

# Selecting Service Providers

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After you close your competitive bidding process, you can evaluate the bids received and choose the bid that is the most cost-effective. You may consider as many factors in your evaluation as you want, but the price of the eligible products and services must be included as a factor and must be weighted more heavily than any other single factor. Remember, your FCC Form 470 and your Request for Proposals (RFP), if you issued one, must both have been publicly available for the same [28-day period](#) as the FCC Form 470 before you can close your competitive bidding process.

If you received one bid, and that bid is cost-effective, you should memorialize that fact with a memo or email for your records. If you did not receive any bids, you can solicit bids. If you currently receive service from a service provider, you can ask your current provider to submit information in response to your FCC Form 470.

## Constructing an Evaluation

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To evaluate the bids you receive, you must [construct an evaluation](#). You decide what factors you want to consider in your evaluation and how important each factor is to you. You can use as few or as many evaluation factors as you like, and you can assign percentages or points to the factors you use to reflect their relative importance. However, you must include the price of the eligible products and services as a factor and that factor must be weighted more heavily than any other single factor.

Preparing a [Bid Evaluation Matrix](#)  helps you evaluate bids and also provides documentation of the process you followed to select your service provider.

You can receive services:

- Under tariff or on a month-to-month basis. Services such as basic telephone service or Internet access may not require a contract. However, you must post an FCC Form 470 and open a competitive bidding process for these services each year.
- Under a contract. Tariffed or month-to-month services provided under a contract are considered to be contracted services. Eligible products and the upkeep of eligible products are generally provided under a contract. If you post an FCC Form 470 and sign a multi-year contract resulting from that posting, you do not have to post an FCC Form 470 or open a competitive bidding process again for the life of that contract.

## Contracts

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If you intend to receive services under contract, remember that the contract must have been preceded by the filing of an FCC Form 470. If you have an existing contract that was not signed as a result of posting an FCC Form 470, you can post an FCC Form 470 for the next funding year and consider your existing contract as a bid response. However, you must evaluate any other bids received as well, and your existing contract may not be the most cost-effective solution. The entity that filed the FCC Form 470 must also have followed the Schools and Libraries Program competitive bidding rules and all applicable state and local contract and procurement rules and regulations.

- You can [sign a contract](#), which may be for one or more years and may include the option of voluntary extensions.
- If you are eligible, you can purchase services from a [state master contract](#).
- If you are eligible to purchase from a state master contract but that contract will expire before or during the upcoming funding year, you and your state should follow the guidance for [state replacement contracts](#).

## Next step

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Once you have chosen your service provider(s) and signed a contract, if applicable, you can file an FCC Form 471 to apply for discounts as soon as the FCC Form 471 application filing window opens.