

# ***REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL MANUAL***

## ***PURCHASING DEPARTMENT***

### ***COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY***

PLEASE USE THESE GUIDELINES TO PREPARE YOUR REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL. THE SAMPLE RFP AT THE END OF THE MANUAL IS AVAILABLE FROM THE PURCHASING DEPARTMENT IN A WORD FILE. WE CAN SEND A DISK OR ATTACH IT TO AN EMAIL. YOU CAN COMPLETE THE APPROPRIATE SECTIONS OF THE SAMPLE TO WRITE YOUR OWN RFP. SEND THE FINAL DRAFT OF YOUR RFP TO PURCHASING ON A DISK OR VIA EMAIL.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT RFP'S, CALL LINDA MESERVE 491-6611.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Request for Proposal (RFP) Definitions | 3  |
| Checklist for RFP                      | 8  |
| RFP ‘Musts’                            | 9  |
| Evaluation Committee Guidelines        | 10 |
| Utilization of RFP Sample Letter       | 12 |
| Non-conflict of Interest Sample Form   | 14 |
| Formal RFP Hints                       | 15 |
| Scoring Guide                          | 17 |

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

DEFINITION: A request sent to vendors asking for a reply to the requirements as listed in the request for proposal at a certain time and date. The factor that distinguishes a request for proposal from an invitation for bid is that other criteria besides "lowest price which meets the specifications", would be used to determine a successful bidder. The first step in any RFP is to direct a letter to the Supervising Purchasing Agent or the Director of Purchasing seeking approval for use of the RFP method of procurement.

### A. Formal RFP's

Formal RFP's must allow a minimum of 30 calendar days for vendor responses. In addition, formal RFP's must contain the following:

#### 1. General Information

The proposal must tell the vendors what relation the scope of work has to the University's ongoing program, and must include a statement of the specific goals to be accomplished by the project. (This section may be described as telling a story as to what we need.)

#### 2. Administrative Information

Standard "boiler plate" information as well as specific information such as whom to contact to ask questions, and time and place of the pre-bid conference should be included.

#### 3. Scope of Work Clearly Defined

- a. Include a clear statement of the work to be performed, including a quantitative and qualitative description of what is to be furnished by the vendor.
- b. Include a schedule of activities to be met by the vendor.
- c. Include a schedule as to the award of the contract.
- d. Define responsibilities of the vendor.
- e. The request for proposal should include any pertinent questions to which the vendor should reply, e.g. What suggestions can the vendor make to solve our problems? What enhancements can they suggest? How long will the suggestions take to implement? What pricing methods can be used to the University's advantage? How many different options are available and what are advantages and disadvantages of each? What items are standard production items versus custom made items? What experience does the vendor have? What is the response time for service calls? Are customer service people available if we have questions?
- f. Clearly define the requirements necessary for a proposal to be considered responsive, and give credit only if the proposal met requirements in the response. What is expected of the vendor? How much information does the University want.

#### 4. Evaluation Criteria

- a. Selection of the evaluation criteria involves two basic considerations. The criteria must be related to the specifications and requirements contained in the RFP, and they must be weighted to reflect their importance to the University without giving undue advantage to any particular bidder. Evaluation committee letter must be on file in the Purchasing Department prior to the RFP opening date. The letter must contain the committee members, points to be assigned, weight factors and statements on conflict of interest. The information contained in this letter is not to be public information until final selection is made.

Weight factors may be included in the request for proposals, if in the judgement of the project director, the University's best interests will be served. Generally, weight factors

are not included in the RFP, but must be developed and furnished to the purchasing agent by the project director before the bid opening. The weight factor sheet must be in the RFP folder prior to the bid opening.

