



Universal Academy Charter School (UACS)
2912 28th Ave South Minneapolis MN 55406
Office: (651) 340-5994
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Request for Proposal Student Transportation Services

Schedule

RFP Release Date: April 7, 2025

Submission Deadline: April 30, 2025

Award Notification: May 11, 2025

Background

Universal Academy Charter School (MN 4225-07) is a K–12 public charter school authorized by Novation Education Opportunities (NEO) and approved by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Founded in 2014, Universal Academy will begin its 11th year of operation in Fall 2025. The school serves approximately 700 students across its two campuses located in Minneapolis and Burnsville.

UNIVERSAL ACADEMY

Grades: K–12

Programs: Field Trips, Student Activities, Athletics, Special Education

Universal Academy Charter School is currently seeking proposals to provide transportation services for the upcoming 2025-2026 school year. The contract is renewable up to two times depending on the satisfactory performance of the provider. Universal Academy is seeking a fully licensed transportation company to provide daily transportation services for Universal students to be transported. Our Request for Proposal (RFP) is enclosed. If you are interested in submitting a proposal, please follow the directions outlined in the RFP. Services shall include transportation for regular school days, field trips, and team sports events.



Universal Academy expects the proposer to have the staffing, resources, and expertise necessary to deliver exceptional and reliable student transportation service. Universal Academy expects the proposer to have a management structure that will ensure high-quality customer service as well as a plan to maintain responsive and effective communication with Universal Academy leadership. The proposer is expected to deliver the requested services at a competitive price and all necessary factors that contribute to the price must be included in the proposed price. The proposer is expected to demonstrate a record of accomplishment of success in the industry, provide professional references and display sound business practices that show fiscal responsibility.

Universal Academy's intent is to hold the proposer accountable for the operational responsibilities associated with student transportation, such that, Universal Academy staff is not involved with facilitating or coordinating the day- to- day operations. The proposer must fulfill all obligations in compliance with all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations. The proposer must be knowledgeable of and abide by all provisions of legislative enactments, by laws and regulations regarding safety and student transportation. A description of the services needed, and other pertinent information follow in the Request for Proposal (RFP).

Universal Academy is committed to making a decision quickly in order to allow the selected proposer time to mobilize. We appreciate your interest in partnering with Universal Academy and look forward to receiving your proposal. **If you have any questions, please contact: Farhiya Einte, Executive Director, at info@uacsmn.org.**

Farhiya Einte
Executive Director



SPECIFICATIONS FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES SECTION

1. GENERAL CONDITIONS

1.1 Student Enrollment and Transportation Needs- Universal Academy currently serves approximately 700 students across two campuses—Minneapolis and Burnsville. To meet student transportation needs, the school requires around 14 passenger buses and 14 vans with appropriate seating capacities. These numbers may vary depending on actual enrollment. The selected transportation provider must have the flexibility and capacity to adjust fleet size, including adding additional buses or vans as enrollment grows.

1.2 Duration of the Contract - The services requested in these specifications shall be for the 2025-2026 school year. The contract is renewable up to two times depending on the satisfactory performance of the provider. If Universal Academy chooses to extend the contract, a written notice will be provided to the Operator 90 days prior to the conclusion of the 2026 contract. At that time Universal Academy and the Operator will negotiate as to how many years the extension will be, and the rates that would coincide with that extension.

1.3 Service Areas and Routes – Universal Academy Transportation “Service Area” includes the city limits of Minneapolis as well as, but not limited to the following; Bloomington, St. Paul, Hopkins, Minnetonka, St. Anthony, Columbia Heights, Fridley, and Richfield, among other locations.

The Operator shall furnish equipment and personnel sufficient to provide daily transportation of students within the Service Area during the duration of the contract to all Universal Academy students according to a time schedule and over routes determined or approved by Universal Academy. Generally, transportation will include to school in the morning and from school in the afternoon.

