability *Based on information provided within the proposal and references	25
Project Approach *Based on the project approach submitted in the RFP as well as technical capabilities and methodology	20
Fully Complete Proposal with all Required Elements	15
Total Possible Points	100

SECTION 7 – TERM OF CONTRACT

District reserves the right to order quantities in any size lot or lots of quantities. Pricing must remain firm for the period of April 1, 2026 thru September 30, 2027. The District reserves the right to extend the intent to purchase for an additional annual term through September 30, 2028.

SECTION 8 – PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The Goal: To provide qualified vendors with the necessary information and specifications to allow them to respond with a solution that they determine best meets those requirements.

No refurbished equipment is acceptable

The proposed solution price must include a complete bill of materials, applicable sales tax, applicable shipping, and optional professional services.

The scope of the project will be as follows:

- The purpose of this project is to purchase firewall and components
- Standard Manufacturer Warranty

E-Rate rules allow a manufacturer's multi-year warranty for a period up to three years that is provided as an integral part of an eligible component, without a separate identifiable cost, to be included in the cost of the component. Vendors are required to provide details on warranties.

Included pricing sheet has further details regarding makes, models, and quantities, however, the district will evaluate equivalent makes and models according to ERate guidelines. Vendors are requested to fill out Section 9 – Pricing Sheet in addition to their response.

No refurbished or gray-market equipment will be accepted. All equipment must be new and should be compatible with existing equipment/infrastructure. If the proposed solution is not compatible, the bidder should explain how their solution will fit into the existing network.

Special note about licenses. Licenses can be either Internal Connections or Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections, depending on their function.

- An internal connections license is software that allows the eligible internal connections equipment to function and distribute high-speed broadband throughout school buildings and libraries. For example, although you may pay once to purchase a wireless access point (WAP), you may need to pay an annual fee to the manufacturer to allow you to use the WAP. The annual fee is the internal connections license (e.g., right-to-use software or client access licenses).

- A basic maintenance license includes software upgrades and patches, including bug fixes and security patches, as well as technical support. For example, after purchasing a switch, you may need to pay a separate annual fee to be able to download software updates and get technical support for the device. If licenses are proposed, the vendor should confirm which under which E-rate category they fall. Vendors are also responsible for listing ERate eligibility for each component offered.

Quantities stated in this document are approximate and final numbers may change with final request.

All contracts awarded will be contingent upon the receipt of a Federal E-Rate Program Category Two Funding Commitment Decision Letter. All contracts awarded will be contingent upon approval by the Oak Ridge City School District Board of Education.

SECTION 9 – PRICING SHEET

Description (optional)	Model Number (or equivalent)	Estimated Quantity	Price/Unit	Extended Price (quantity * unit price)	Equivalent Make	Equivalent Model	Product E-rate Eligibility %
Nutanix NCI Cluster Infra Deploy SVC	CNS-INF-A-SVC-DEP-ONP-AHV	6					
Nutanix Infrastructure Modernization HCI Micro-Segmentation Deployment-de	CNS-INF-A-SVC-MCR-STD	2					
Nutanix Infra Modern SVC	CNS-INF-A-WRK-MCR-STD	1					
Nutanix OS+FW+AOS+FLOW INTEG SUB	NCI-U-24	12					
Nutanix Minimum Xeon Silver 2X4410Y 16X64GB Rack Server	NX-NODE-ER24	6					
			TOTAL	0	0		

E-RATE SUPPLEMENTAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Signed copy to be returned with proposal and/or bid response (“Proposal”) in response to this Solicitation.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 established a fund by which Schools and Libraries (“Applicant” or “Applicants”) across the Country could access discounts on eligible telecommunications products and services. The program is commonly known as the E-rate Program. The eligibility for discounts on internet access, telecommunications products and services, internal connection products, services and maintenance is determined by the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”). Funding is made available upon application approval by the Universal Service Administrative Company (“USAC”), which was established by the Act. The amount of the discount is based on the numbers of students eligible to receive free and reduced-price meals.

1) E-RATE CONTINGENCY

The project herein may be contingent upon the approval of funding from the Universal Service Fund’s Schools and Libraries Program, otherwise known as E-rate. Even after award of Agreement(s) and/or E-rate funding approval is approved, the Applicant may or may not proceed with the project, in whole or in part. Execution of the project, in whole or in part, is solely at the discretion of the Applicant.

2) SERVICE PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS

The Applicant expects Service Providers to make themselves thoroughly familiar with any rules or regulations regarding the E-rate program.