- b. If Federal funds are being used the RFP must identify all significant factors, giving their relative importance, including price.
- c. The evaluation method and general information about the criteria to be used must be part of the RFP. It is not necessary to provide the exact detailed items or the percentage weights of the general categories.
- d. Examples of Criteria
  - i. Methodology and approach to project.
  - ii. Number and status of personnel assigned.
  - iii. Prior experience of firm.
  - iv. Contractor's proposed schedule.
  - v. Financial capability.
  - vi. Service availability and service response time.
  - vii. Cost

5. Vendor Response

The proposal should provide instructions to the vendor regarding those items which are to be included in the response. Examples of such items include:

- a. The number of copies of the response required.
- b. An explanation of how the vendor proposes to complete the project.
- c. The personnel to be assigned.
- d. The number of personnel and man-hours required to perform the work.
- e. Previous related experience of the contractor.
- f. A list of references from recent customers.
- g. A budget breakdown detailing how the vendor arrived at the prices quoted.
- h. The total cost of the project.
  - i. Vendor to supply cost and pricing data, as complete as possible to insure that there are no hidden costs or misunderstandings on costs and prices.
  - ii. Cost data is defined as the elements that make up the cost, such as out-of-pocket expenses, and actual expenses of performing a contract. Variable, fixed expenses of performing a contract. Variable, fixed, semi-variable, direct and indirect costs must be examined to determine if they are fair and reasonable costs.
  - iii. Pricing data is defined as information which would prove that the vendor's asking price is fair and reasonable. Such information as price lists, purchase orders from customers showing what the customer paid for the same material, catalog sheets, independent government cost estimates, published market prices of commodities, competitive published price lists may be used to determine whether a vendor's price is fair and reasonable.
  - iv. Travel costs and expenses. Established state rates should apply.
  - v. An explanation of how thoroughly the vendor should respond.

6. Cancellation of Contract

A cancellation clause should be in the RFP and in the contract. Sample cancellation clause:

"If the contractor fails on three occasions to fulfill his obligations as stated in the contract, the University will have the right to cancel the contract upon 30 days' written notice to the contractor. Written notice will be given to the contractor after each failure to perform."

C. Vendor Inquiries

1. Vendor pre-bid conference.

If a pre-bid conference is to be held, it should be held approximately 10 days after the requests have been mailed. It is highly recommended that the pre-bid conference should be designated in the RFP as mandatory, in order that all vendors be given the same information. If not feasible the Purchasing Agent can do a non-mandatory pre-bid conference, but must provide all information provided at the pre-bid conference to all prospective bidders. The issuing department must determine whether the pre-bid conference will be held. As an alternate to holding the conference, the department may choose to ask vendors to submit questions in writing to the committee. A time limit is given to the vendors, after which no further questions will be considered. An addendum, which gives answers to the questions, is posted on BIDS after all questions have been received.

- a. The date and time of the pre-bid conference should be on the front of the RFP as well as conspicuously placed elsewhere in the document.
- b. There will be a sign-in sheet at the pre-bid conference to document those vendors who attended. Proposals from vendors who do not attend mandatory pre-bid conferences cannot be accepted.
- c. A formal date is set for receipt of vendor inquiries. This date is given in the RFP and restated during the pre-bid conference. After that date, no further questions will be received.
- d. The purchasing agent develops an addendum, if it is necessary, giving questions and answers, and the addendum is posted on BIDS.
- e. The bid opening date may have to be adjusted to allow for more time to respond to the addendum.

D. Evaluating the RFP

1. The requestor should be the Project Director and act as the chairperson of the evaluation committee.
2. The Project Director must establish the general criteria prior to sending the RFP. The general criteria are then outlined in the RFP. The project director/evaluation committee must decide two (2) weeks prior to the bid opening date what specific categories are to be evaluated and assign a weight factor to each category. This detailed evaluation criteria must be given to the purchasing agent prior to the proposals being opened and must be made a part of the proposal file.
3. A completed evaluation report, along with the criteria and weight factors must be in the RFP file and be available before and after the award.
4. A minimum score may be established and included on the weight factors sheet before the bid opening.
5. The project director will decide whether to include costs as one of the evaluation criteria, or whether to compute a price/performance ratio by comparing the cost with the total scores obtained considering the other evaluation criteria. If the price/performance ratio is used, then each vendor's

total cost will be divided by the vendor's evaluation rating to determine each proposal's cost per point.

6. The project director may decide to use costs as one of the standard evaluation criteria and weight it according to its importance. This is the most commonly used method.
7. Another method would be the lowest price qualified. This method requires the project director to determine the pass/fail score that represents the minimum acceptable performance. The lowest priced bid proposal that meets the pass/fail score is accepted. Like the sealed bid, this method encourages bids of minimal capability and cost. The project director must consider the different options, and select the method that best suits the needs of the University.

