

FY 2025 - 2026  
**Dedicated Internet Access with  
Transport Service Specifications**

<b>Organization:</b>	<b>Universal/Star International Academies</b>
<b>Billed Entity Number (BEN):</b>	<b>222461</b>
<b>Form 470 #:</b>	<b>250008094</b>
<b>Attachments:</b>	<b>Universal Star Internet Pricing Attachment.xlsx</b>
<b>Authorized Procurement Contacts:</b>	<b>Rami Hamadeh <a href="mailto:rhamadeh@hesedu.com">rhamadeh@hesedu.com</a> Andrew Epting <a href="mailto:aepting@e-ratecentral.com">aepting@e-ratecentral.com</a></b>

**Procurement Timeline**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Form 470 Issue Date	See Form 470 Certification Date
Deadline to Submit Questions	January 24, 2025, by 5 p.m.
Posting of Questions/Clarifications	January 28, 2025
Proposal Submission Deadline	February 14, 2025, by 5 p.m.

*All times noted are Eastern Time Zone*

**Communications and Questions**

All communication with Universal/Star International Academies (Universal) regarding this solicitation **must** be emailed and received by the “Deadline to Submit Questions” noted in the “Procurement Timeline.” Questions should be directed to all “Authorized Procurement Contacts” listed above, with the Form 470 Number included in the subject line. Failure to include all “Authorized Procurement Contacts” could result in questions going unanswered. Verbal inquiries are not allowed. Clarifications, when applicable, will be posted as an attachment/addendum to the Form 470 in the E-rate Productivity Center (EPC). Each Bidder is responsible for downloading the current version of the Form 470 and attachments, including any addenda. Universal reserves the right to ask Bidders clarifying questions during the proposal review process.

Communication in any form initiated by a Bidder concerning this solicitation with any other Universal representative other than those listed as Authorized Procurement Contacts is strictly prohibited. Unauthorized contact may result in the Bidder's disqualification from this solicitation.

**Proposal Instructions**

Proposals **must** be submitted by the Proposal Submission Deadline in the Procurement Timeline, or as stated in subsequent addenda, whichever is later.

**Please Note: The items listed below are bid requirements. Bidders whose proposals do not include this information will be disqualified and not reviewed.**

Bids **MUST** include the following information:

- Organization name: Universal/Star International Academies
- Form 470 number: 250008094
- SPIN (Service Provider Identification Number)
- Service Provider's Federal Tax ID Number
- Service provider's terms and conditions, if applicable
- Completed Pricing Attachment
- Signature of official authorized to bid the Bidder to the provision's set forth in the proposal
- Proposal must meet stated requirements set forth in the sections detailed below

Proposals **must** include all costs associated with providing service, including but not limited to:

- Monthly recurring charges (MRC) include any recurring charge related to delivering the services, such as monthly charges for Internet access, IP addresses, basic terminating equipment, etc.
- Non-Recurring Charges (NRC) include any one-time fee other than special construction charges. This includes, but is not limited to installation charges, connection charges, and/or basic terminating equipment charges.
- Special Construction Charges (SPC) are one-time costs for deploying new fiber or upgrading network facilities for eligible entities. These charges are non-recurring and include the following components:
  - construction of network facilities,
  - design and engineering,
  - and project management.
- Failure to identify the monthly recurring, non-recurring, and special construction charges will result in the disqualification of the proposal. Respondents are encouraged to provide the estimated taxes and surcharges associated with the service. Submissions indicating that there may be additional MRC, NRC, or SPC related to delivering the services **WILL** be disqualified.

Proposal pricing **must** be included in the Pricing Attachment and be submitted in xls or xlsx format.

Proposals **must** be in response to the specific requirements of this solicitation. Proposals including a generic listing of services beyond the scope of this solicitation and/or encyclopedic price lists will be disqualified. SPAM and/or robotic responses will not be considered valid responses and will be disqualified from consideration.

The items listed below are considered preferred and should be included in all bid proposals. Bidders who fail to provide the information below will not be disqualified but will receive point deductions during evaluation.

Universal requests that prospective bidders include the following information in the bid proposal:

- A financial stability summary (e.g. Annual Report, Dun & Brad Street report, etc.)

