



**Enoch Pratt Free Library/State Library Resource Center
Request for Proposal
for Electronic Resources for Maryland Public Libraries
and Public K-12 Schools FY26-FY29**

Issue Date: August 26, 2024

Pre-Bid Question Deadline: October 18, 2024

Bid Deadline: November 1, 2024, 5 p.m. EST

Procurement Contacts: Send bids to: mjohnson@prattlibrary.org
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Description:

The Enoch Pratt Free Library/State Library Resource Center is soliciting proposals from qualified vendors to provide access to statewide electronic resources in support of the Sailor Electronic Resources Project. These resources, purchased through the Sailor database budget, ensure all Maryland residents have equitable access to a core collection of databases and other electronic resources. The library is requesting proposals to fulfill a 4-year contract term.

Written questions regarding the substance of the RFP must be submitted via e-mail to the procurement contact(s) listed above no later than the Pre-Bid Question Deadline indicated above. Emailed Bids are due prior to the Bid Deadline indicated above and must be delivered to mjohnson@prattlibrary.org Late bids will not be accepted.

Sections:

- **Project Overview**
- **Instructions & General Conditions**
- **Project Background**
- **Resources of Interest**
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SAILOR OPERATIONS CENTER

Enoch Pratt Free Library / State Library Resource Center

400 Cathedral Street Baltimore, MD 21201

Project Overview

The Enoch Pratt Free Library/State Library Resource Center is soliciting proposals from qualified vendors to provide access to statewide electronic resources in support of the Sailor Database Project. These resources, purchased through the Sailor database budget, ensure all Maryland residents have equitable access to a core collection of databases and other electronic resources. The library is requesting proposals to fulfill a 4-year contract term.

Instructions & General Conditions

1. **COMMUNICATIONS:** All communications, any modifications, clarifications, amendments, questions, responses or any other matters related to the Request for Proposal (RFP) must be made only through the Procurement Contact noted on the cover of this RFP, or their designee. A violation of this provision is cause for the Library to reject a company's bid. No contact regarding this document with other Library employees is permitted, and may be grounds for disqualification.
2. **PRE-BID INFORMATION & QUESTIONS:** Each bid that is timely received will be evaluated on its merit and for completeness of all requested information. In preparing bids, Bidders are advised to rely only upon the contents of this RFP and accompanying documents and any written clarifications or addenda issued by the Library. If a Bidder finds a discrepancy, error, or omission in the RFP package, or requires any written addendum thereto, the Bidder is requested to notify the Procurement Contact noted on the cover of this RFP, so that written clarification may be sent to all prospective Bidders. All questions must be submitted in writing to the Procurement Contact before the Pre-Bid Question Deadline indicated on the front of this document. All answers will be issued in the form of a written addendum.
3. **RFP MODIFICATIONS:** The library may make clarifications, modifications, or amendments to the RFP at any time prior to the Bid Deadline. It is the Bidder's responsibility to periodically check the Library's website at <https://www.prattlibrary.org/about-us/request-for-proposal> until the posted Bid Deadline to obtain any issued addenda.
4. **BID SUBMISSION:** Submitted bid should contain all requested elements as outlined in the Proposal Elements section.
 - a. Bids must be submitted to the Library by email to mjohnson@prattlibrary.org, before the date and time indicated as the deadline. It is each Bidder's sole responsibility to ensure the Library receives the bid prior to the Bid Deadline.
 - b. Submission of a bid establishes a conclusive presumption that the Bidder is thoroughly familiar with the Request for Proposal (RFP) and that the Bidder understands and agrees to abide by each and all of the stipulations and requirements contained therein.