E. Evaluation Committee - Composition

1. The committee should be composed of an odd number of knowledgeable personnel with a professional interest in the contents and results of the proposal.
2. Committee members must be unbiased and MUST NOT have a personal or beneficial interest in the proposal.
3. A representative from Purchasing will be on the committee, ad hoc.

F. Evaluation Committee - Instructions

1. Instructions must be given to the evaluation committee.
  - a. Each committee member is to be given a copy of the instructions as outlined in the RFP4 entitled, "Evaluation Committee Functions".
  - b. Written instructions are passed to the committee by the purchasing agent and may be read at the beginning of the first committee meeting.

G. Evaluation Committee - Rules and Procedures

1. Committee members must independently evaluate the proposals, using an evaluation form.
2. After the proposals have been independently evaluated, members may express opinions in a committee meeting.
3. Scores may be adjusted after committee discussion.
4. If points are assigned for the prices involved in the proposal, the vendors should be rated by a mathematical formula in order to keep the points awarded for price the same for all committee members, since that part of the evaluation is strictly objective and all the individual committee members' scores should be the same for the pricing aspect of the proposal.
5. A consensus score is then assigned.
6. Committee members may be required to meet with vendors for bench mark tests.

H. Notification of Award and Protest Procedures

1. After the committee has decided who the successful vendor should be, and an evaluation report is written and signed by the committee members, a letter will be written by the purchasing agent to the successful vendor and unsuccessful vendors. The letter will state that the University intends to award a contract on or after a certain date. The date specified must be seven (7) working days after the letters will be received by the vendors.
2. The letters must be sent certified return receipt requested to all unsuccessful vendors, with all letters dated the same date and going out at the same time. If vendors have been eliminated in the "first round" because they failed to meet a minimum score, the purchasing agent may send a letter

to only those vendors advising them that they have been eliminated from further consideration. The purchasing agent needs to wait seven (7) working days after the letter is sent before the committee does further work to give those vendors the legal time limit on protests.

3. After the date has passed which has been mentioned in the letter, the purchasing agent may award a contract, if a letter of protest has not been received by the date. If a letter of protest is received before that date, then the Director of Purchasing needs to examine the proposal and evaluation and determine whether or not the protest is valid.
4. The Director of Purchasing has seven (7) working days to reply to the letter of protest.
5. If the protesting vendor is not satisfied with the decision of the director, the vendor may appeal the decision within ten (10) working days to the Executive Director of the Department of Administration.
6. The purchasing agent should try to resolve conflicts before they reach the letter writing stage. Meetings should be held with vendors who have questions about the decision. The purchasing agent should invite his/her director to sit in to solve a problem. Protest letters should be avoided whenever possible.

I. Errors in Bids or Quotations

Vendors are responsible for the accuracy of their quoted prices. In the event of a discrepancy between a unit price and its extension, the unit price will govern. Bids may be amended or withdrawn by the bidder up to the bid opening date and time. After that time, in the event of an error, bids may not be amended but may be withdrawn prior to the acceptance of the bid. After an order has been issued, no bid may be withdrawn or amended.

Minor informalities as defined and listed in the State Procurement Code may be waived depending on what is in the best interests of the University.

Any decision to permit or deny correction or withdrawal of a bid shall be supported in writing by the purchasing agent involved.

J. Late Bids or Proposals

It is the vendor's responsibility to ensure that their bids and proposals are received in the Purchasing Department no later than the appointed time and date as specified on the request for proposal. Late bids or proposals will not be considered and will not be opened.

## CHECKLIST FOR RFP

### GENERAL OVERVIEW OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS

#### I. Prior to issuance of RFP

- a. Department meet with CSU Purchasing Agent to discuss overall RFP procedure
- b. Rough draft of RFP from department to CSU Purchasing for review.
- c. Final draft of RFP from department to CSU Purchasing along with list of potential bidders. RFP must be given to Purchasing in electronic format for transfer to the state BIDS system.

