

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
for
DATA COMMUNICATIONS
Issued by
the STATE OF MONTANA



In collaboration with



SOLICITATION NUMBER: SPB-RFP-2025-0563LS



RFP OVERVIEW

I. INTRODUCTION

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is being issued by the State of Montana ("Lead Entity") in collaboration with the Procurement Professionals Alliance, RFxPremier cooperative purchasing program. The purpose of this RFP is to establish one or more Master Agreements (MA) for Data Communications.

The resulting Master Agreement(s) will form this new iteration of the Data Communications portfolio. The previous Data Communications portfolios have been a strong and impactful set of contracts that garner significant usage to fulfill the communications needs of many entities throughout the United States.

The current portfolio is awarded to suppliers that are OEMs of data communications products under the NASPO ValuePoint cooperative. The effective date of the current MAs was October 1, 2019 and the current expiration date is September 30, 2026. The decision was made to transition this portfolio to the new RFxPremier cooperative organization due to many factors, including RFxPremier's alignment with its focus on providing cooperative contracts to non-state entities and the significant usage by those non-state entities on the current portfolio.

In calendar year 2024, contractors reported a combined **\$685.85 million** in sales through the current portfolio (under NASPO ValuePoint) through cooperative solicitations like this RFP, including a combined **\$3.3 billion** in sales through the current Data Communications portfolio from 2019 through 2024.

Please see Attachment B, Scope of Work for further information about this RFP's goals and desired offerings including product categories.

About RFxPremier

RFxPremier is a division of the Procurement Professionals Alliance (PPA), a non-profit association dedicated to advancing public procurement through leadership, excellence, and integrity. In accordance with RFxPremier's Lead Entity Model, the Lead Entity is issuing this RFP, evaluating responses, and establishing Master Agreements with the support and assistance of a Sourcing Team, representing a broad range of perspectives that ensure the RFP incorporates best practices recognized by public entities across the country.

Participation in RFxPremier Master Agreements is convenient and cost-effective for Eligible Entities—including all states (as well as the District of Columbia and US territories), cities, counties, districts, other political subdivisions of any State, Institutions of Higher Education, K-12, quasi-governmental entities, service districts, healthcare institutions, transportation districts, tribes/tribal organizations, or nonprofit organizations—and suppliers, with no membership or registration required.

More information about PPA, RFxPremier, and the RFxPremier Lead Entity Model can be found at www.p2alliance.org and www.rfxpremier.org.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

A. RFP Contact. The following individual is the sole contact for this RFP:

Lauren Spatzierath
Procurement Operations Manager
State of Montana
Lauren.Spatzierath@mt.gov

B. RFP Website. The following website is the sole official source for RFP information and updates:



This solicitation will be posted on eMACS – the electronic Montana Acquisition and Contracting System. The proposal submittal process will be managed and facilitated by this eProcurement system. Below is the link for open bids, please search for “Data Communications” to find the solicitation.

<https://bids.scquest.com/apps/Router/PublicEvent?CustomerOrg=StateOfMontana>

For assistance with eMACS functionality only, such as vendor registration or responding to events, see the eMACS Vendor handbook@ <https://spb.mt.gov/eMACSresources>

For additional eMACS help not found in the Vendor Handbook, contact the eMACS Help Desk at 406-444-2575, emacs@mt.gov.

C. RFP Documents. This RFP consists of this RFP Overview, the following attachments, and any information or materials posted by the Lead Entity on eMACS, as amended:

1. Attachment A, RFP Terms and Conditions
2. Attachment B, Scope of Work
3. Attachment C, RFP Evaluation Plan
4. Attachment D, Sample Master Agreement
5. Attachment E, Sample Montana Participating Addendum
6. Attachment F, Participation Information
7. Attachment G, Offeror Response Worksheet
8. Attachment H, Cost Proposal
9. Attachment I, Proposed Modifications

D. Important Dates.

1. **RFP Open Date:** see eMACS
2. **RFP Pre-proposal Conference:** see eMACS
3. **RFP Q&A Deadline:** see eMACS for Q&A Board Closing Date
4. **RFP Close Date:** see eMACS

Attendance at the RFP Pre-proposal Conference is optional, and registration is not required.