1.4 Routes - Universal Academy will furnish student data and enrollment information upon which the Operator shall determine efficient routes, with Universal Academy's final approval. The Operator shall furnish a description of each route to Universal Academy each school year. A preliminary route description will be given to Universal Academy by August 1st of each year. Each route description will include the school bus number, driver, route mileage, bus stop locations, bus stop times (morning and afternoon), bus capacity, number of passengers, and a route map. Universal Academy may establish regulations to be observed by the Operator in connection with all details incidental to the operation of the routes, including starting times, bus stops, transfers, discipline on the

3



buses and any situation that may, from time to time, arise in the performance of this contract. Once routes have been approved, there shall be no change in bus routes or time schedule without consent of the Universal Academy. Changes in the routes, time schedules, or designated stops may be made by Universal Academy. A high quality GPS System needs to be available to Universal Academy once the contract has been approved and signed by both parties.

1.5 Regular and City Transportation - Transportation will be round trip to and from school. Route miles shall be the length of the Route and shall be determined as the total number of miles from the school (or other point of discharge as determined by Universal Academy) thence once around the designated route and back to the point of origin. Such route length shall be reported to Universal Academy within 10 days of the opening of school. Route length shall be rounded to the nearest whole mile. Transportation shall be provided to maximize efficiency and minimize the number of vehicles and mileage.

1.6 Special Education Transportation - Universal Academy reserves the right to assign an aide to any vehicle should it deem such aide necessary. Operators must furnish equipment acceptable to Universal Academy to meet the needs for special education transportation. The Operator shall comply with all applicable state and federal rules and regulations.

1.7 Field Trips and Extra-curricular Trips - Field trips mean excursions for educational purposes and usually take place during the school day (there are occasional exceptions). Universal Academy will provide supervision of students. These may be within Universal Academy's regular transportation boundaries or they may be outside of the regular boundaries. Extra- Curricular trips are usually associated with some extra-curricular or co-curricular activity and usually take place after school hours. Universal Academy provides the chaperone.

1.8 Contract and Performance Bond - The Operator shall enter into a formal contract based on the conditions and specifications as set forth herein. The Operator may be required to supply a performance bond for up to 100% of the anticipated contract award,

before commencing service, and shall also provide liability and property damage insurance as herein described. If required, the performance bond shall comply with the provisions of Minnesota Statutes Section 574.26. The Operator shall be advised if a performance bond will be required and the amount at such time as the contract is awarded.

1.9 Assignment - The services contemplated under this Agreement are deemed to be in the nature of personal services. Operator shall not assign this Agreement without prior consent of Universal Academy. The parties agree that assignment by Operator of any sums due and owing Operator under this Agreement shall not constitute an assignment of the Agreement.

4



1.10 Award - Universal Academy may elect to make its award based upon proposals as received, or alternatively, Universal Academy may elect, in its sole discretion, to enter into direct negotiations with those entities submitting proposals. In the event that Universal Academy elects to enter into negotiations, each entity submitting a proposal shall be notified of the time and place. Negotiations will be conducted utilizing such rules and procedures as established by Universal Academy. Universal Academy reserves the right to accept, reject, or negotiate any quotation and to make an award for transportation services that is deemed most favorable and advantageous to UNIVERSAL ACADEMY.

1.11 School Operating Hours and Calendar – The Operator will agree to deliver students to the school at 7:00am on Monday to Friday and pick up students at 2:30 pm on Monday to Thursday, and Fridays at 12:00 pm. The Operator will agree to follow the Universal Academy 172 day school calendar approved by the board.

2. SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

2.0 Vehicles

2.1 All vehicles must be maintained in safe operating condition and must have a current inspection by the State of Minnesota. The Operator shall provide assurance that exterior and interior cleanliness of the vehicles will be maintained.

2.2 All vehicles used shall comply with all road and safety regulations as set forth by any Federal, State, and Municipal policy, law, statute or ordinance as it may relate directly or indirectly to the safe operation of a vehicle used in public transportation of students.

2.3 All vehicles used in transportation service shall be made available for inspection from time to time as deemed necessary by Universal Academy agent or any state or federal authority.

2.4 Universal Academy will analyze all State and Federal vehicle inspection records for

any Operator wishing to submit a proposal. Operators shall be in good standing with the MN State Patrol and all Federal agencies pertaining to the transportation of students.

2.5 Equipment

2.5.1 All vehicles used in transporting students must be equipped with an operating two-way radio with a frequency capable of communicating with the Universal Academy office.

