



FirstLine Schools, Inc.
Request for Proposal – Student Transportation

UPDATED RFP NARRATIVE
April 12, 2013

Changes from the original document are highlighted in YELLOW.
All other text remains as original written.

RFP Announcement: March 28, 2013, at 2:00 PM

Optional Pre-Bid Meeting: April 8, 2013, at 11:00 AM

Question Submittal Deadline: April 16, 2013, at 5:00 PM

Proposal Submittal Deadline: April 29, 2013, at 2:00 PM

Award Notification Deadline: May 10, 2013, at 2:00 PM

General Information

FirstLine Schools (hereafter “FirstLine”) is a charter management organization in New Orleans that operates five (5) public charter schools. We believe New Orleans can be the first city in America where every child goes to a great school.

Currently, FirstLine contracts with two Student Transportation providers to service 2500 students with 30 home-to-school buses, 10 of which are Single-Tier and 20 of which are Double-Tier (as defined in this RFP), and 5 Special Needs buses, two being wheelchair accessible and all 5 of which are Double-Tier. Both of FirstLine’s contracts are naturally expiring on June 30, 2013. FirstLine is aggressively seeking proposals from qualified Proposers interested in providing Student Transportation Services as described in this RFP.

The winning Proposer shall provide full-service student transportation. Full-Service is defined as including all vehicles, consumables, maintenance, insurance, staffing, supervision, and management necessary to operate school buses as well as running a staffed Dispatch operation. The Proposer may also include route creation and routing support if desired. The primary obligation of the Proposer is to operate its affairs so that FirstLine will be assured of continuous, reliable service and such that FirstLine is not burdened with day-to-day operations.

FirstLine expects the Proposer to have the staffing, resources, and expertise necessary to complete the service required as well as a plan to deliver high-quality, dependable transportation service. The proposer is to have a management structure that will ensure high-quality customer service, as well as a plan to maintain responsiveness and effective communication with FirstLine leadership and FirstLine parents. The proposer is expected to offer the requested service at a competitive price, and all of the necessary factors that contribute to the price must be included in the proposed price. Proposer is to have a demonstrated track record of success in the industry, is to provide positive references, and is to have sound business practices that show fiscal responsibility.

The Proposer is responsible for all day-to-day Student Transportation operations. The intent of this contract is for FirstLine to hold the Proposer accountable for the reliable and efficient operation of a Transportation system that services our students both efficiently and effectively. It is not the intent of this contract to specify required practices or procedures but to hold the Proposer to a very high level of performance. The Proposer is given the flexibility to develop and perform their own programs, provided required performance standards relating to the reliability and safety of the service are met and the work is completed within the bounds outlined in this RFP.

While the Proposer’s cost is of great importance, proposing the lowest price will not assure award of the service. FirstLine demands comprehensive, reliable, efficient, professional service and high-quality customer service. Failure to address FirstLine requirements or concerns about any matter will disqualify the Proposer from consideration.

In this RFP the term **run** refers to a path a bus follows from an initial pickup location to a final drop-off location for a set of students. The term **route** refers to a set of runs assigned to a particular unit. A route may consist of 2 runs (1 morning and 1 afternoon), 3 runs (1 morning and 2 afternoon), 4 runs (2 morning and 2 afternoon), etc. A route may serve multiple schools each day.

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For the 2013-2014 school year, in addition to the five (5) schools that FirstLine will operate directly, FirstLine will also be providing transportation services for four (4) other Charter Schools and four (4) District run schools. The 5500 students at these 13 schools will be served **by 64 buses**: 22 of these buses will be Single-Tiered and 42 of these buses will be Double-Tiered. Average route length and route time is given and defined on page 11 (Pricing Proposal). Site information is given in Table 1 (Page 3).