#### II. After issuance of RFP, but prior to opening

- a. Scoring methodology submitted in writing by Evaluation Committee to Purchasing - submit at least two (2) weeks prior to opening in case of possible disagreement.
- b. Signed statement by all Committee Members RE: Conflict of Interest.
- c. Possible Addendum to RFP if any inquiries received.
- d. No direct contact, verbal or written, between members of Evaluation Committee and vendors unless coordinated through Purchasing.

#### III. After opening of RFP

- a. No contact, verbal or written, between Evaluation Committee and vendors unless coordinated through Purchasing.
- b. Each Committee Member analyzes and scores each proposal independently.
- c. All Committee Members meet to discuss scoring.
  - 1. Eliminate any non-responsive proposals document reasons for presentation to CSU Purchasing).
  - 2. Discuss scoring of all responsive proposals.
  - 3. Consensus of Committee for award of contract.
- d. Committee Chairman submits, in writing, the following information to CSU Purchasing:
  - 1. Cover letter explaining why, in general, this particular vendor was deemed better than the others. Statement that this particular vendor is being recommended for award. Signed by all Committee Members.
  - 2. Consensus scoring of Committee.
  - 3. All scoring sheets of Committee Members.
  - 4. Documentation for rejection of any proposals.
- e. If recommendation is approved by CSU Purchasing, Purchasing will notify all vendors in writing of recommended vendor. After receipt of this notification, vendors have seven (7) business days to protest the recommendation. This is known as the cooling off" period. **DURING THE COOLING OFF PERIOD, NO EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEMBER MAY HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH ANY VENDOR EITHER VERBALLY OR IN WRITING.**
- f. After the cooling off period has expired, a Purchase Order may be issued.

March 12, 1999

TO: All Purchasing Agents  
FROM: John R. Schneider, Director of Purchasing  
SUBJECT: Request for Proposal (RFP) "Musts"

1. Written determination as to why you are using the formal RFP rather than the formal Invitation for Bid (IFB). This must be approved by the Supervising Purchasing Agent or the Director of Purchasing.
2. Evaluation committee letter must be on file in the Purchasing Department two (2) weeks prior to the RFP opening date. The letter must contain the committee members, points to be assigned, weight factors and statements on conflict of interest. The information contained in this letter is not to be public information until final selection is made.
3. The Purchasing Department must have a letter from the selection committee on its recommendation for selection. The letter should review the evaluation process and show the scoring as outlined for the evaluation process. The recommendation must be signed by all committee members.
4. Final Selection is not made until the Purchasing Agent, and the Supervising Purchasing Agent, or the Director of Purchasing have approved the process and recommendation of the evaluation committee.
5. Upon this approval all bidders shall be advised by letter of the selected vendor. Award can not be made until the first seven working day protest time period has passed. Should a protest be filed by a bidder, the decision to proceed with the award rests with the Director of Purchasing.

## EVALUATION COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

COMMITTEE OBJECTIVE - The sole objective of the Evaluation Committee will be to recommend the Vendor whose proposal is most responsive to the project needs within available resources. The Vendor must demonstrate their capability by successfully complying with all mandatory requirements.

COMMITTEE TASKS - In order to fulfill this objective, the Committee members may be required to perform the following tasks:

1. Define, approve, and document policy and procedures affecting the preparation, release, and modification of the RFP.
2. Define, approve, and document changes to the Rules and Procedures of the Committee pertaining to the RFP, mandatory requirements and specifications.
3. Develop work plan, define Committee member's responsibilities, and assign workload.
4. Advise Purchasing Agent of needed changes so proper addendum can be issued.
5. Analyze requirements and develop evaluation criteria and weights prior to receipt or opening of proposals. Separate and format criteria into mandatory and desirable categories for initial screening checklist. Mandatory requirements must be clearly identified in the RFP. No mandatory requirement can be set forth otherwise.
6. Develop policy and procedure for benchmark or demonstration of the proposed system.
7. Assemble the benchmark or demonstration package and write benchmark or demonstration procedures.
8. Develop outline and method of reporting final recommendation.
9. Perform initial screening against established mandatory checklist.
10. Evaluate accepted proposals against established evaluation criteria.
11. Evaluate Vendor's benchmark or demonstration against established criteria.
12. Analyze and compile results and prepare preliminary draft of recommendation report for Purchasing Department review and approval.
13. Sign final report and submit to the Purchasing Department for approval.
14. Assist the Purchasing Agent in notification of award and contract negotiation as necessary.