Dates and deadlines are subject to change. Offerors should continue checking the eMACS for the most up-to-date information.

E. How to Ask Questions.

1. **Please see eMACS for all information regarding Q&A.**
2. Questions will be submitted via eMACS Q&A Board.
3. The Lead Entity may, but is not obligated to, answer all questions submitted. The Lead Entity reserves the right to refrain from responding to any particular question that is deemed irrelevant or may damage the integrity of the process.

F. How to Respond.

1. **Read and review all of contents of this RFP, including all information on eMACS, attachments, exhibits, and amendments.**
2. Prepare a proposal that:
 - a. Follows the requested format;
 - b. Includes the Solicitation Number on all materials making up the proposal;
 - c. Addresses each question and request for a response in this RFP, including all questions in Attachment G, Offeror Response Worksheet;



- d. Clearly demonstrates your ability to meet the Scope of Work described in Attachment B; and
 - e. Includes all required submissions identified in Section IV, A, below in this attachment.
3. Submit your proposal by the RFP Close Date via eMACS.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

A detailed description of the Deliverables being sought through this RFP is attached as Attachment B, Scope of Work.

The scope of this RFP and its resulting Master Agreement(s) is intended to benefit all states (as well as the District of Columbia and US territories), cities, counties, districts, other political subdivisions of any State, Institutions of Higher Education, K-12, quasi-governmental entities, service districts, healthcare institutions, transportation districts, tribes/tribal organizations, or nonprofit organizations. Therefore, **Offerors should not interpret the Scope of Work to be associated with or limited to any specific purchase, implementation, project, need, or program** within the Lead Entity or any other eligible entity. Proposals should be generally applicable to all potential Participating Entities and Purchasing Entities, except where specificity is requested.

The initial term of the Master Agreement(s) resulting from this RFP is anticipated to be **7 years**, with the option to exercise renewals totaling up to an additional **3 years** following the initial term, upon mutual agreement by the Lead Entity and Contractor.

IV. OFFEROR RESPONSE

- A. Required Submissions.** The following list below must be submitted with your proposal. Proposers will be responsible to submit these required documents directly in eMACS and certify any required statements as necessary as a part of the Offeror Response. Failure to comply and submit the required information could result in the Offeror's proposal being deemed non-responsive.
1. Any response required to be submitted or answered (including Offeror information, acknowledgements, certifications, etc.) directly through/on eMACS prior to closing date outlined in the solicitation;
 2. Completed Attachment G, Offeror Response Worksheet;
 3. Completed Attachment H, Cost Proposal (and all required attachments for the Cost Proposal including: Product Catalog and Authorized Dealer List); and
 4. Redacted copy of proposal clearly marked as such, if claiming confidential, proprietary, or protected information
- B. Other Documents.** The following are informational only and do **not** need to be submitted with your proposal:
1. This RFP Overview
 2. Attachment A RFP Terms and Conditions
 3. Attachment B Scope of Work
 4. Attachment C, RFP Evaluation Plan
 5. Attachment D, Sample Master Agreement, if NOT proposing modifications
 6. Attachment E, Sample State of Montana Participating Addendum, if NOT proposing modifications
 7. Attachment F, Participation Information

V. EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS

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- A.** Proposals will be sealed until the RFP Close Date. After opening, proposals will be evaluated in stages as set forth in this section and further detailed in Attachment C, RFP Evaluation Plan. Below is an outline of the evaluation stages.
- 1. Stage 1: Initial Responsiveness Evaluation including agreement to Mandatory Minimum Requirements validation.**
 - 2. Stage 2: Technical Criteria Evaluation.**
 - 3. Stage 3: Cost Evaluation.**
- B.** After evaluations are completed, the Lead Entity and Sourcing Team will determine which proposals are most advantageous to the Lead Entity and potential Participating Entities and Purchasing Entities. Please see Attachment C, RFP Evaluation Plan for further details of award determination.
- C.** Prior to announcement of awards and execution of Master Agreements, the Lead Entity will present an award recommendation to RFXPremier for approval of the proposed awards.
- D.** Following approval of RFXPremier the Lead Entity will present an award recommendation for internal approval and once approved post a public intent to award, then begin negotiations with successful Offerors.