Table 1 - Site Information

School Name	Address	Enrolled	AM Runs	Untiered Runs	Tiered Runs	Grades	Take In	Release
Samuel J Green Charter School	2319 Valence St	500	9	2	7	K - 8	715	330
Langston Hughes Academy	3519 Trafalgar St	650	12	2	10	K - 8	715	330
A.P. Tureaud Elementary School	2021 Pauger St	200	5	2	3	Pre K - 6	715	330
Arise Academy	3819 St Claude Ave	400	8	2	6	Pre K - 6	715	330
Success Preparatory Academy	2011 Bienville Ave	450	9	2	7	K - 7	715	330
Benjamin Banneker School	421 Burdette St	600	11	2	9	Pre K - 8	715	330
Andrew Wilson Charter School	3617 General Pershing St	630	12	2	10	K - 8	830	445
Arthur Ashe Charter School	1456 Gardena Dr	500	10	2	8	K - 8	830	445
John Dibert Community School	4217 Orleans Ave	500	10	2	8	Pre K - 8	830	445
Joseph S Clark Prep High School	1301 N Derbigny St	400	6	2	4	9-12	830	445
G.W. Carver Senior High School	3059 Higgins Blvd	150	4	0	4	11-12	830	445
Sarah T Reed High School	5316 Michoud Blvd	150	4	0	4	11-12	830	445
Encore Academy	2301 Marengo St	300	6	2	4	Pre K - 6	830	445
TOTALS		5430	106	22	84			

Enrollment and bus quantity projections are estimated and subject to change. This list of schools to be serviced is subject to change. This information is provided for estimating purposes only. At this time FirstLine estimates requiring 64 home-to-school units to run 106 runs each AM and PM.



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Pre-Bid Meeting: An optional Pre-Bid meeting will be held at the FirstLine Schools Central Office, 4200 Canal St, New Orleans LA 70119, at 11:00 AM CDT, on Monday, April 8, 2013. The Proposer may also attend this meeting via conference call by dialing 712.432.1549, access code 4200#.

Contract Period: This RFP addresses the Contract Period July 1, 2013, through June 30, 2016. The contract will be renewable by mutual written agreement with one-year extensions through June 30, 2018. The contract will expire naturally at the end of this contract term, but FirstLine reserves the right to terminate the Contract with thirty (30) days advance written notice in the event of inferior quality of service, product, and/or reductions or termination of funding. FirstLine also reserves the right to terminate the contract immediately in the event that there are unresolved safety or liability concerns.

Questions: All questions regarding this RFP must be emailed directly to Aron Michalski, Director of Operations for FirstLine Schools, at amichalski@firstlineschools.org by 5:00 PM on Tuesday, April 16, 2013. Questions received by that time and/or asked at the Pre-Bid meeting will be compiled and answered by 5:00 PM on Wednesday, April 17, 2013. Answers to questions and other addendum to this RFP will be available on the FirstLine Schools website: <http://www.firstlineschools.org/firstline-rfps.html>

Site Visits: The Proposer may visit each site by appointment only. The Proposer must contact Aron Michalski via email to arrange the visit at a mutually agreeable time.

Submission: Bids are due at 2:00 PM CDT on April 29, 2013. The Proposer is required to submit a copy of their bid **electronically** via email to Aron Michalski (amichalski@firstlineschools.org). Bids received after this deadline will NOT be considered. The Proposer is also required to submit **one bound version** of their bid to

Aron Michalski
Director of Operations
4200 Canal St Suite B
New Orleans, LA 70119

The bound version of the bid must match the electronic version but will be accepted after the submittal date if it is postmarked by that time. In the event of a conflict of content the electronic version wins.

In lieu of a public bid-document opening, Aron Michalski will notify all bidders who submitted proposals via email of the base pricing of all received bids. The three top Proposers may be invited to interviews with FirstLine Operations staff between the submission date and the contract award date.

Evaluation: A variety of weighted criteria, given below in order of priority, will be considered in evaluating proposals. This evaluation will be made based on information provided within the Proposal, by the Proposer during RFP specific presentations or negotiations, news articles, press releases, client references, industry references, vendors, and other sources.

- **Price (5 Points):** The lowest bid(s) will receive 5 points; the highest bid(s) will receive 1 point; all other bids will receive 3 points. Total cost is calculated based on extension of unit prices proposed to estimated service levels.