- c. All costs incurred in the preparation and presentation of the bid is the Bidder's sole responsibility; no pre-bid costs will be reimbursed to any Bidder. All documentation submitted with the bid will become the property of the Library.
 - d. Bids must be held firm for a minimum of 90 days.
- 5. **EXCEPTIONS:** Bidder shall clearly identify any proposed deviations from the Scope of Work in the Request for Proposal. Each exception must be clearly defined and referenced to the proper paragraph in this RFP. The exception shall include, at a minimum, the Bidder's proposed substitute language and opinion as to why the suggested substitution will provide equivalent or better service and performance. If no exceptions are noted in the Bidder's bid, the Library will assume complete conformance with this specification and the successful Bidder will be required to perform accordingly. Bids not meeting all requirements may be rejected.
- 6. **DUPLICATE BIDS:** No more than one (1) bid from any Bidder, including its subsidiaries, affiliated companies, and franchises will be considered by the Library. In the event multiple bids are submitted in violation of this provision, the Library will have the right to determine which bid will be considered, or at its sole option, reject all such multiple bids.
- 7. **REJECTION:** The Library reserves the right to reject any or all bids, or to accept or reject any bid in part, and to waive any minor informality or irregularity in bids received if it is determined by the Chief of Collections and Access Services that the best interest of the Library will be served by doing so. A Bidder's failure to provide any additional information requested by the Library prior to a vendor selection may result in rejection of the bid. The Library may reject any bid from any person, firm, or corporation in arrears or in default to the Library on any contract, debt, or other obligation, or if the Bidder is debarred by the Library from consideration for a contract award. The Library reserves the right to reject all nonconforming, nonresponsive, unbalanced, or conditional Bids. Discrepancies in the multiplication of unit prices and unit prices themselves will be resolved in favor of unit price. Discrepancies between the indicated sum of any column of figures and the correct sum thereof will be resolved in favor of the correct sum.
- 8. **PROCUREMENT POLICY:** Procurement for the Library will be handled in a manner providing fair opportunity to all businesses. This will be accomplished without abrogation or sacrifice of quality and as determined to be in the best interest of the Library.
- 9. **NON-DISCRIMINATION:** Library will not contract with any person or firm that discriminates against employees or applicants for employment because of any factor not related to job performance. The Bidder must comply with all federal, state, and local laws and policies that prohibit discrimination in employment contracts. The Bidder must include in its subcontracts provisions that prohibit subcontractors from discriminating in their employment practices.
- 10. **BIDDER EVALUATION:** The Bid will be awarded to the most responsive, responsible Bidder meeting specifications with the highest evaluation score based upon the following criteria:
 - a. Alignment with the stated interests and needs of our user group
 - b. Pricing is within the budget parameters

- c. Resource(s) address a high percentage of points outlined in the Resources of Interest and General Selection Criteria sections.
11. **CONTRACT AWARD:** The Library reserves the right to award by item, group of items, or total bid. The Bidder to whom the award is made will be notified at the earliest possible date. After a final award of the Contract by the Library, the vendor must execute and perform said Contract. If, for any reason, a contract is not executed with the selected Bidder within fourteen (14) days after the start date of the Contract period, then the Library may recommend the award to the next qualified Bidder.
 12. **DISQUALIFICATION OF BIDDERS:** Any one or more of the following causes may be considered for the disqualification of a Bidder as non-responsible and the rejection of the Bid:
 - a. Evidence of collusion among Bidders;
 - b. Lack of competency as revealed by either financial, experience, or safety statements;
 - c. Lack of responsibility as shown by past work;
 - d. Uncompleted work under other contracts which in the judgment of the Library, might hinder or prevent the prompt completion of additional work if needed.
 13. **DISCUSSIONS:** Discussions may be conducted with responsible Bidders, in order to clarify and assure full understanding of, and conformance to, the solicitation requirements. Discussions may be conducted with Bidders who submit bids determined to be reasonably susceptible of being elected for award, but bids may be accepted without such discussions. Bidders shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussions and revisions of bids. Such revisions may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining best and final offers. If during discussions there is a need for any substantial clarification of or change in the RFP, the RFP shall be amended to incorporate such clarification or change. The Bidder shall reduce any substantial oral clarification of a bid in writing.
 14. **SUBCONTRACTORS:** The successful Bidder must identify all subcontractor(s) regardless of the dollar amount or percentage and the services they will provide. The successful Bidder is responsible for all payments and liabilities of all subcontractor(s). The Library reserves the right to approve or reject any proposed subcontractor. If the Library rejects any proposed subcontractor, the successful Bidder shall be responsible to assume the proposed subcontractor's responsibilities. The successful Bidder may propose another subcontractor if it does not jeopardize the effectiveness or efficiency of the contract.
 15. Nothing contained in the RFP or in the contract shall create or be construed as creating any contractual relationship between subcontractor and the Library. The Contract will not be assignable to any other business entity without the Library's approval.
 16. **DISCLOSURE OF CONTENTS:** All information provided in the bid shall be held in confidence and shall not be revealed or discussed with competitors or the general public, until after award of the contract except as provided by law or court decision.

Bidders must make no other distribution of the bids other than authorized by this RFP. A Bidder who shares cost information contained in its bid with other Library personnel or competing Bidder's personnel shall be subject to disqualification.

17. **PUBLIC DISCLOSURE:** Bids are subject to public disclosure after the deadline for submission in accordance with applicable law.
18. **CONTRACT COMMENCEMENT:** Commencement of a contract shall not begin prior to all necessary Library approvals, including Library's Board of Directors approval where required, and subsequent execution of the Library's Contract. Commencement of a contract without these approvals is solely at the Bidder's own risk and is likely to result in no payment for services performed or goods received.
19. **CHANGE ORDERS:** In the event the Library determines to change the resources and/or services, to either delete or add resources and or services, the Vendor shall prepare a Change Order setting forth in detail the changes to the resources, the cost associated with the changes, and the amount by which the bid will decrease or increase. The Library shall have the right to approve or disapprove the change order. Change Order Requests shall not exceed a markup percentage of Ten Percent (10%).