- a. Service Providers are required to be in full compliance with all current rules and requirements and future rules and requirements issued by the FCC and USAC throughout the agreement period of any Agreement entered into as a result of this RFP/RFB/RFQ.
- b. Service Providers are responsible for providing a valid Service Provider Identification Number (“SPIN”). More information about obtaining a SPIN may be found at this website: <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/service-providers/step-1-obtain-a-spin/>
- c. Service Providers are responsible for providing a valid Federal Communications Commission Registration Number (“FRN”) at the time the Proposal is submitted. More information about obtaining an FRN may be found at this website: <https://fjallfoss.fcc.gov/coresWeb/publicHome.do>

d. Service Providers are responsible for providing evidence of FCC Green Light Status at the time the proposal is submitted. Any potential Service Provider found to be in Red Light Status must provide an explanation of the steps it is undertaking to be removed to Red Light Status and the expected timeframe for resolution. A Service Provider's sustained Red Light Status may be grounds for termination of the Agreement as it could prohibit the Service Provider from providing E-rate discounts in a timely manner which would cause harm to the Applicant. More information about FCC Red and Green Light Status may be found at this website: http://www.fcc.gov/debt_collection/welcome.html

e. Products and services must be delivered before billing and E-rate discounting can commence. At no time may the Service Provider invoice before July 1, 2026.

f. Prices must be held firm for the duration of the associated E-rate Funding Year(s) or until all work associated with the project is complete (including any Agreement and USAC-approved extensions).

g. Goods and services provided shall be clearly designated as "E-rate Eligible." Non-eligible goods and services shall be clearly called out as 100% non-eligible or shall be "cost allocated" to show the percentage of eligible costs per USAC guidelines.

h. For Category 2 equipment or services, within one (1) week of notification of award, the awarded Service Provider must provide the Applicant a bill of materials using a completed and most current and appropriate version of USACs "Bulk Upload Template" (formerly known as the Item 21 attachment) located at <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/applying-for-discounts/fcc-form-471-filing/>. Subsequent schedules of values and invoices must match the Bulk Upload Template and approved Funding Request Line Items or subsequent approved service substitutions. If the service provider's proposal consisted of pricing per eligible location, a summary sheet and summary Bulk Upload Template must be provided to describe the cumulative amount for all sites.

i. In the event of questions during an E-rate pre-commitment review, post-commitment review, and/or audit inquiry, the awarded Service Provider is expected to reply within 3 days to questions associated with its proposal.

j. The awarded Service Provider is required to send copies of all forms and invoices to the Applicant prior to invoicing USAC for pre-approval. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the Applicant placing the vendor on an "Invoice Check" with the USAC: <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/invoicing/invoice-check/>.

k. Service providers must comply with the FCC rules for Lowest Corresponding Price ("LCP"). Further details on LCP may be obtained at USAC's website: <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/service-providers/step-2-responding-to-bids/lowest-corresponding-price/>.

l. Service providers must not propose any equipment or services produced or provided by companies, their parents, affiliates, and subsidiaries, found to pose a national security threat to the integrity of communications networks or the communications supply chain as required by FCC rules. See <https://www.usac.org/about/reports-orders/supply-chain/>. Any proposed solution including Covered Equipment or Services as defined by the FCC will be disqualified. If, after award of the project it is found Covered Equipment or Services are included, the award and/or Agreement will be considered to be null and void. See <https://www.fcc.gov/supplychain>.

m. SPAM and/or robotic responses will not be considered valid Proposals and will be disqualified from consideration.

n. Any Service Provider proposals identifying contingency fees such as allocations for change orders, tariffs, or other speculative fees not specifically called out for in the scope and/or terms of the RFP/RFB/RFQ will automatically be included in the Proposal price and subject to evaluation unless otherwise specified in the RFP/RFB/RFQ. Contingency fees not pre-approved by the Applicant will not be allowed.

3) SERVICE PROVIDER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

a. The Service Provider acknowledges that no change in the products and/or services specified in its proposal will be allowed without prior written approval from the Applicant and a USAC service substitution approval with the exception of a Global Service Substitutions. See <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/before-youre-done/service-substitutions/>.

b. The Service Provider acknowledges that all pricing and technology infrastructure information in its Proposal shall be considered as public and non-confidential pursuant to §54.504 (2)(i)(ii).

c. The Service Provider acknowledges that its offer is considered to be the lowest corresponding price pursuant to § 54.511(b). Service Providers found not to be providing Lowest Corresponding Price (LCP) may be required to repay any identified overcharges to USAC. The Service Provider acknowledges that LCP is solely the service provider's responsibility and it will not hold the Applicant liable, or seek reimbursement from any applicant, for any appeals, commitment adjustments or funding recoveries.

d. The Service Provider attests that its offer does not violate the FCC's Supply Chain certifications included in the FCC Form 473. Supply Chain requirements and certifications can be viewed at USAC's Website: <https://www.usac.org/about/reports-orders/supply-chain/>.

e. This offer is in full compliance with USAC's Free Services Advisory <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/competitive-bidding/free-services-advisory/>. There are no free services offered that would predicate an artificial discount and preclude the applicant from paying its proportionate non-discounted share of costs. The Service Provider agrees to provide substantiating documentation to support this assertion should the applicant, USAC, or the FCC request it.