## COMMITTEE RULES AND PROCEDURES

1. Each member will be asked whether he/she has a personal interest in which vendor is recommended and if he/she understands and can perform within the ground rules and procedures.
  - a) Each member should have no personal/financial interest in which vendor is recommended for award. All personal/financial interest situations must be reported on the Conflict of Interest statement requirement.
  - b) Each member should have a professional interest that the results of the Committee can be supported and defended.
  - c) Each member should have a professional interest that the recommendation of the Committee will lead to the selection of a vendor that can and will provide and/or operate a system (Equipment - Service) for Colorado State University in an acceptable manner.

2. Vendor contact will be strictly through the Purchasing Department. If a vendor contacts a member of the Committee the vendor must be referred to the Purchasing Agent. You shall not partake of individual meetings, lunch, entertainment, or any other direct contact with Vendors once you have been appointed to the Evaluation Committee.
3. The Committee shall perform as fair an evaluation as possible of all proposals and set aside prejudices. The sole use of inherent knowledge shall be avoided. When a condition arises that an item of evaluation is beyond your knowledge based on past experiences or otherwise, such items or conditions should be researched, to bring yourself to a supportable conclusion.
4. Items of question will be brought before the Committee. Contact with vendors will be conducted through the Purchasing Agent and responses will be presented either verbally to the Committee by the vendor, or in writing to the Committee. If verbally, appointments between the vendor and the Committee will be coordinated by the Purchasing Agent. If in writing, schedules for submission will be coordinated by the Chairperson.
5. During the process of evaluation and while meetings are in session, the Committee shall maintain confidentiality. No member shall communicate preliminary conclusions or results of what was bid by the vendors, or that a given vendor will be selected. All internal workings of the Committee shall be kept confidential until the Committee has completed its work and its report, and the selected vendor has been officially announced. You may report schedules, activity, etc., which are not to be confused with the results of the Committee's evaluation.
6. The first process of the Committee after receipt of the proposals shall be to eliminate from further evaluation any and all vendors who do not meet the predefined mandatory requirements.
7. If such process eliminates all or all but one vendor, the Committee will adjourn until appropriate action by the Purchasing Department.
8. If the conditions set forth in Item 7 do not occur, the Committee shall proceed with the detail evaluation of the remaining vendors.
9. Each member will conduct an individual evaluation. These will be summarized and averaged for the Committee as a whole.
10. It may develop that members of the Committee will not always arrive at the same conclusions. The committee will discuss any individual differences as best they can, and may request, through the Purchasing Agent, additional materials from the vendor. If these discussions or material bring consensus, good. If not, each member may retain his/her independent thinking in his/her rating which will be averaged with the others.
11. Wherein these methods produce an unacceptable conclusion to any member, he/she may, at their option, take exception in their final report form. Where such differences are matters of fact (mathematical in nature or facts in evidence) and cannot be resolved by consensus, the Chairperson shall rule. A record shall be kept in the event of such rulings.

October 23, 1991

TO: Whom It May Concern  
FROM: John R. Schneider, Director of Purchasing  
SUBJECT: RFP 7601

The RFP procedure is being used because the selection process will involve factors other than cost, but to include cost. The underwriter selected must be capable of providing these services and experience and expertise are very important evaluation factors.

March 12,1999

TO: John R. Schneider, Director of Purchasing

FROM: Department or Evaluation Committee Chair

SUBJECT: Utilization of Request for Proposal

Colorado State University is nearing the end of its contract for maintenance of Digital Equipment Corporation computer systems. June 30, 1999, is the last day of this contract. For this reason, competition will be solicited this Spring for a new three year contract. In addition to price, other factors such as Background, Problem Resolution, Assurance of DEC Maintainability, etc. must be weighed into the analysis of this award. For this reason, I am requesting permission to use the Request for Proposal.



NON-CONFLICT OF INTEREST/CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

I, the undersigned, a member of the Evaluation Committee for Request for Proposal xxxxxx for (Title of RFP) will perform the evaluation under the guidelines, procedures and requirements in the evaluation plan.

