

Schools & Libraries – Competitive Bidding Process

The competitive bidding process begins when an applicant posts the Form 470 to the USAC website and/or issues an RFP. The applicant must then wait 28 days after the Form 470 is posted or an RFP is issued (whichever is later) before selecting a service provider, ordering services and/or executing a contract.

Conduct an open, fair competitive bidding process

- “Open” means that there are no secrets in the process and that all bidders have equal access to the same information.
- “Fair” means that all bidders are treated the same and that no bidder has privileged knowledge over the contents of the Request for Proposal (RFP) or the Form 470.

Service provider involvement in the competitive bidding process

- Service provider involvement in the preparation or certification of the Form 470 or the vendor selection can taint the competitive bidding process and result in denials.
- Applicants cannot turn over their responsibility for ensuring a fair and open competitive bidding process to a service provider or a consultant acting on behalf of a service provider. Only applicants or authorized representatives can prepare, sign and submit (i.e., post to the website or file on paper) the Form 470 and certification.
- Listing a service provider representative as the Form 470 contact person and allowing the same service provider to participate in the competitive bidding process is a violation of FCC rules and will result in denial of funding.
- Service providers who bid on services must not participate in the evaluation process.

Select the winning bid

- Price of the eligible products and services must be the primary factor under consideration when evaluating bids. It does not have to be the sole factor. Examples of relevant factors include: prior experience, personnel qualifications, management capability, environmental objectives, and the cost of ineligible goods and services.
- The selected bid must be cost-effective in comparison to prices available commercially. If you receive only one bid, it is not necessarily cost-effective.

Retain all documents for a period of five years from the last date of service

- This includes:
 - Request For Proposal (RFP), with evidence of publication date
 - Bid evaluation matrix, criteria and weighting
 - Bid evaluation worksheets
 - All written correspondence with the service providers
 - All bids submitted, both winning and losing
 - Other documentation related to service provider selection

For additional information, please use the USAC resources listed below:

28 Day Waiting Period:	http://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/step04/28-day-waiting-period.aspx
Competitive Process:	http://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/step03/
Open & Fair Bidding:	http://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/step03/run-open-fair-competition.aspx
Selecting Service Provider:	http://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/step04/