2.5.2 All vehicles used in transporting students must be equipped with crossover mirrors and crossing gates, an interior working public address system, and fully functioning windows and emergency exits.

5



2.5.3 All vehicles used in transporting students must be equipped with a security camera. Video footage must be available within 12 hours of the request of Universal Academy.

2.5.4 Each vehicle used to transport students will have identifying unit numbers on the four corners of the vehicle and alongside the loading door. The identifying number shall correspond to the route number assigned to the vehicle. All vehicles will have a method of applying a unit number for substitute and/or emergency vehicle use. The temporary number should be able to cover the regular vehicle number alongside the loading door.

2.5.5 Due to an enhancement in safety and student management, Universal Academy recommends that all new buses purchased and placed in service be equipped with full-length acoustic roof panels.

2.5.6 All vehicles shall be washed and cleaned on both the inside and the outside on a monthly basis at a minimum. Daily attention should be given to sweeping the floors, removal of trash, and inspection and removal of any graffiti.

3. Drivers and Staffing

3.1 Operator must employ a sufficient number of drivers and a reasonable number of standby drivers to assure that services are provided in a reliable and continuous manner.

3.2 Operator shall ensure that all drivers meet the minimum state requirements for transporting students.

3.3 Operator shall comply with all requirements related to employee background checks and screening under federal, state, and local law.

3.4 Operator shall have a comprehensive training program accessible for drivers operating their vehicles, which will conform to the School Bus Training requirements in state law.

4. Insurance

4.1 The Operator shall maintain during the life of the contract public liability, property damage and excess liability in with minimum amounts as follows:

4.1.1 Bodily injury \$1,000,000 per person, \$2,000,000 per accident.

4.1.2 Property damage \$100,000 per accident.

4.1.3 Excess liability, body injury \$1,000,000 per person.

4.2 Certificates of insurance coverage shall be filed with Universal Academy when the contract is executed, and shall carry the following endorsement:

6



"It is agreed that such insurance as is afforded by the policy applied subject to the following provisions: Under the Bodily Injury Liability and Property Damage Liability Coverage.

The Company agrees that it will not use, either in the adjustment of claims or in the defense of suits against the insured from tort liability, any legal immunity the insured may possess solely by reason of its sovereign status unless requested in writing by the insured to interpose such defense."

4.3 Operator shall furnish and maintain during the life of the contract Worker's Compensation coverage for the protection of its employees in amounts required by law.

4.4 No liability resulting from a vehicular accident or any driver or operational negligence will be assumed by Universal Academy, or its officers, employees or authorized representatives.

4.5 All certificates of insurance coverage furnished to Universal Academy shall show Universal Academy as an additional insured under the policy, and such certificates shall be in force at all times under the contract.

5. Service Condition

5.1 - The number of students transported shall not exceed the rated manufacturer's capacity of the transporting vehicle. If passenger vehicles are used, i.e. private cars, the number of passengers shall not exceed five or the rated capacity of the vehicle, exclusive

of the driver. Scheduling of the students for arrival at the various school locations shall conform to school schedules, or to the schedule established by Universal Academy.

5.2 - Special education students shall be picked up immediately in front or as near as possible to their homes. A student shall load or unload at home or school only from the right side of the vehicle, except on a one-way street, where the non-traffic side of the vehicle may be used. Type III vehicles may be used only upon request of the Operator and the approval of Universal Academy.

5.3 - No unauthorized person shall be allowed in any vehicle while engaged in the transportation of students for Universal Academy. Universal Academy reserves the right to assign attendants to any vehicle in the best interest of any student.

5.4 - The Operator shall be highly selective in employment of its drivers. The Operator will be required to utilize only those drivers holding a valid Class A or Class B license with a school bus endorsement who have been thoroughly checked for ability, character, integrity and fitness, and who are acceptable to Universal Academy.