Further, whether I am an employee of the State of Colorado or a consultant assisting in the evaluation of the proposal, I represent as follows:

1. I have a professional interest in seeing that the scoring and evaluation of the vendor responses to this request for proposal can be supported and defended, and that the recommendation of the Evaluation Committee will lead to the selection of the proposal most advantageous to the States, taking into consideration the price and evaluation factors set forth in the RFP.
2. Except as I have disclosed in detail, I neither have nor shall I during the evaluation acquire any financial interest, direct or indirect, in any offeror or otherwise that would conflict in any manner or degree with my evaluation responsibilities. Member of my immediate family (spouse or children) and other family members who are in my household are subject to the same restriction and disclosure requirements. For purposes of this provision, publicly traded shares in stock of any offeror that are selected and administered by a third person, e.g. a mutual fund or retirement plan, are not subject to this restriction. Otherwise, the nature and extent of such financial interests must be disclosed by me to the purchasing agent for their evaluation of the significance of the financial interest on participation in this evaluation.
3. Notwithstanding my termination of employment or other later disassociation from this evaluation committee, I may not participate in the development of proposals in response to this solicitation.
4. I am aware that this evaluation will involve my knowledge of official information and possible vendor commercial information not publicly known. I agree not to disclose any information gained during the course of my service on this evaluation committee to any person, except to other State employees who may in the normal course of State business have a need for such information.

If I should become aware of any situation, which might arise, that could alter any of the representations above, or that might otherwise create the appearance of a conflict or other impropriety, I will notify the purchasing agent and committee chair immediately.

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Title (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## FORMAL RFP HELPFUL HINTS

### 1. General.

Those items in *italics* are sections of the RFP that need to be revised and adapted to each specific Request for Proposal. Items in Section II, Administrative Information, shall be revised with input from the Purchasing Agent. Sections I, III, and IV shall be revised by the Project Manager/Department/End User.

### 2. Section I - Background, Overview and Goals.

This section is a general explanation as to the need of the project, how this need developed and must include a statement of how the scope of work will be incorporated into the department's ongoing program. Very general specifications are included in this section. A statement should be included as to the specific goals or results to be accomplished. Vendors should be able to read this section and determine if they are interested in and/or capable of responding to the RFP.

### 3. Section II. Item D, Schedule of Activities.

When developing this schedule, the main points to keep in mind are 1) the RFP must allow a minimum of 30 days for vendor responses and 2) be realistic in the time it will take to evaluate the responses, it generally takes longer than you think.

#### Item F, Inquiries.

- 1) This date should correspond with #2 in Item D, and allow a minimum of two (2) weeks for University response. It is recommended that vendor inquiries and University responses be written in order to assure that all vendors are preparing their response with the same information and there is less chance for misunderstandings. 2) If there is to be a pre-bid conference, it should be explained at this time. It is recommended that attendance at pre-bid conferences be mandatory for the same reasons as inquiries and responses are written. Questions and issues not answered at the pre-bid conference will be addressed in the form of an addendum issued by the Purchasing Agent. The department may make arrangements for the conference to be recorded electronically. Review RFP1,C,1 for further information on vendor inquiries.

#### Item H, Proposal Submission.

The required number of copies of proposal responses is equal to the number of members on the evaluation committee plus the original copy for Purchasing files.

#### Item O, Evaluation and Award.

This item is a general description of the evaluation process and a list of the factors to be evaluated. Each evaluation factor must be related to the specifications. Keep in mind that the evaluation factors are the basis for the award. The points and/or weights assigned to the factors need not be included in the RFP. The evaluation committee does not have to be made up entirely of University personnel. Knowledgeable professionals from other universities or the private sector may serve on the committee. However, these individuals

must have absolutely no connection with prospective bidders. Review RFP1,B,4 for further information on evaluation criteria.

Items V, Term of Contract.

This is optional for service contracts and should be discussed with the Purchasing Agent.

4. Section III, Specifications.

This is the core of the RFP. The more complete the specifications, the more complete the responses from bidders. This is a detailed description of the goods and/or services required and what they are expected to accomplish. This is where you tell the bidders what you want and need. Remember, each specification must be evaluated.

