

## RFP 13-71-17 District-Wide Copper and Fiber Optic Cabling

### Background and Award Value Explanation

As Governing Board members will recall, last spring TUSD launched its District-wide IT Infrastructure Modernization Initiative (ITIMI). The Board awarded three contracts for the ITIMI project – one for the new fiber-based Wide Area Network, one for Telephony (i.e. voice) Services, and the third for site Local Area Networks and site-wide Wireless systems. Included in the LAN/Wireless contract that the Board awarded to World Wide Technologies, Inc. (WWT) was \$2.9 million in copper and fiber-optic cabling (internal to buildings).

Shortly after award, a protest was filed against both TUSD's contract and the State of Arizona's similar contract with WWT. The protest called into question whether all bidders on RFP's containing low-voltage cabling requirements (such as ours) are required to possess an Arizona Contractor's License in order to either perform the cabling portion of the project or to oversee subcontractors who perform that work and are licensed to do so. While the protest against our particular contract award ultimately was resolved in TUSD's favor, the AZ Registrar of Contractors has not officially ruled on the main issue. Therefore, TUSD Counsel has advised us to remove the cabling portion from our WWT contract and re-bid that work.

In the past, we have been able to leverage the AZ State Contract for cable and fiber-optic services in the performance of both Bond-funded and M&O-funded cabling projects. This year, however, when the state re-bid its cabling contract it *did not require bidders to certify their eligibility to perform E-Rate eligible cabling services*. Most of TUSD's network cabling requirements are E-Rate eligible. The Schools and Libraries Division (SLD – the E-Rate authority) requires that contracts for E-Rate eligible products and services specifically and explicitly require vendors to be certified as eligible. Therefore, we cannot use the AZ State Contract for E-Rate eligible cabling services, even if a vendor on the contract may happen to be an E-Rate eligible company. As a result, when we were informed of the State Contract limitation in late October we concluded that we had to conduct a TUSD RFP for these services.

In past years TUSD has averaged approximately \$700,000 in cabling projects each year. Some were/are Bond-funded (school renovations, McCorkle, etc.) and the others are miscellaneous projects funded out of M&O budgets. These can include classroom reconfigurations, office moves, etc. Since most of that work is E-Rate eligible as well, staff decided to combine both the ITIMI project requirements and these other projects into a single RFP process.

The scope of this RFP is to purchase materials and professional services from a responsible firm or firms to provide Premise Structured Cabling Systems (PSCS) in support of the ITIMI project and the cable plant additions and/or modifications that occur annually to meet new requirements of the District. More specifically, the RFP and subsequent 5-year contract awards serves a combination of needs for TUSD:

1. It includes the \$2.9M in copper and fiber-optic cabling that was previously approved by the Governing Board as part of the ITIMI project. This work is still scheduled to be complete in June of 2014.
2. It also includes an estimated \$3.5M in anticipated miscellaneous PSCS cabling needs to support school closures/consolidations, renovations, moves, relocations, small projects, repairs, etc. that are projected to occur as normal parts of our school and support operations. This amount is spread over five years and is an estimate based on actual expenditures over the past two fiscal years.
3. Lastly, it includes a small contingency of \$600,000 (approx. 9.4%) for any additional unforeseen work. Such a contingency is prudent and important in view of uncertainties around the impact of school closures this year and possibly in future years.

The total amount of Board approval being requested is therefore \$7.0M over five years, commencing with contract award. This is a not-to-exceed amount; actual expenses may be less.

As described in the BAI documentation, staff is recommending contract awards to three vendors. This will provide flexibility and assurance for TUSD that we will have the necessary contractor capacity as it is required.

It is very important to award these contracts now to enable final preparation of actual LAN/Wireless upgrade designs for schools in time for E-Rate request submissions in February.