Sno-Isle Libraries Discover Bus
Request for Information (RFI)

RFI NO. 2025.09.18 STEM

RFI Release Date**:**	**September 18, 2025**
Due Date:	**October 9, 2025 by 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time**
RFI Coordinator:	Joanna Armstrong at vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org
Purpose:	To gather information for a future RFP about vehicle modification possibilities to build out a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)-focused "Discover Bus" for children ages 5-11.
How to Respond:	Responses must be submitted via email to the RFI Coordinator no later than 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on the due date noted above.

1. OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

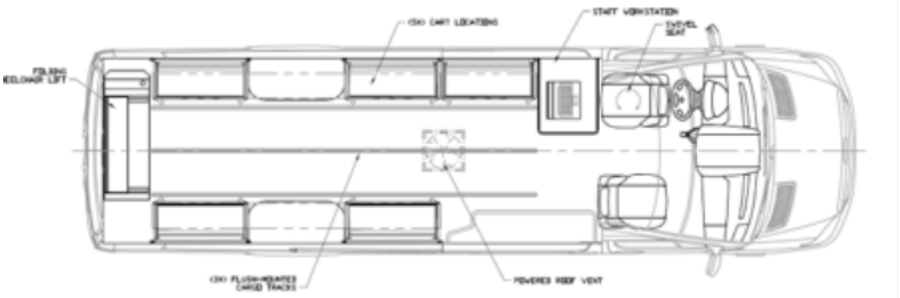
A. About Sno-Isle Libraries

Sno-Isle Libraries is a local two-county public library district headquartered at its distribution facility in Marysville, Washington, located approximately 35 miles north of Seattle, Washington. We are one of the largest Library Districts in the state of Washington serving more than 800,000 people throughout Snohomish and Island counties across 23 community libraries, one service center, and a Library on Wheels.

B. Background

Washington State leads the country in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) job availability, yet lags in cultivating a skilled workforce, particularly in Snohomish County where 90% of unfilled jobs are in STEM fields. Access to STEM experiences is limited in many Snohomish and Island County communities, disproportionately affecting students facing poverty, belonging to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, residing in rural areas, and/or encountering resource barriers.

Sno-Isle Libraries is planning to modify a 2013 Mercedes 3500 Sprinter Van into a mobile exploration unit ("Discover Bus"). The purpose of this planned modification of our walk-on vehicle is to ignite curiosity, foster exploration, and promote STEM habits of mind in children such as collaboration, critical thinking, persistence, and creativity. Please see **Attachment A** for images of the vehicle.



FLOOR PLAN

The goal of this vehicle modification is to provide STEM-focused experiences to underserved youth and to offer unstructured discovery opportunities at outreach events.

Children and caregivers will have the opportunity to engage with activities on board the vehicle and at tables set up outside the vehicle. The activities will focus on a variety of themes, such as weather, engineering, senses, and marine life. One of the desired features

of the vehicle's interior and interactives is that they can easily be switched out depending on the theme. Most of the activities will be flush against the wall so the Library District is interested in interactive wall mounts that can be easily changed out.

C. About this RFI

Through this RFI, the Library District is seeking more information around the kinds of modifications we can make to this vehicle to power technology on board for STEM activities and what kinds of displays and interactives are available to adapt to changes in themes and activities. The Library District is also seeking information around the costs and time required to make such modifications.

On board the Discover Bus, the Library District intends to have 5 different stations, each supporting the current theme in a unique way. Some examples of these stations include:

i. Along the driver's side of the Discover Bus there will be space for an interactive display as well as:

    1. Large white board used for displays such as a ball wall, interconnecting gears, etc.; and

    2. Space for 3 feet by 3 feet next to the white board for an interactive display.

ii. Along the passenger's side, there will be 3 stations:

    1. A microscope that is either bolted down to a table or easily interchangeable with other display units;

    2. Space for another 3 feet by 3 feet interchangeable display; and

    3. Space for library books and/or another display.

The Library District is looking for flexible and creative uses for the interior space that will maintain the ability of multiple adult and child participants to comfortably move around the vehicle and engage in a variety of on-board activities. The Library District is also interested in creative options for storage e.g. use of a ceiling feature, space under seating or along the wheel well.

This RFI will help the Library District better understand the possibilities and costs so that we can plan accordingly. With the information gained from this RFI process, the Library District will consider our options, budget availability, and timing, which will all inform a future Request for Proposals to modify and outfit the Discover Bus.

