

Request for Proposals Worksheet

From time to time we procure services by means of the Request for Proposals (RFP) process. In developing the RFP, I have to rely, in large measure, on the data provided by the department that requires the service. Attached is a work sheet to facilitate development of this data by the department. Development of an RFP is a difficult and time consuming process. It is important that we understand precisely what we are trying to accomplish and articulate it clearly in the RFP before it is published. Most of the problems that we encounter in this process are a result of either not knowing what we want or not clearly communicate what we want. It is critical that the evaluation factors are carefully developed. We are bound to evaluate proposals in accordance with the published evaluation factors. Invalid evaluation factors will result in selection of the wrong contractor or procurement of a less than satisfactory product.

I encourage departments requiring a service that is to be procured by means of the RFP process to involve purchasing as early as possible. The attached worksheet is not all inclusive but is meant as a starting point.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS WORKSHEET (Cont)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS WORKSHEET

I. GENERAL.

RFPs are generally used to procure goods or services when factors in addition to price are used to select the contractor. RFPs allow for evaluation of the "quality" of competing products and services. They provide for trade-offs between price and quality. They are generally not appropriate for the procurement of "off the shelf" goods. The RFP process should not be used as a "crutch" to avoid research and preparation of a purchase description/detailed statement of work to allow sealed bidding. They may be appropriate for procurement of "high tech" goods. The RFP process allows for and is the gateway to competitive negotiations. This procedure was developed by the Federal Government to allow a government agency to negotiate the best deal in a competitive manner. If the procurement is done properly, it is time consuming. Proposal evaluation, negotiations, the call for and evaluation of "best and final" offers (BAFO) involve a structured process that takes at least twice as long to complete as sealed bidding. It is also subject to litigation and can be difficult to defend in court because of the inherent subjectivity of the process.

TITLE (What is the project?)

BUDGET (How much is budgeted for this service?) _____

TIME LINES:

Use a reverse planning sequence that starts with the date the service is to commence. Don't wait until the last minute. A protest will generally delay award of a contract by 30 days. If the project comes in at less than \$30,000 School Board approval is not required.

EVENT	DAYS REQUIRED	COMPLETE DATE
A. COMMENCE PERFORMANCE		_____
B. SCHOOL BOARD APPROVAL	5	_____
C. BOARD NOTES SUBMITTED	2	_____
D. EVALUATE BAFO	5	_____
E. OPEN BAFO	1	_____
F. NEGOTIATIONS	5 - 10	_____

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS WORKSHEET (Cont)

G.	EVALUATE/EST. COMP. RANGE	5 - 15	_____
H.	PROPOSAL DUE DATE/TIME	30	_____
I.	ISSUE RFP		_____

EVALUATION FACTORS

	FACTOR	WEIGHT
A.	_____	_____
B.	_____	_____
C.	_____	_____
D.	_____	_____
E.	Price	_____

NOTE: Factors must be realistic and measurable. Data must be available in each offeror's proposal to allow evaluation and measurement of each factor. An attachment identified in the "FORM OF PROPOSAL" clause should be specified to match each evaluation factor. This will ensure that the offerors include sufficient data in their proposals to allow a proper evaluation. Limit the factors to four excluding price if possible.

FORM OF PROPOSAL (Attach a draft of each attachment)

ATTACHMENT	DESCRIPTION
A.	_____
B.	_____
C.	_____
D.	PRICE SCHEDULE

NOTE: Attachments should be tailored to force the offerors to provide adequate data to allow evaluation and measurement of the above evaluation factors. The attachments are the forms that the offerors complete that when submitted under a cover sheet constitute their proposals.

EVALUATION COMMITTEE

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS WORKSHEET (Cont)

NOTE: The evaluation committees job is to score proposals in accordance with the published evaluation factors. The committee does not vote on the "best" proposal. The committee may or may not participate in the negotiation phase. This is a joint decision of purchasing and the project manager. The committee may or may not score the "best and final" offers. The size of the evaluation committee is best limited to three to five members.

STATEMENT OF WORK

This section defines precisely what is required of the contractor. It is an accurate description of the essential and technical requirements of the task(s) that the contractor is to perform. It should define the desired results and standards to be used to determine whether the requirements have been met. It provides the offerors a clear, complete, and concise description of what is to be done. It is the mechanism that allows the offerors to develop a proposal that is clear and to the point. A recommended outline follows:

OBJECTIVES of project. Who, what, when, where, why.

REQUIREMENTS (desired credentials of contractor)

CURRENT OPERATIONS Explanation of the need for the services, where these services fit into the overall goals of the School District or using department, and description of existing conditions. This information will assist the offerors to focus their responses.

DEFINITIONS. Not always necessary but should be included if there are special terms and phrases in the RFP which may not be understood. The definitions must clearly establish what is meant so that a disinterested person can understand them.

SERVICE DESCRIPTION. The general scope of work and the detailed tasks that must be accomplished. Analyze the project to identify each task to be accomplished. Recommend that you write each task on a 3 X 5 card to include the input, work, and output associated with that task. These cards can then be organized into the service description. A good way to draft the service description is as follows:

- a. Scope of Work
- b. Tasks to be accomplished
 - i. Desire features of contract
 - ii. Required features of contract
- c. Other Conditions

PROPERTY/SERVICES. What will the School District furnish? What is the contractor expected to furnish.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS WORKSHEET (Cont)

DIRECTIVES (rules/regulations that govern the work to be accomplished. Incorporate by reference if possible.) Examples include OSHA directives, the state "Mini Davis Bacon Act" etc. Many projects are initiated as a result of a new regulation or legislation. These directives may serve as a standard of performance and/or a service description.

DATA SUBMISSION. This section tells the offerors precisely what information must be provided in their proposals. Ideally, attachments (see above FORM OF PROPOSAL) will be keyed to each evaluation factor. Describe the use of the attachments by the offeror to provide this data. (It is not a good idea to ask for data that is not going to be used in the evaluation. You have to read it but you can't use it when evaluating proposals.)

STATUS REPORTS and SUBMISSIONS. Include any progress reports, presentations or other "deliverables" required to be provided by the contractor.

SCHEDULE (time lines or term of the contract)

RECORDS and RECORD RETENTION. Some professional or client services e.g., legal and medical may require that records be maintained by the contractor. Include these requirements here.

PHASE OUT PLAN. Some service contracts require this plan to ensure continuity of service between contractors.

TECHNICAL EXHIBITS. Drawings, wiring diagrams, etc.

The above format has been proven over time and promotes clarity and organization. However, format should never get in the way of presenting essential information in the most simple and direct way. Simple sentences and one syllable, English words promote clarity over complex, run-on clauses and phrases. Correct words include "shall" and "will" which specifies that an item is binding. "Should" and "may" are used to express an advisory or permissible action. "Any", "either", and "and/or" imply choice, and unless it is acceptable for a contractor to choose among actions, they should not be used. The word "contractor" describes the person or firm who will be under contract. Never say the same thing more than once. To do so invites ambiguity and law suits. The keys to specification writing are CLARITY, COMPLETENESS, and CONCISENESS.