Sample Network Cabling RFP — Annotated

A complete, filled-in cabling RFP with the reasoning behind every clause.

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About this sample. The buyer, sites, dates, and contact details below are fictional placeholders in [BRACKETS] — no real organization, client, or location appears in this document. The technical clauses, standards, and evaluation weights are real and reusable. Replace the bracketed values with your own and the document is ready to issue.

How to use this sample

1. Read the annotation under each clause first — it explains what the clause prevents, which tells you whether you need it.
2. Replace every [BRACKETED] value. A stray placeholder in an issued RFP costs credibility with bidders.
3. Attach your real site list. Clause 3 is a pointer; the attachment is the substance.
4. Delete clauses that do not apply. A shorter RFP that is fully answerable beats a long one full of boilerplate nobody scores.

The annotated RFP

1. Introduction and background

[BUYER ORGANIZATION] is soliciting proposals for structured cabling installation across fourteen (14) retail locations in [STATES]. Work is driven by a point-of-sale refresh with a hard cutover date of [DATE]. This RFP covers cabling, pathway, and closet buildout only; network hardware is furnished by [BUYER] under separate contract.

WHY IT IS WRITTEN THIS WAY

States the driver and the hard date in the first paragraph, and draws the scope boundary immediately. Bidders who see 'hardware by others' up front stop padding for equipment they were never going to supply.

2. Scope of work

Vendor shall furnish all labor, materials, tools, and supervision to install approximately 48 Category 6A cable drops per site, terminated at both ends, tested, labeled, and documented. Scope includes J-hook pathway, sleeve and firestop at all rated penetrations, one 24-port patch panel per closet, and rack-mounted cable management. Scope excludes: network electronics, patch cords, and electrical circuits, which are provided by [BUYER].

WHY IT IS WRITTEN THIS WAY

Quantifies drops per site and names the exclusions explicitly. Unstated exclusions are where a low bid hides its gap — forcing them into the RFP means every bid prices the same job.

3. Site inventory

See Attachment A for the site list. Each row includes address, square footage, ceiling type, closet location, occupied/vacant status, and permitted work hours. Sites [X] and [Y] are in enclosed malls with landlord vendor-onboarding requirements; allow ten (10) business days for badge issuance.

WHY IT IS WRITTEN THIS WAY

The attachment does more work than the whole document. Calling out the two hardest sites by exception prevents an averaged bid that under-prices them and over-prices the other twelve.

4. Technical specification

All horizontal cable shall be Category 6A, plenum-rated where required by local code, in [COLOR] jacket. Components shall be from a single manufacturer's certified system to preserve warranty eligibility. Terminations: T568B at both ends. Pathway: J-hooks at maximum 48-inch intervals, no cable resting on ceiling grid or piping. Bend radius and cinch tension per manufacturer specification.

WHY IT IS WRITTEN THIS WAY

Names category, rating, and termination standard. 'Single manufacturer's certified system' is the clause that keeps warranty registration possible — mixed components void most manufacturer system warranties.

5. Testing and certification

Every drop shall be certified with a Fluke DSX-series tester to the permanent-link standard for Category 6A. Vendor shall deliver a PDF test report per drop, exported from the tester, plus a summary sheet showing pass/fail by drop ID. Any failing drop shall be remediated and retested at vendor cost prior to acceptance.

WHY IT IS WRITTEN THIS WAY

The single most load-bearing clause in the document. It names the instrument, the standard, the deliverable format, and who pays for failures. Without it, 'tested' can mean a continuity check.

6. Deliverables at closeout

(a) Fluke certification reports, PDF, per drop. (b) As-built drawings showing final drop locations and IDs. (c) Labeling schedule mapping faceplate ID to patch-panel port. (d) Photo documentation of each closet and representative drops. (e) Manufacturer warranty registration certificate. Final payment is contingent on delivery of items (a) through (e).

WHY IT IS WRITTEN THIS WAY

Ties final payment to documentation. This is the only reliable mechanism for actually receiving as-builts — every other approach depends on goodwill after the money is gone.