2. RESPONDING TO THIS RFI

A. Who Should Respond

The Library District invites responses from all individuals, firms, non-profits, and other organizations to provide feedback on vehicle modifications and/or outfitting a STEM-focused mobile learning environment for children aged 5-11.

In particular, the Library District encourages responses from the following:

i. Anyone with experience or expertise in modifying vehicles for different purposes.

ii. Exhibit creators for children's museums.

B. How to Respond

This RFI will remain open for three weeks. Submissions with either full or partial responses to the questions below are requested by October 9, 2025 via email to the RFI Coordinator, Joanna Armstrong at vendorsubmissions@sno-isle.org.

If you would like a response to your submission from the Library District, please include that request along with your submission and if there is anything in particular you would like Library District to respond to.

The Library District may reach out to respondents with follow-up questions or to clarify information submitted.

C. Questions About the RFI?

All questions about this RFI may also be directed to the RFI Coordinator. Please allow up to one (1) week for the Library District to respond to your questions.

Any questions and answers that materially change the nature of this request or potentially alter responses to this RFI will be communicated via written addendum and posted to the Library District's Vendor Submission website: https://www.sno-isle.org/vendors/

3. SUBMISSION CONTENT

The Library District is requesting submissions containing responses to the following prompts and questions. Please respond as thoroughly as you can. We will accept submissions with complete or partial responses.

A. Cover Letter

Please include in your submission a cover letter that includes the following information about yourself and the entity you are responding on behalf of:

i. Your organization's name, address, website, and contact information for a representative who we can reach out to if needed for follow-up questions.

ii. Description of your organization's past experience and/or involvement in similar vehicle modifications or installations of art, sensory, and other museum-type exhibits.

iii. How long your organization has been in business.

iv. OPTIONAL: Client testimonials of past work

B. Vehicle Modifications and Components

Please provide details on feasibility, interchangeability, power requirements, and cost on the following STEM components that we are considering outfitting the vehicle with:

i. <u>Powering and Connecting On-Board Technology</u>

1. How can we power and connect various technology on the vehicle? Examples include, but are not limited to LED ceiling screen with changing images, projecting microscope, 1-2 laptops for staff, etc.

2. Vehicle modification for connectivity additions via StarLink on the roof

ii. <u>Interchangeable Displays, Features, and Interactives</u>

The Library District is interested in learning about what kinds of modular interactives or mounted flip-style displays are available and how to customize them to be interchangeable.

Some examples of displays and interactives we are considering include, but are not limited to:

1. Installing STEM-adjacent manipulatives on board the vehicle at one of the stations described in this RFI. Aside from your own suggestions, please include details for:

    a. Microscope with viewing screen or monitor. Ideally the viewing screen can fold down from the interior back of the vehicle.

b. Magnetic white board around 9 feet by 4 feet in size, which will be used to display an interactive wall with gears, magnetic features, and/or other manipulatives.

c. Any other ideas you can suggest that fit the vision of the Discover Bus as described in this RFI.

2. Floor feature such as carpet with path/activity or lights that differentiate the various sections on board. The Library District is open to other ideas for floor features.

3. Ceiling feature that is exciting and sets the tone for the interactive displays. Examples include LED display screen, or other interactive feature that changes based on the theme. The Library District is open to other ideas for ceiling features.

4. Flexible design that is accessible to both children and adults, and provides creative storage solutions.

5. Mounted flip-style displays that fit in the limited space on board and can be easily switched out depending on the topic. They can feature swing or slide away designs to reveal hidden information, images, or interactive elements.

   The Discover Bus will have 3 stations to accommodate these displays; 2 stations have 3 feet by 3 feet space available and 1 station has 1 foot by 3 feet space available.

6. How can the interior be modified for a particular theme? Please include ideas for themes such as weather, plants/agriculture, and flight/airplanes/space, etc.

7. The door's current configuration is a classic sliding door, which is not conducive to leaving open during rainy and cold weather. What creative ideas do you have for maintaining safety and comfort on board? E.g. magnetic door or other way to seal the entry way.

iii. <u>Cost and Time to Modify</u>

The Library District will need to budget and plan for these vehicle modifications.

1. Please provide an estimated range of total costs for the type of modifications described in this RFI and what that estimate includes.

2. Please also provide a range of pricing for each of the individual modifications, displays, and interactives described above.

3. Please provide a best estimate on the length of time that would be required to complete these modifications; and if any particular modifications would be faster to complete and which modifications might extend the time frame.