- Vendors and/or third parties support staff and locations
- At least three references from similarly situated schools and/or libraries with whom the Bidder has contracted in the past two years for similar services as those described within this solicitation
- Evidence that vendor is insured and/or bonded

## **Service Requirements**

Universal **requires** Dedicated Internet Access (DIA) with Transport service to the locations specified in the Pricing Attachment.

Bidders are **required** to provide at minimum /29 with 6 usable IP addresses to each site listed in the Pricing Attachment.

Bidders should refer to the Pricing Attachment for the requested bandwidth service levels. If the exact bandwidth service levels listed in the Pricing Attachment are not available, Bidders should update the Pricing Attachment to include their closest comparable service level for Universal's consideration.

Proposals meeting any of the three criteria below may be disqualified.

1. Solution does **NOT** offer at least the minimum requested bandwidth.
2. Solution does **NOT** offer bandwidth dedicated to the Consortium but instead, the bandwidth is dependent on the number of other customers on the network or some other factor that does not, generally, guarantee the minimum bandwidth as a committed information rate (CIR).
3. Solution includes caps on data usage or slows speeds based on data usage or other factors.

All Proposals must terminate service or infrastructure at the demarcation point within the building, generally, the main distribution frame (MDF). Proposals that only bring service to the property line but not to the demarcation point will be disqualified. The resulting contract must terminate service at an MDF designated by Universal. The Bidder should specify the exact demarcation setup included in the base fees, such as wall-mounted CPE and CAT6a handoff, rack mount patch panel, etc.

Universal reserves the right to consider its existing service contract as a standing proposal and evaluate it against the other submitted proposals.

**Partial bids will not be accepted.**

## **Contract Term and Modifications**

Bidders are requested to provide 36-month pricing. Unless otherwise stated, Universal may voluntarily extend the agreement for two (2) additional twelve (12) month terms. Proposals requiring an initial term of more than 36-months **will not** be considered.

The initial contract term shall begin July 1, 2025, and expire June 30, 2028.

The maximum contract term includes the initial contract term and all voluntary extensions. The maximum contract term shall begin July 1, 2025, and expire June 30, 2030.

Services shall be active and operational by July 1, 2025. If the service cannot be guaranteed by this date, this should be clearly indicated in the proposal, along with an estimated timeline for when the service will be available.

Universal requests that the resulting contract permit bandwidth increases during the term of the contract. Any such increases, including those during optional renewal periods, will be treated as modifications to the existing agreement rather than new agreements and, therefore, will **NOT** extend the contract's term.

Universal requests that the resulting contract include a provision allowing for early termination of circuits without penalty if a location is closed by the Universal.

Universal requests that the resulting contract include a clause allowing services to additional sites be added to the contract at the contracted MRC for the duration of the contract. In the event an additional site is added to the contract, Universal will assume responsibility for any one-time charges related to adding the new site to the network. Sites added to the service contract after it has been executed will have the same end date as the executed contract.

Price increases **will not** be permitted during the term of the contract.

Bidders proposing equipment whose prices may increase depending upon new U.S. government tariffs imposed on imports are encouraged to (a) identify such products in their proposals, and (b) propose an acceptable methodology for limiting price adjustments over the life of the contract.

Subject to contract restrictions, services may be reevaluated for cost-effectiveness at any time during the term of the contract including renewal periods.

### **E-rate Specific Considerations/Information**

Universal requests service provider invoice (SPI) discount method for the services described within this solicitation.

Per the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) E-rate rules, the "cost of eligible services" will be the highest valued criterion in the evaluation process; however, other criteria with a lesser value may also be considered.

Bidders proposing to temporarily loan equipment for product demonstration and/or evaluation purposes are **required** to clearly state that such loans are of limited duration. Product demonstrations extending beyond thirty (30) days must be explicitly authorized by both parties

and provided at a fair market rate.

By submitting a proposal on the requested services herein, the Bidder certifies its proposed services and/or products comply with Part 47 Section 54.9 and 54.10 of the FCC rules which prohibits the sale, provision, maintenance, modification, or other support of equipment or services provided or manufactured by Huawei, ZTE, or any other covered company posing a national security threat to the integrity of communications networks or the communications supply chain. See <https://www.usac.org/about/reports-orders/supply-chain/> for more details.