7



Universal Academy reserves the right to comment on the performance of any employee of the Operator, and the Operator shall take appropriate steps to improve services. The Operator must agree to provide a minimum of eight hours of in-service time for all bus drivers utilized in the performance of the contract including substitute drivers or additional drivers for routes, which may be added, during the year. Each driver must have a current criminal history background check to the satisfaction of Universal Academy. A qualified mechanic that has been working in the School Bus Transportation industry for at least three years must be onsite for all repairs and general maintenance of equipment. Operator shall provide satisfactory evidence of the good health of each driver prior to each school year (or during the school year for new drivers) based on a physical examination as required by law. Such examination shall indicate that the driver complies with the minimum health standards required by the rules and regulations of the State Board of Education or any other state agency for school bus drivers. The Operator shall pay the expense of the physical exam for all drivers, other than that paid by insurance. The Operator must comply with all state, and federal laws governing the mandatory drug and alcohol testing of school bus drivers.

5.5 - Operator shall be responsible for handling complaint calls in accordance with Universal Academy's procedures and policies.

5.6 - The Operator shall insure the following:

- 5.6.1 All buses are operated with safe and reliable equipment, including an operable two-way radio. It will be required that Universal Academy has consistent communication with the base during service hours, or as needed.

5.6.2 All drivers will comply with the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation, The Federal Highway Administration, and the State of Minnesota and its subdivisions (including the Department of Transportation, the Motor Vehicle Department, and the Minnesota Department of Education).

5.6.3 All bus operators and drivers control students' behavior on the buses in accordance with Universal Academy's procedures and policies.

5.6.4 All buses are driven by qualified drivers as to licensure as well as ability to perform required duties (including the ability to follow established schedules on a timely basis and control student behavior on the buses).

5.6.5 In cases where students are transferred from one bus to another in rural areas, no student shall be left unattended (bus must wait until transfer bus arrives). 5.6.6 All accidents, physical injuries, emergencies, or other unusual occurrences involving the transportation of students must be reported in a timely manner to the Business Manager on a school accident form.

6. Facilities

6.1-Vehicle and equipment storage and maintenance shall be the responsibility of the Operator and shall occur per the terms of the Transportation Services Contract.

8



7. REIMBURSEMENT RATES AND BILLING

7.1 - Mileage for extracurricular trips shall be computed from the departure point of the trip at the school to the destination of the trip and return back to the departure point. Mileage from the Operator's base to the departure point will not be charged to UNIVERSAL ACADEMY. Mileage for use of the bus not related to the school event will not be reimbursed by Universal Academy.

7.2 - The Operator agrees to submit bills for services rendered to Universal Academy in a format prescribed by Universal Academy and according to the billing schedule established by Universal Academy.

7.3 - Universal Academy may withhold or reduce payment if, in its reasonable view, services are not adequately performed or rendered in accordance with the specifications in the contract.

8. INCLUSION BY REFERENCE AND APPLICABILITY OF LAWS

8.1 - Anything herein notwithstanding, successful Operator shall comply with applicable

provisions of State and Federal Laws including the Motor Vehicle Code, State Board of Education or any other state agency rules and regulations relating to student transportation, the construction, design, operation of equipment, and safety accessories for equipment, vehicle codes and other applicable laws, rules and regulations prescribed by the State or any political subdivisions thereof relating to the transportation of regular and special education students.

8.2 - Universal Academy shall require strict adherence to the terms of the specifications of the contract to be awarded in order to safeguard the comfort and safety of the students and to provide for the orderly operation of its program.

9. QUESTIONS AND CLARIFICATION

All inquiries regarding this RFP should be directed to:

Farhiya Einte, Executive Director, at info@uacsmn.org
Phone: (651) 340-5994

9



10. HOW TO SUBMIT:

Please submit your proposal by mail or email to the address below, postmarked no later than April 30, 2025

Farhiya Einte, Executive Director, at info@uacsmn.org

Submissions must be received no later than 5:00 P.M. CST on (April 30, 2025)

All emailed communications should include: Your Company Name/Transportation RFP 2025-2026 in the subject line.

BID WORKSHEETS

Item 1 Bid to Provide Special Student Transportation

Daily fee per bus/per day based on a minimum of 4 hours (live time) and 60 miles (live mileage).