- Proposal Quality (5 Points): Proposal provides the best value to FirstLine based on quality, availability, delivery, specifications, terms and conditions.
- Professional References (3 Points): Proposals with multiple positive references will receive 3 points; Proposals with references indicating reservations concerning Proposer quality will receive 0 points. Consideration is given to the Proposer’s ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions and their past performance record.
- Resumes of Executives and Key Participants (3 Points): Relevant professional experience, but no expertise in student transportation will receive 1 point; between 5 and 10 years of specified expertise in transportation will receive 2 points; more than 10 years of expertise in student transportation will receive 3 points.
- Company Financials (3 Points): Proposer must provide three years of recent company financials and all must be in order to receive 3 points.
- Headquartered in Orleans Parish (1 Point): Principal of Business and Registered Office is in Orleans Parish as listed with the Louisiana Secretary of State.
- State & Local Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (1 Point): Proposer is listed in the SLDBE Directory on the City of New Orleans website.
- Community Involvement (1 Point): Proposer demonstrates organizational commitment to programs or public service initiatives serving the youth of New Orleans.
- Innovation (1 Point): Proposer demonstrates organizational commitment to business practices and methodologies that promote continuous professional development and technical training of employees; promote the health, safety, and wellness of employees; or promotes sustainable and responsible environmental and community relationships.

Proposal Authorities, Restrictions & Clauses

Authorities and Options

- FirstLine reserves the right to reject any and all proposals for any reason.
- FirstLine reserves the right to correct or waive irregularities in submitted proposals should it be deemed in the best interest of FirstLine to do so.
- FirstLine reserves the right to negotiate any and all proposals for any reason.
- FirstLine reserves the right to disqualify any proposals that do not meet the submittal requirements.
- FirstLine reserves the right to award to more than one Proposer or to no Proposer.
- FirstLine reserves the right to contract with parents, guardians, and others for the transportation of students.
- Final prices will be negotiated between the Proposer and FirstLine. FirstLine reserves the right to cancel the contract award if Proposer cannot commit to a contract that has prices within 5% of what is initially quoted.

Prohibitions

- FirstLine shall assess, negotiate and decide on this Proposal without influence from the Proposer’s employees, the Proposer’s representatives or agents, the Proposer’s vendors, or any other parties with a business, financial or family relationship to the Proposer.
- The Proposer is prohibited from exploiting a conflict of interest, gratuities, kickbacks, or any other type of incentive or influence upon FirstLine, its Board(s) and its agents; violators will be prosecuted to the extent of the pertinent laws.

- The proposer is prohibited from submitting Proposals that are contingent upon winning multiple contracts; any such proposals will be disqualified.

Proposer Responsibilities

- It is the Proposer’s duty to inspect all submitted documents to assure completeness and legibility.
- It is the Proposer’s duty to understand the proposal; any misunderstanding is the responsibility of the Proposer; FirstLine has no obligation to correct, reject or question any portion of the proposal.
- Proposer must abide by all proposal requirements; the proposal may be rejected by FirstLine regardless of the type or significance of noncompliance.

Termination of the Contract

- The contract will expire naturally at the end of the contract term.
- FirstLine reserves the right to terminate the contract with thirty (30) days advance written notice because of inferior quality of materials, product, workmanship, service and/or reductions and/or termination of funding.
- FirstLine reserves the right to terminate the contract immediately in the event that there are unresolved safety or liability concerns.

Proposal Requirements

The Proposer must answer all questions in this section and must include all requested documentation in order for the Proposer’s bid to be considered. A complete list of required elements is available on Page 15 (Table 5).

For each of the items below the Proposer must provide the requested **Information and Data**. The Proposer can provide this information in any form provided that all items are addressed and that FirstLine is assured that the Proposer has a history of high performance and strong systems in place to ensure continuity of performance at that level.

1. **Company Information**, to include headquarter location, website, year founded, years operating with K-12 school clients, years operating in New Orleans, SLDBE or woman/minority-owned status, and bid authorization contact information.
2. **On-Time Performance Data** in districts of similar size
3. **Driver Turnover Rate** for a minimum of the last 2 years
4. **Accident History** for a minimum of the last 2 years
5. **Resumes** of key executives and key contributors who will work with this contract if it is awarded
6. A minimum of three (3) **References**, at least 2 of which must be current or former clients
7. Contact information for at least 3 **Current Accounts** of similar size
8. **Company Financial Information** for the last 3 years

For each of the following **assurances** the Proposer must provide sufficient documentation to prove their ability to meet these expectations and deliverables.