Project Background

Sailor Project

[Sailor](#) is a project of Maryland's public libraries that provides broadband Internet access for libraries, schools and local government in Maryland, and an extensive collection of electronic resources for the use of Maryland public library customers and students attending Maryland public schools (K-12).

The day to day operations of Sailor are managed by the Sailor Operations Center at the State Library Resource Center (SLRC), located at the Central Library of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, Maryland. Oversight is assigned to the Sailor Advisory Committee, which is a subcommittee of the State Library Resource Center Oversight Commission. Since 2001, funding for Sailor has been included in the State of Maryland grant that provides for Enoch Pratt Free Library to serve as Maryland's State Library Resource Center.

Sailor Electronic Resources

Maryland's public libraries share a collection of Internet-based electronic resources that are purchased through the Sailor e-resource budget. Links to the Sailor-funded e-resources can be found on each Maryland public library website, as well as on the Sailor website. Funding for Sailor e-resources is currently provided by the State of Maryland through the annual State Library Resource Center grant to Enoch Pratt Free Library. Purchasing is done by Enoch Pratt/SLRC librarians on behalf of Maryland public libraries for use by Maryland residents and Maryland public schools (K-12).

User Population

The state of Maryland comprises 24 counties, including the City of Baltimore, which is considered a county-equivalent. Sailor electronic resources are made available through each county's public library website and available to the Maryland public school (K-12) community through each school's preferred system. Access to Sailor e-resources should be available to all Maryland residents with a valid public library card regardless of location.

When a Maryland public school system enables access to Sailor e-resources, most do so from within a content/learning management system and/or a school intranet. Linked resources include both Sailor and non-Sailor content but all public school (K-12) based remote access requires either a student login or a public library card, or in some cases both. Maryland public school (K-12) access is administered through the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), while the Sailor Operations Center facilitates the public library access.

Resources of Interest

Based on outreach and communication with the statewide library community, the Sailor e-resource priorities are a Periodical Index, Targeted Student Resources, Job Skills and Career Support, and Family History. We are open to a broad range of resources but these are the core interests expressed by our community.

Along with the above resource types, these were other various topics of interest:

- Childhood Literacy
- Language Learning
- Streaming Resources
- Health and Mental Health resources
- Consumer Information
- Easy authentication
- Promotional materials for schools and libraries
- ADA Compliance

Resource Priorities

Specific details regarding each priority area of interest can be found in this section. Vendors are encouraged to submit proposals that cover all or some of these areas. If multiple resources are proposed, please include both bundled and individual pricing for all resources.

Family History

The following features are of particular interest:

- Support for customers who are new to Family History research.

- Easy access to government census information.
- Connections to:
 - Family history resource groups
 - Newspaper collections
 - Resources and documents focused on the diverse communities of Maryland. (European, African-American, Asian, Hispanic, Jewish and Indigenous peoples)

Periodical Index

The Index(s) should provide coverage suitable for a wide range of our anticipated user population and include periodicals that support the following:

- Elementary, Middle School and High School student research (K-12).
- Upper level academic research support.
- General public interests including but not limited to:
 - Consumer research information
 - Current events
 - Celebrity news
 - Crafts
- Translation to major languages
- Read aloud features

The index should include a variety of formats including images, periodicals, journals, video and audio resources. Materials should be current, reliable sources that reflect community diversity, and in areas generally included in Maryland K12 curriculums.

Targeted Student Support Resources

Student Support Resources should be specifically geared to K-12 students. Materials (magazines, journals, books, videos, recordings, images) and support should include:

- Indexing by age level
- Easy, intuitive filtering by Elementary, Middle and High School level.
- Support tools for teachers (Lexile level, word count)
- Support features for Advanced students
- Citation tools

Job Skills and Career Resources

Resources should include support both students and adults with needs that range from:

- Resume building
- Financial Literacy
- Test Prep (GED, AP, Technology Certifications)

General Selection Criteria

For all electronic resources under consideration, these issues are of particular importance. Please respond directly to these individual questions and requests for information.

*Please also notice that in light of recent legislative updates in Maryland, particularly the enactment of the Equivalent and Nonvisual Access Accountability Act for K-12 Education, we have asked for more explicit demonstrations of compliance with the required standard WCAG 2.1 AA, which fully takes effect in October 2024.

Visual Appearance and Usability

- What steps have you taken to make the resource as easy to navigate and understand, especially for customers of all computer skill levels.
- Are both basic and advanced search options clear and easy to navigate?
- Is age/reading level information clearly indicated?

Ease of Authentication

- How do you ensure ease of authentication statewide?
- Describe the process of securing authentication within public schools.
- What are your policies and expectations regarding unauthorized user access?

