

California State University, Sacramento

Procurement and Contract Services

Request for Proposal Guide for Campus Departments

This guide has been developed by the Procurement and Contract Services Department to assist you with the Request for Proposal process.

Definition of a Request for Proposal: A request sent to firms (or individuals) for a reply to the requirements listed in the Request for Proposal at a certain date and time. A Request for Proposal differs from an Invitation for Bid in that other criteria besides price would be used to determine a successful bidder.

When to use a Request for Proposal (RFP) versus an Invitation for Bid (IFB)

The RFP method may be best used when the requesting department isn't certain about what it wants and is looking for a firm or individual to develop a solution and cost estimate. An RFP is issued to describe in general terms that which is to be procured and is used to procure the most cost-effective solution based upon evaluation criteria identified in the RFP. The RFP will list the specific requirements to be addressed by the offerors, which will be used to evaluate the proposals.

An IFB is usually for less complex projects where you are primarily request a price quote for a clearly determined project. The University may determine it is in its best interest to use the RFP method instead of an IFB if:

- Criteria other than price are to be considered
- Bidder qualifications are important
- Complex specifications/scope of work
- Discussions with proposers required

Best used for acquiring services because it allows award based on factors other than just lowest responsible bidder may be used for commodities where factors other than price are evaluated

- No public opening of proposals
- No disclosure of contents until contract award has been made
- Allows for negotiations

The RFP Process

Pre-Proposal Considerations

- Start pre-procurement planning with the Procurement Department
- What are you doing?
- Who is involved?
- Define Roles
- Define Timeline
- Deliverables/Benchmarks/Measurements

- Existing or related contracts
- Minimum vs Desired Expectations
- Operating Issues
- Pre-RFP conference to go over the requirements with the potential vendors?
- Presentations
- Samples
- References
- Option to include post RFP interview?

Considerations for a RFP to renew services previously obtained through the RFP process (Lessons Learned)

- How is the current contract working out?
- What do you want done differently?
- What went well last time?
- What did not go well?
- Is there anything that was not included in the last RFP that you want to include?
- Is there any new criteria to evaluate

Do you want the option to conduct post RFP interviews with the top proposers?

Role of Procurement

The Procurement Officer prepares and issues the RFP, manages the RFP process, answers all questions during the process, reviews the responses to determine if responsive, fair and reasonable, facilitates the evaluation process and negotiations, notifies proposers of intent to award, manages protests, and issues the contract resulting from the RFP.

What are the components of an RFP?

General and Administrative Information

The RFP must describe the background of the project and what relation the scope of work has to the University's ongoing operation as well as standard "boiler plate" (terms and conditions) information developed by Procurement and Contract Services.

Scope of Work

The Scope of work is to be developed by the requesting department and should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic and timely. The scope should include the background, overview, and goals of the project.

Specific – objective is concrete, detailed, focused and well defined. Be as precise as possible; do not allow specifications that may be misinterpreted or ambiguous.

Questions:

- **Who:** Who is involved? What does his/her skill set need to be?
- **What:** What do I want to accomplish?
- **When:** Establish a time frame.

- **Which:** Identify requirements and constraints.
- **Why:** Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal

Measurable – use appropriate metrics. If the objective is measurable, it means that the measurement source is identified and you are able to track the actions as you progress towards the objective.

Questions:

- How much?
- How many?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

Attainable - The objective needs to be attainable based on the skills required for the project/program and the constraints imposed.

Questions:

- Do the specifications exceed a realistic budget?
- Can the objective be achieved in the timeframe?

Relevant/Realistic - Is the goal or target being set with the contractor something they can actually impact upon or change?

Questions:

- Is the goal important to the organization?
- Is it aligned with the mission of the organization?
- Are the resources available to achieve the objective?
- Is it REAL? Is it technically & legally possible?

Timely – Impose a stated timeline!

Questions:

- What is the start date?
- When will the objective be accomplished?
- Will other competing demands cause delay?

Other Considerations

- Format – Define what you want for ease of review; keep it consistent
- Introduce your statement of need briefly
- Provide brief demographics about your organization/department
- Provide statistics as they relate to the RFP if needed
- Deliverables
- Staffing requirements from proposer

Evaluation Criteria and Selection

Evaluation Criteria

- Must be objective and be related to the specifications and requirements contained in the RFP.
- Must include pre-determined weight factors to reflect their importance to the University.

Criteria can include:

Cost

Ability to meet the specifications

Methodology

Ability/capacity/skill of the vendor/contractor

Quality of performance on previous projects (Past Performance)

Experience of the vendor/contractor

Experience of the vendors key staff members who will work on the project

Ability to provide future maintenance/repairs

Local presence

Financial capacity

Evaluation Team Guidelines

The objective of the Evaluation Team is to recommend the vendor whose proposal is most responsive to the project needs within available resources as outlined in the RFP.

- Evaluation team – who has a vested interest?
 - Who will be impacted by the resulting contract? Who is a key player?
 - Include various campus areas if applicable
 - Be sure each team member has critical experience or expertise to contribute.
 - Must be unbiased and must not have a personal or financial interest in the proposal.
- Evaluation team member requirements
 - Review and evaluate each response to the RFP.
 - Participate in Evaluation Team Committee to discuss and evaluate proposals
 - Each team member shall be required to sign:
 - Rules of Conduct form – Prior to be included on the team
 - Confidentiality Statement/Conflict of Interest form – Prior to being given a copy of any proposal.

CHECKLIST FOR RFP

Prior to Issuance of RFP

- Mandatory meeting between Requesting Department and Procurement Officer to discuss overall RFP process
- Draft of Specification/Scope of Work sent to Procurement Officer for review
- In house price estimate or engineering estimate
- List of potential firms (or individuals) if any provided to Procurement Officer
- Evaluation Team members identified and provided to Procurement Officer
- Rules of Conduct form (prepared by Procurement) signed by each evaluation team member and returned to the Procurement Officer

After Opening of RFP

- Conflict of Interest/Confidentiality Statement (prepared by Procurement) signed by each evaluation team member and returned to the Procurement Officer
- Evaluation Team members pick up proposals from Procurement Officer for review
- No contact, verbal or written, between evaluation team members and proposers unless coordinated through Procurement Officer.
- Evaluation Team (including Procurement Officer) meets to discuss and score proposals
- Consensus of Evaluation Team (spreadsheet of evaluation criteria and scores) signed by all team members and Procurement Officer for contract award.
- Requisition submitted via CFS