1. Staffing: The Proposer agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, sex, religion, color, age, disability, national origin or sexual orientation. The Proposer will ensure that all employees involved in their services pass a drug screening and background check prior to employment and will submit those tests to FirstLine upon request. The Proposer will, at the request of FirstLine, immediately remove from service to FirstLine any employee who, in the opinion of FirstLine, is incompetent or who has been conducting him- or herself improperly. The Proposer shall maintain adequate staffing at all times. All of the Proposer's employees shall be neatly dressed and shall be presentable, helpful, friendly and cooperative at all times. Drivers and all other persons coming in contact with the children must be of stable personality and of the highest moral character. FirstLine places and the Proposer accepts full responsibility of assuring such qualities in personnel.

2. Supervisor: The Proposer will work in conjunction with FirstLine to hire or appoint an experienced Supervisor residing in the Greater New Orleans area to be responsible for all work required under the contract. The Supervisor will manage all technical activities of the Proposer (scheduling, drivers, busses, etc.) as well as business activities (compliance, inspection, billing, etc.) and must be trained and experienced in the supervision of bus drivers. The supervisor will be jointly-managed by both the Proposer AND FirstLine. The proposer must include the resume of at least one potential Supervisor or current Supervisor operating in a similar role under another contract.

3. Bus Drivers: The Proposer is responsible for the hiring, assigning, training, and managing of all bus drivers. Both regular and substitute drivers shall be assigned as consistently as possible to the same bus run for the purpose of route familiarization and pupil control. It is the express desire of FirstLine that the rate of driver turnover be minimal. FirstLine delegates to the Proposer's drivers the necessary authority to maintain orderly behavior on buses, and drivers must have the training and experience necessary to control student conduct. Proposer must provide their driver screening, training, assignment and management plans, as well as plans describing how Proposer manages unplanned driver absences.

3. Buses: The Proposer shall ensure that all buses have first aid kits, fire extinguishers, operational and lighted stop arms, back-up alarms, functional exit doors, a functional front arm extension, working two-way radios, and an up-to-date inspection sticker. The School District Name (FirstLine) must be posted on midline of all buses (both sides). The Route Number must be posted on the side of the bus and on the front of the bus, visible to potential passengers.

4. Fleet Maintenance: The Proposer is responsible for maintenance and repairs on all vehicles utilized under the contract at its own cost. The Proposer is to provide sufficient spare vehicles as backup units during breakdowns and whenever vehicles may be out of service for maintenance or repairs. The Proposer shall also perform daily pre-trip inspections and promptly correct any deficiencies discovered on any vehicles or equipment to be utilized under the contract. Under no condition may an unsafe bus be used to transport students. The Proposer will keep on file the completed inspection sheets and submit copies of the sheets to FirstLine Leadership when requested. The Proposer shall provide daily interior cleaning of all vehicles. Exterior cleaning will be done at least twice a month from August through June. Vehicle windows must be clean and clear, and vehicle numbering must be visible at all times. All vandalism or damage to the Proposer's equipment will be the responsibility of the Proposer

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unless such damages result from the negligence of FirstLine; however, FirstLine will assist the Proposer in attempting to collect from the responsible party for damage to the Proposer's property.

5. Safety: The Proposer is responsible for implementing and administering a comprehensive safety program. The program must include continuing on-the-road training and classroom training for all drivers as well as yearly emergency exit drills (documented) and yearly classroom presentations for all students. The safety of the transported children is our primary priority. Proposer must include their comprehensive safety training and management plan.

6. Transition Plan: The Proposer must have all staff, equipment, and procedures in place BEFORE regular transportation service begins on 8/5/13. The Proposer already providing transportation service in the greater New Orleans area must assure their ability to increase their operational capacity. The Proposer not currently providing services in the New Orleans area must outline their plans to set up operations in New Orleans and must address land, vehicles, staffing, and insurance.

7. Legal and Responsibility: The Proposer must fulfill all obligations in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations, including the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The Proposer will be responsible for all damage to the School's property, equipment, and buildings caused by its employees or its equipment. The Proposer will also be responsible for any injuries to persons caused by its staff or equipment. The Proposer must notify FirstLine concerning any litigation involving the Proposer or its parent or subsidiary companies.