Mobile App/Mobile responsive website

- Is there an easy to use mobile app? Please describe the main features.
- Is the website optimized for use with mobile devices?

Privacy

- Describe how the privacy of customer information is handled.
- What are your policies surrounding the retention and security of customer information?
- What customer data is available for external marketing purposes, e.g. Orangeboy

ADA Compliance

- Proposals should include a completed [Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\)](#) found through the Maryland Department of Disabilities Information Technology (IT). The VPAT will outline how the product meets accessibility standards.
- Provide a plan for addressing any identified accessibility issues.
- Include an indemnification clause that acknowledges their responsibility for remediating any accessibility shortcomings discovered post-procurement.
 - However, for proposals involving third-party managed products (e.g., where the vendor is acting as a reseller), Vendors may propose alternative language that reflects a shared responsibility model, where they will work in good faith with their business partners to address and remediate any accessibility issues.

Diversity & Inclusion

- In what ways have you ensured unrepresented & diverse perspectives are included in your resource?

Statewide Implementation

- Please describe your statewide implementation process including setup, payment and available initial training.
- How do you ensure interoperability with other products and systems (ILS, LMS, Discovery, A-Z Lists, etc.)
- Are you compatible with major LMS (Learning Management Systems) and cloud

services? Can you describe how you would particularly work with public schools to ensure ease of implementation and integration?

Customer Service

- Describe how you handle ongoing training and customer service during the contract period.
- Describe your availability to attend Maryland Library Association Conferences and Sailor related professional events. The Library requests participation in the MLA/DLA Annual Conference and annual Sailor Symposium.
- What technical support do you provide to statewide customers?
- What marketing or other customer service support do you offer?

Statistics & Reporting

- Describe the statistical reporting features of your product. Can we easily pull statistical information for individual libraries and for the Sailor project as a whole.
- Do your e-resources provide COUNTER compliant reports?

Proposal Process Timeline

Date	Description
August 26, 2024	Distribution of Request for Proposal packet
October 18, 2024	Pre-bid question deadline
November 1, 2024	Vendor deadline to submit proposals via email to Michael Johnson, Deputy Chief of SLRC via mjohnson@prattlibrary.org
November 4 - December 31, 2024	Proposal review period
January 1- January 31, 2025	Vendor selection and negotiation period
February 3, 2025	Contracts finalized and signed
March 1- June 30, 2025	Implementation and training
July 1, 2025	Contract period begins

Proposal Elements

Proposals are due via email to Michael Johnson, Chief of Collections and Access Services via mjohnson@prattlibrary.org by 11:59 pm on **November 1, 2024** and should include the following information:

- A description of the product(s) being quoted, including how the product addresses

specific areas and features of interest.

- Response to General Selection Criteria section.
- The annual cost for the product(s). Including, individual and bundled pricing options if more than one resource is being quoted
- Standard library license agreement
- Standard privacy policy
- Contact name with email and phone number for follow-up questions
- List of any proposed exclusions or clarifications along with proposed substitute language and opinion as to why the suggested substitution will provide equivalent or better service and performance.
- Company resume highlighting company's relevant experience, qualifications, and key personnel.
- Proposed project schedule with key milestones.
- Signed **Bid Form** (Appendix A)

All proposal information will be kept confidential and shared only with Sailor representatives.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS PROCESS

Appendix A: Bid Form

TO: Enoch Pratt Free Library/State Library Resource Center

The Undersigned hereby offers and agrees to furnish the goods and/or services in compliance with all terms, scope of work, conditions, specifications, and addenda in the Request for Proposal.

BIDDER QUALIFICATION STATEMENT:

The following statements of experience, personnel, and general qualifications of the Bidder are submitted with the assurance that the Library can rely on its accuracy and truthfulness.

ADDENDA:

The undersigned has read, understands and is fully cognizant of the Instruction, Scope of Work, BidForm, all Exhibits thereto, and all contents of this document, together with any written addenda issued in connection with any of the above. The undersigned hereby acknowledges receipt of the following addenda: , __ , (write "none" if none). In addition, the undersigned has completely and appropriately filled out all required forms.

COMPLIANCE:

The undersigned hereby accepts all administrative requirements of the RFP and will be in compliance with such requirements. By submitting this Bid Form, the Bidder represents that: 1) the Bidder is in compliance with any applicable ethics provisions of the Library's RFP, and 2) if awarded a contract to provide the goods or services required in the RFP, the Bidder will comply with the Library's standards outlined in this RFP.

NON-COLLUSION:

The undersigned, by submission of this Bid Form, hereby declares that this Bid is made without collusion with any other person, firm, or corporation.

INSURANCES:

The undersigned further agrees that if awarded the Contract, it will submit to the Library any required evidence of required insurance coverage within 14 business days after acceptance of this bid.

FROM:

Respondent's Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____