

March 7, 2025

Mr. Aaron Guske
Director of Technology
Harlem School District 122
8605 North 2nd Street
Machesney Park, IL 61115

Re: Recommendation for Harlem School District 122 – Fiber Optic Replacement RFP

Dear Mr. Guske:

ClientFirst Technology Consulting was retained by Harlem School District 122 to facilitate a competitive selection process for the following products and services, through the Federal E-rate program:

Fiber Optic Replacement between telecom rooms in ten of eleven District schools.

The District's fiber infrastructure is aging. A replacement is needed to prepare for future bandwidth speeds. One school, Ralston Elementary School, was not included because it has only one telecom room and therefore does not need a fiber replacement between telecom rooms.

We worked closely with Harlem School District 122 and the District's IT team in the development and issuance of Request for Proposal (RFP) documents, and the subsequent validation of a qualified contractor.

The work steps that we utilized to assist the team in reaching the recommendation for procurement of the proposed products and services were as follows:

1. ClientFirst worked with District IT to prepare a detailed proposal scope of work.
2. We determined which fiber optic products and services were eligible for E-rate discount.
3. We developed a proposal document that described the scope-of-work and posted those on the Universal Service Administration Corporation (USAC) site, according to E-rate program rules. The proposal referred to drawings, specifications, and terms/conditions developed by ClientFirst, working with the IT team.
4. We conducted a mandatory pre-proposal meeting for interested contractors.
5. ClientFirst assisted the District with the responses to contractor questions.
6. Following submission of proposals, ClientFirst and the District evaluated proposal pricing and scope.
7. We facilitated a process with the District and the District IT team for review of technical features and completeness of documentation with the proposed contractor,

The following are the proposal recommendations, based on the collaboration between Harlem School District 122 and ClientFirst:

Recommendation - Fiber Optic Replacement

Fiber Optic Replacement

Proposals were received from four contractors. Three of the contractors submitted valid proposals. The fourth proposal was disqualified because it provided a generic hardware and services purchase list, without identifying the specific fiber solution to meet the requirements of the RFP. The contractor also failed to attend the Mandatory Pre-Proposal Meeting and Site Tour as required by the RFP.

Here is a summary of the total proposal costs, and evaluation points, based on criteria published in the RFP, including cost, completeness of proposal, meeting technical specifications, and the vendor's experience on projects of comparable size and scope.

Vendor	Fiber Optic Replacement	Evaluation Points
<i>Nicomm Networks</i>	\$233,441.51	97.3
<i>Applied Communications Group</i>	279,252.00	91.8
<i>Homestead Electrical Contracting, LLC</i>	\$378,430.00	79.5
<i>Cytranet (disqualified)</i>	--	--

The District qualifies for an 80 percent E-rate discount on eligible products and services of up to \$214,562. If the project is approved by USAC, the E-rate administrator, the 80 percent discount equals \$171,650. This amount would be reimbursed by Federal E-rate funds. When you subtract the estimated reimbursement amount from the \$233,441.51 lowest total proposal cost, the estimated net cost to the District is approximately \$61,800.

Based on our review of the proposal responses and proposal validation, ClientFirst recommends Nicomm Networks for the Fiber Optic Replacement. Their proposal meets the technical requirements of the RFP, including all products and services required to install the fiber optic replacement. They are also a local contractor, with offices in the District.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 630.656.7366 or via email at cwilliams@clientfirstcg.com for additional information. We appreciate the continued opportunity of serving Harlem School District 122.

Sincerely,



Craig Williams, RCDD, NTS

Director
Infrastructure Consulting Services