As required by Section 54.500(f) of Part 47 of the Code of Federal Regulation all bids in response to this RFP **must** offer the lowest corresponding price (LCP) which is defined as the lowest price that a service provider charges to nonresidential customers who are similarly situated to a particular E-rate applicant (school, library, or consortium) for similar services. See <https://www.usac.org/e-rate/service-providers/step-2-responding-to-bids/lowest-corresponding-price/> for more details.

The awarded Bidder must maintain and enforce an internal E-rate audit process that ensures that the Bidder complies with all E-rate program rules and regulations. This process must include the following:

- Where labor is involved, maintaining detailed, signed individual timesheets.
- Ensuring that ineligible charges are not submitted to USAC.
- Invoicing to USAC that is consistent with the contract and the Universal's Form 471.
- Ensuring that services or products are not provided to the Universal without Universal's express written permission or official purchase authorization.
- Ensuring that Academy-approved substitute services or products are prominently noted on invoices submitted to USAC and the Universal.
- Maintaining fixed asset list of E-rate-supported equipment provided to the Universal with detailed information for each item (model number, serial number, product description) and made available to the Universal in electronic format upon project completion.

Universal requests that the awarded Bidder itemize, price, and invoice separately any materials or services that are ineligible for E-rate funding. Bidder should include the following information on all invoices to Universal for E-rate eligible equipment and/or services:

- Date of invoice.
- Date(s) of service.
- Funding Request Number ("FRN")
- Vendor SPIN
- Detailed description of services performed
- Clear, concise breakdown of amount(s) to be billed to USAC (discounted portion of eligible charges) and amount(s) to be billed to Universal (non-discounted amount of eligible charges)
- Invoice on Bidder's letterhead or on a bidder-generated form

- Proper E-rate discount percentage as set forth by the applicable FRN and USAC funding commitment decision letter ("FCDL")

### **Additional Considerations/Information**

The language in this solicitation has been standardized so that "must," "shall," "mandatory," and "required" are mandatory specifications that Universal expects to be included in the proposed solution. Proposals failing to meet or address these mandatory specifications will be disqualified. The terms "should" and "may" indicate desirable specifications. A mandatory requirement may be waived if all Bidders fail to meet a mandatory requirement.

Universal reserves the right to waive any irregularities or informalities in the proposals received.

Universal reserves the right to award all, part or none of the services set forth in this procurement. This procurement does not obligate Universal until a valid agreement and/or valid Purchase Order is executed.

Universal may, at its sole discretion, extend the due date for the submission of proposals and any extensions shall be done via an addendum posted in EPC.

The Bidder's proposal is subject to open records requests and, as such, the records will be released in accordance with those policies. Bidders are encouraged to mark pages as "Proprietary" or "Confidential" as appropriate, but the entire proposal may not be marked as such. Identifying information as "Proprietary" or "Confidential" does not guarantee that the information will not be released but will be considered in determining whether the information is required to be released in accordance with Universal's open records policies and those of the State of Michigan. Generally, pricing is not exempt from being publicly released.

By submitting a proposal, the Bidder certifies that no relationship exists between the Bidder and Universal that would interfere with a fair and open competition or is a conflict of interest.

The Academies do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, height, weight, religion, marital status, or disability in its programs and activities.

Award of this proposal is contingent upon the approval of funding from the Universal Service Fund/Schools and Libraries Division E-Rate Program.

Bidders submitting unaccepted or rejected documents will be notified within thirty (30) days of RFP Deadline and may come in person to re-claim their documents within thirty (30) days of notification.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Evaluation of all responsive bids may use the criteria listed below. Bidders are encouraged to provide details in their proposals that address these criteria. Pursuant to E-Rate program rules,

the price of E-Rate eligible goods and services is the highest weighted evaluation criteria.

- Price of the E-rate eligible goods and services
- Price of ineligible goods and services
- Prior experience including past performance
- Costs related to changing providers and breaking contract
- Management capability including schedule compliance and timetable
- Meets and understands needs and requirements described within the solicitation
- In-state and/or local presence

Universal's Board of Directors will validate the evaluation of all proposals received at a scheduled, public meeting of the Board of Directors.

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