Bus Type:

12-18 passenger School Bus Proposal Amount: \$

19-36 passenger School Bus Proposal Amount: \$

2 w/c + passenger Lift Bus Proposal Amount: \$

4 w/c + passenger Lift Bus Proposal Amount: \$

6 w/c + passenger Lift Bus Proposal Amount: \$

Other (please specify capacity):

w/c + passenger Bus Proposal Amount: \$

w/c + passenger Bus Proposal Amount: \$

10



w/c + passenger Bus Proposal Amount: \$

w/c + passenger Bus Proposal Amount: \$

A. Charge for each additional hour (live time) a route exceeds 4 hours
(live time) per day: Per hour/bus/day \$

B. Charge for each additional mile (live mileage) a route exceeds 60 miles (live
mileage) per day:
Per mile/bus/day \$

C. Total number of buses contractor is willing to provide for this bid:

D. Proposed cost per hour to provide a Bus Assistant for assigned route: \$

E. List any deviations from bid specifications:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Item 2 -Bid to Provide Regular Student Transportation

A. Daily fee per bus/per day based on a minimum of 2 hours and 40 minutes (live time) and 60 miles (live mileage).

Bus Type:

45- 50 passenger School Bus Proposal Amount: \$

70-72 passenger School Bus Proposal Amount: \$

76-78 passenger School Bus Proposal Amount: \$

11



82-84 passenger School Bus Proposal Amount: \$

88-90 passenger School Bus Proposal Amount: \$

Other (please specify capacity):

w/c + passenger Bus Proposal Amount: \$

w/c + passenger Bus Proposal Amount: \$

w/c + passenger Bus Proposal Amount: \$

w/c + passenger Bus Proposal Amount: \$

A. Charge for each additional hour (live time) a route exceeds 4 hours (live time)
per day: Per hour/bus/day \$

B. Charge for each additional mile (live mileage) a route exceeds 60 miles (live
mileage) per day:
Per mile/bus/day \$

C. Total number of buses contractor is willing to provide for this bid:

D. List any deviations from bid
specifications:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Item 3 Charter Bus Transportation (Field & Athletic Trips)

Daily fee per bus/per day based on a minimum of 2 hours (live time) and 40
miles (live mileage).

Bus Type:

70-72 passenger School Bus Proposal Amount: \$

76-78 passenger School Bus Proposal Amount: \$

12



82-84 passenger School Bus Proposal Amount: \$

88-90 passenger School Bus Proposal Amount: \$

Other Types of units available for Charter Trips (please specify capacity):

w/c + passenger Bus Proposal Amount: \$

w/c + passenger Bus Proposal Amount: \$

w/c + passenger Bus Proposal Amount: \$

w/c + passenger Bus Proposal Amount: \$

A. Charge for each additional hour (live time) a route exceeds 2 hours (live time)
per day: Per hour/bus/day \$

B. Charge for each additional mile (live mileage) a route exceeds 40 miles (live
mileage) per day:
Per mile/bus/day \$

C. Additional charge for “Prime Time” trips (if any): \$

Please designate what constitutes “Prime Time”

M-F AM Hours: am to :

am

M-F PM Hours: pm to pm

Late cancellation charge (if any): \$

D. List any deviations from bid
specifications:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Item 4 Short Term Point to Point Transportation (6 students or less per run) Note – *these trips can be short term (30-90 days) but can also run through the entire school year and are subject to cancellation at any time with 48 hours’ notice from UNIVERSAL ACADEMY. These trips typically involve students that are placed in programs outside of UNIVERSAL ACADEMY or homeless students that need to be transported to UNIVERSAL ACADEMY from various metro wide locations, but*

13



UNIVERSAL ACADEMY uses these rates for any short term, temporary arrangements that it deems necessary. Proposed trips will be subject to current availability of the contractor at the time they are instituted but upon acceptance contractor will be expected to continue transportation until the trip is terminated by UNIVERSAL ACADEMY.

A. Daily fee per trip – one rider (Ride Charge): Proposal Amount: \$

Miles included in base Ride Charge (if any): # of miles

B. Additional Mileage Charge per trip (if any): Proposal Amount: \$

C. Last minute cancellation charge – no show upon arrival (if any): Proposal Amount: \$

D. List any deviations from bid specifications:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.