8. Insurance: The Proposer must be able to provide **proof** of insurance coverage that will minimize FirstLine's risk exposure to the extent outlined below:

- Worker's Compensation/Employer's Liability insurance to cover bodily accidents in the amount of not less than \$1,000,000 per accident
- Comprehensive General Liability insurance in the form of comprehensive, contractual insurance, personal injury, broad-form property damage, premises operations and completed operations in an amount of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 aggregate
- Automobile Liability and Physical Damage insurance for an amount of not less than \$1,000,000 for each bodily injury and property damage combined, single limits, and extensions of comprehensive coverage for all leased, owned and hired vehicles
- Excess umbrella liability policy in the amount not less than \$10,000,000 per incident

For each of the **short answer questions** below the Proposer must provide a detailed response (approximately 1 page) and can include additional documentation or forms if desired. The Proposer must answer every question.

1. Communication Plan: The Proposer must run a Dispatching operation that stays in regular communication with FirstLine leadership and acts as the primary contact for FirstLine families needing bus information. Dispatch must be adequately staffed every day that buses are running for FirstLine, including nights and weekends. The Proposer is expected to provide a direct phone number by which FirstLine leadership can reach Dispatch as well as a direct phone number for FirstLine parents and students in order to ensure consistent, courteous, professional assistance to our families. In the event of a bus breakdown or an accident involving a bus, the Proposer will work proactively with FirstLine to communicate the necessary information to affected families. How will your company run Dispatch?

2. Field Trips: The proposer is responsible for following a field policy and procedures that will clearly delineate the request procedure, required forms to be used, confirmation/reminder expectations and schedule of process. Proposer must also include their plan to properly assign buses and drivers who do not have other obligations during the field trip's times. Drivers are expected to stay with the bus at all times when on Field Trip. Field trips bills are to be consolidated by school by month. How will your company manage field trips?

3. Feedback System: The Proposer will enact a rigorous feedback system so that FirstLine and the Proposer both have regular opportunities to celebrate achievements, critique issues, and identify concerns to address. The feedback schedule must include weekly meetings during start-up, monthly meetings that focus on customer service, and quarterly anonymous surveys submitted to students, parents, and school leadership. What is your company's feedback system, how will it be administered, and how will the data be reviewed?

4. Situation Analysis: A 6-year-old student arrives at her bus stop at the prescribed time on the first half of a tiered PM route but no adult is there to receive her. What do you do to keep that child safe, get all the other students home in a timely fashion (including the 2nd tier), and help make sure that unmet child gets home at a reasonable hour? Please detail your procedure here as well as how you would communicate throughout the process.

Routing Services (OPTIONAL)

If desired, the Proposer can offer to provide Routing Services to FirstLine. All stops and routes are to meet the specifications below but shall otherwise be designed to be as convenient as possible for the parents and students utilizing these Transportation Services. FirstLine intends to tier as many runs as possible to maximize consistency and reduce costs.

If Routing Services are included in your proposed prices per run or per hour for student transportation, please indicate as such and include the information requested below. If Routing Services are available at an additional cost, please indicate as such.

In addition to proposing a price for this service and providing resumes for potential routers (or resumes for routers currently working on other accounts), the Proposer must also provide information and documentation that assures their ability to deliver on the following expectations:

1. Data Management: Proposer must work with FirstLine to effectively and regularly communicate student demographic information, bus rosters, and routes across all pertinent systems, including FirstLine's Student Information System, the Proposer's Routing System, and the Proposer's Dispatch System. The Proposal must include software information, communication methods, import/export specs, etc.

2. Roster/Route Maintenance: Rosters are to be updated WEEKLY and students can be re-assigned to existing stops on that schedule. This is to ensure that drivers have access to the most up-to-date ridership information and contact information. Routes will be updated MONTHLY on the schedule below in order to best meet the needs of parents and students and to continuously improve operations.

3. Special Considerations for Special Needs Bus Service: It is the expectation of FirstLine that any updates to Special Needs Bus Service will be completed within 48 hours of the Proposer receiving the request. These routes are not bound to the monthly maintenance schedule.