4) STARTING SERVICES/ADVANCE INSTALLATION

Category 1 Services

The annual E-rate Funding Year begins on July 1 and expires on June 30 of each calendar year. Regardless of the Agreement's "effective date," E-rate eligible goods and/or services requested in this RFP/RFB/RFQ shall be delivered no earlier than the start of the 2026 funding year (July 1, 2026). If Category 1 services (Telecommunication Services and Internet access) will begin on or shortly after July 1 of a funding year, the service provider, in some cases, may need to undertake some construction and installation work prior to the beginning of that funding year. Within the limitations indicated below, the infrastructure costs of a service provider can be deemed to be delivered at the same time that the associated Category 1 services begin. That is, if services begin on July 1, then the delivery of service provider infrastructure necessary for those services can be considered as also delivered on July 1. However, NO INVOICING can take place prior to July 1 of the associated Funding Year.

Early Funding Conditions

Category 1

There are four conditions that must be met in order for USAC to provide support in a funding year for Category 1 infrastructure costs incurred prior to that funding year.

- *Initiation of installation cannot take place before selection of the service provider pursuant to a posted Form 470 and in any event no earlier than six months prior to July 1 of the funding year.*
- *The Category 1 service must depend on the installation of the infrastructure.*
- *The underlying Category 1 service cannot have a service start date prior to July 1 of the funding year.*
- *No invoices can be submitted to USAC for reimbursement prior to July 1 of the funding year.*

For more information, please refer to the FCC Order involving the Nassau County Board of Cooperative Educational Services (DA 02-3365 , released December 6, 2002). This FCC decision only applies to Priority/ Category 1 services (telecommunications services and Internet access).

The complete text can be found at the following URL:

<https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/starting-services/advance-installation/>

Category 2

There are two conditions that allow USAC to provide support in a funding year for Category 2 Internal Connections (equipment and services) incurred prior to that funding year.

- *Applicants may seek support for Category 2 eligible services purchased on or after April 1, three months prior to the start of the funding year on July 1. This will provide schools with the flexibility to purchase equipment in preparation for the summer recess and provide the maximum amount of time during the summer to install these critical networks.*
- *No invoices can be submitted to USAC for reimbursement prior to July 1 of the funding year.*

For more information, please refer to the FCC Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ([FCC 14-99](#) , released July 23, 2014).

It is important to note NO FCC FORM 474 INVOICING can take place before the Funding Commitment Decision Letter is issued, the FCC Form 486 is approved, and/or prior to July 1 of the funding year.

5) INVOICING

a. The Service Provider agrees to bill and receive a portion of the payment for the provisions of goods and services described herein directly from USAC via the FCC Form 474 Service Provider Invoice (SPI). The Applicant will only be responsible for paying its non-discounted share of costs and does not intend to use the BEAR process (FCC Form 472). The maximum percentage the Applicant will be liable for is the pre-discount amount minus the funded amount as shown on the FCC Form 471 Funding Request Number (“FRN”) and associated FRN Line Items and any identified ineligible costs. Upon the successful receipt or posting of a Funding Commitment Decision Letter from USAC and submission, certification and USAC approval of FCC Form 486, the Applicant shall pay only the discounted amount beginning with the billing cycle immediately following said approval. Alternatively, should the Applicant decide that it is in the best interest of the Applicant to file an FCC Form 472, the Applicant will inform the Service Provider of its intent.

b. The Service Provider agrees that it will not invoice USAC for equipment or services that have not been delivered to and accepted by the Applicant and installed. If equipment is being drop-shipped to the Applicant and the Applicant is responsible for installing the equipment, the Service Provider may not invoice USAC until equipment is received and accepted by the Applicant.

c. All Service Provider invoicing to USAC must be completed within 120 days from the last day of service. Should the Service Provider fail to invoice USAC in a timely manner, the Applicant will only be responsible for paying its non-discounted share.

6) FCC/USAC AUDITS

The E-rate program requires that all records be retained for at least ten (10) years from the last date of service provided on a particular funding request. The Service Provider hereby agrees to retain all books, records, and other documents relative to any Agreement resulting from this RFP/RFB/RFQ for ten (10) years after final payment. The Applicant, its authorized agents, and/or auditors reserves the right to perform or have performed an audit of the records of the Service Provider and therefore shall have full access to and the right to examine any of said materials within a reasonable period of time during said period.

7) PROCUREMENT OF ADDITIONAL GOODS AND/OR SERVICES AND AGREEMENT TERM

During the term of any Agreement resulting from this RFP/RFB/RFQ, the Applicant may elect to procure additional or like goods and/or services offered by the Service Provider. Such services shall be negotiated and obtained via an official amendment to this Agreement and approval by the Applicant's Governing Board. All terms, conditions, warranties, obligations, maintenance and support of said goods or services shall have a coterminous expiration date with the original date of this Agreement. The Applicant shall not enter into a separate Agreement for said goods or services. Service Providers must state in their proposal that they acknowledge, accept and are in agreement with coterminous expiration conditions.

I, the undersigned, as an authorized agent of _____ (Service Provider Name), hereby certify that I have read the E-rate Supplemental Terms and Conditions, am fully compliant and intend to cooperate with the E-rate process as outlined above.

Signature: _____ Title: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Service Provider Name: _____

Service Provider FCC Registration Number: _____

Service Provider Identification Number: _____