7. Labeling scheme

Labels shall follow [ROOM]-[FACEPLATE]-[PORT] format, machine-printed, applied to both cable ends, the faceplate, and the patch panel port. Handwritten labels will be rejected.

WHY IT IS WRITTEN THIS WAY

Specifying the scheme up front costs one sentence. Discovering at closeout that fourteen sites used fourteen conventions costs a re-label project.

8. Schedule and work hours

Mobilization no earlier than [DATE]. Substantial completion by [DATE]. Sites are occupied and trading; cabling work shall occur between [HOURS] only. Vendor shall provide a per-site schedule within ten (10) business days of award. Any after-hours premium must be stated in the bid, not invoiced after the fact.

WHY IT IS WRITTEN THIS WAY

Occupied-space work hours and the after-hours premium are the two most common sources of post-award change orders. Requiring the premium in the bid makes it competitive rather than captive.

9. Vendor qualifications

Respondents shall submit: (a) low-voltage license numbers for each state in scope; (b) current Certificate of Insurance showing general liability, workers' compensation, and auto coverage at the limits in Attachment B; (c) installer certifications; (d) three references at comparable multi-site scope within the last twenty-four (24) months; (e) a statement of whether field labor is W-2 or subcontracted, and how subcontractors are vetted.

WHY IT IS WRITTEN THIS WAY

Item (b) with the bid, not after award — a failed COI check on an enforced jobsite is a multi-day stop-work order. Item (e) is the question most RFPs never ask, and it predicts documentation quality better than references do.

10. Pricing format

Pricing shall be submitted on the Attachment C schedule: per-drop unit rate by category; per-site mobilization; pathway and firestop as separate lines; project management as a stated line item or percentage; after-hours premium as a percentage; and unit rates for adds and moves valid through [DATE]. Lump-sum-only responses will be considered non-responsive.

WHY IT IS WRITTEN THIS WAY

Unit rates in the bid are the buyer's only leverage on change orders after award. Declaring lump-sum-only bids non-responsive is what makes bidders actually comply.

11. Evaluation criteria

Responses will be scored: scope completeness 20%, leveled price 20%, schedule realism 15%, certification and deliverables 15%, labor model 10%, insurance and compliance 10%, change-order unit pricing 10%. [BUYER] reserves the right to interview the two highest-scoring respondents before award.

WHY IT IS WRITTEN THIS WAY

Publishing the weights changes what bidders submit. Price at 20% signals that the cheapest number will not automatically win, which encourages honest scoping instead of strategic omission.

12. Submission instructions

Responses due [DATE] by [TIME] [TIMEZONE] to [EMAIL]. Questions due [DATE]; answers will be distributed to all respondents simultaneously. Late or incomplete responses will not be considered.

WHY IT IS WRITTEN THIS WAY

Distributing answers to all bidders simultaneously keeps the field level and prevents the informed-bidder advantage that produces incomparable responses.

The pattern behind the annotations. Almost every clause above exists to convert something that is normally discovered after award — an exclusion, a premium, a missing document, a labeling convention — into something priced during competition. That is the entire mechanism by which an RFP saves money. It is not about being adversarial; it is about making bids comparable.

About SRS Networks. SRS Networks is a nationwide enterprise infrastructure deployment firm headquartered in South San Francisco, California, deploying structured cabling, wireless, network, security, and low-voltage systems for multi-site enterprises and channel partners across all 48 contiguous states since 1996. 500+ deployments · 5,000+ sites · in-house W-2 leads plus a vetted W-9 subcontractor bench · West and East Coast staging · COI audited before every dispatch in the Project Command Center.

We publish this because we answer these documents for a living and would rather receive a good one. If you want SRS in the bid pack, send the issued RFP to partners@srsnetworks.com. If your project is a single site in one metro, hire a local installer — our coordination model does not pay back under roughly 25 sites, and we will say so on the call.

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