4. Additional Routing Services: FirstLine may run extra academic programming that will require the creation and maintenance of new routes during the school year. The Proposer must expect (and have capacity to support) a large number of roster and route changes during the first two weeks of school and again after the Christmas Holiday. Proposer may be asked to build new routes from existing stops based on a limited student roster for afterschool programming, Saturday school, Summer School, inter-sessions, regular athletic programs, etc.

Proposal Pricing

Proposed rates are to include ALL operating costs, including but not limited to overhead, facilities, maintenance, staffing, training, equipment, insurance, software, and any other costs necessary to provide school bus transportation services. FirstLine intends to maximize bus usage as much as possible and will demand aggressive tiering, maximizing ridership, and minimizing bus downtime.

The average route that a unit will run over the course of an average morning will be 45 miles. The same route in the afternoon would average another 45 miles for a total (average) of **90 miles per day**. Routes, each morning or afternoon, may be a single-tier, running a long run from the bus yard to a distant first stop, then to a school across town, then back to the bus barn; or they may be a double-tier, running from the bus yard to a nearby starting point, to one school, then to another nearby first top, then another school, then back to the bus yard. Some routes may be longer or shorter than this average.

The average single-tier route will average 2.25 hours each morning and each afternoon for a total average of **4.5 hours per day**. The Average double-tier route will average 3.5 hours each morning and each afternoon for a total average of **7 hours per day**.

The Proposer is to include all mileage costs in their proposed route price based on this average of 90 miles per route per day. If the average length of all routes exceeds 99 miles (representing a 10% increase) then FirstLine and the Proposer may renegotiate the price per route.

The Proposer is to include all fuel costs in their proposed route price based on the average (local) market price per gallon on the day of bid submission and the potential for that price to fluctuate 10% in either direction. If the cost per gallon of fuel fluctuates outside of that range then FirstLine and the Proposer may renegotiate the price per route.

The Proposer **MUST** completely fill out Page 11 (Table 3). Any service that will not be offered must be indicated by filling in the appropriate cell with **N/A**. Proposer **MUST** offer pricing for regular school buses and **MUST** include any conditions or limits per the additional information requested for each service.

FirstLine will require some Special Needs buses but that quantity cannot be determined until student enrollment at each school is finalized. For the purpose of this RFP, Proposers should estimate a need for 5 wheelchair-accessible buses, all to be Double-Tier.

Table 3 – Proposed Pricing

	Regular Bus	Wheelchair Bus	Mini Bus or Van	Taxi Or Other
COST PER ROUTE PER DAY SINGLE-TIER ROUTE (22/day) Per Details Above				
COST PER ROUTE PER DAY DOUBLE-TIER ROUTE (42/day) Per Details Above				
Capacity of Vehicle Indicate Number of Students And Number of Adults And Number of Wheelchairs				
3-Point Camera System Indicate if per day or per year				
Real-Time GPS Positioning Must sync with Routing Software Indicate if per day or per year				
Air Conditioning Indicate if per day or per year Indicate Installation Timeline		(required – include in base price)		
Discipline/Behavior Trained Monitor Indicate if Per Run or Per Hour Indicate Minimum (if applicable)				
Special Needs Trained Monitor Indicate if Per Run or Per Hour Indicate Minimum (if applicable)				
In-Town Field Trip (Orleans/Jefferson) Indicate if Per Bus Per Round-Trip Or If Per Hour				
Out-Of-Town Field Trip (Other Parishes/States) Indicate if Per Bus Per Round-Trip Or If Per Hour				

Table 4 – Summary of Required Proposal Elements

1. Information and Data
 - a. Company Information
 - b. On-Time Performance
 - c. Driver Turnover Rate
 - d. Accident History
 - e. Resumes
 - f. References
 - g. Current Accounts
 - h. Company Financial Information
2. Assurances
 - a. Staffing
 - b. Supervisor
 - c. Bus Drivers
 - d. Buses
 - e. Fleet Maintenance
 - f. Safety
 - g. Transition Plan
 - h. Legal Responsibility
 - i. Insurance
3. Short Answer
 - a. Communication Plan
 - b. Field Trips
 - c. Feedback System
 - d. Situation Analysis
4. Routing Services
 - a. Pricing
 - b. Router Resumes
 - c. Data Management Plan
 - d. Roster/Route Maintenance
5. Pricing
6. Any Additional Information