5. Section IV, Information Required from Respondents.

Prospective offerors should be given detailed instructions as to the manner and format that should be followed in responding to the RFP. A specific, consistent format for the proposals is helpful in evaluating the responses. It is recommended that a transmittal letter be requested. This letter is a general overview of the bidder's proposal. It is a good starting point for the evaluation personnel to see what the bidder is proposing. Remind the bidders to include a signature and pricing page. The remainder of the information requested will be determined by the item or service required and the specifications.

# RFP Scoring Guidelines

| Score               | Technical/Functionality Standards   |
|---------------------|---|
| 0-25<br>poor        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposes an approach that does not comply with State’s requirements in many respects, requiring major proposal rewrites to conform to State’s requirements or material deficiencies or ambiguities remain that require clarification and discussions</li> <li>• Very limited understanding of the requirement; does not demonstrate more than surface comprehension</li> </ul> <p>High risk of unacceptable or late performance; likely would require extensive amounts of State involvement to change the approach and achieve successful completion on-time.</p>   |
| 26-50<br>marginal   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposes an approach that complies in many respects with State requirements, although some material deficiencies or ambiguities remain that require clarification and discussions; major proposal rewrites may be necessary</li> <li>• Demonstrates basic understanding of the requirement that is may be inadequate for successful performance, and proposal does not demonstrate more than surface comprehension of the requirement in the context of the program’s environment</li> </ul> <p>Moderate to high risk of unacceptable or late performance; likely would require significant amounts of State involvement to refine the approach and achieve successful completion on-time.</p> |
| 51-70<br>fair       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposes a sound approach that meets all significant requirements, exceeding mandatory functionalities in some respects. Requires clarification of minor ambiguities and/or limited proposal revisions to correct limited deficiencies and conform to States’ requirements.</li> <li>• Fair understanding of project, although limited recognition of non-obvious dependencies that would demonstrate comprehensive understanding of the requirement in the context of the program’s environment</li> </ul> <p>Low to moderate risk of unacceptable or late performance; State’s involvement probably will exceed normal contract administration.</p>  |
| 71-85<br>good       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposes a sound approach that meets all requirements, exceeding mandatory functionalities in many respects. Requires only clarification of minor ambiguities, and requires no proposal revisions to conform to States’ requirements</li> <li>• Good understanding of project, recognizing some non-obvious dependencies that demonstrate more than just surface understanding of the requirement in the context of the program’s environment</li> </ul> <p>Low risk of unacceptable or late performance; States’ involvement not likely to exceed normal contract administration.</p>   |
| 86-100<br>excellent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposes an excellent approach that meets all requirements and exceeds most mandatory requirements in tangible, clearly advantageous ways. Requires no clarifications and no proposal revisions to conform to State requirements</li> <li>• Excellent, comprehensive understanding of project, recognizing many non-obvious dependencies that demonstrate in-depth comprehension of the requirement in the context of the program’s environment</li> </ul> <p>Very little to no risk of unacceptable or late performance; State involvement will not exceed normal contract administration</p>   |

| Score               | Experience/Demonstrated Capabilities Standard   |
|---------------------|---|
| 0-25<br>poor        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offeror and/or its personnel have marginal qualifications and very little relevant experience with projects substantially equivalent to this project</li> <li>• Past performance, experience, and qualifications raise serious questions about offeror's ability to complete the project on-time</li> </ul> <p>High risk of either unacceptable or late performance based on experience and/or past performance; likely would require extensive States' involvement beyond expected States' interfaces to make the solution viable and achieve successful completion on-time.</p>  |
| 26-50<br>marginal   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offeror and/or its personnel have basic qualifications but limited relevant experience with projects substantially equivalent to this project</li> <li>• Past performance, experience, and qualifications raise substantial questions about offeror's ability to complete the project on-time</li> <li>• Moderate risk of unacceptable or late performance based on experience and/or past performance; likely would require significant amounts of State involvement beyond expected State involvement to make the solution viable and achieve successful completion on-time.</li> </ul>  |
| 51-70<br>fair       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offeror has personnel who are qualified and have relevant experience with projects similar in scope to this project</li> <li>• Past performance, experience, and qualifications raise no significant questions about offeror's ability to complete the project on-time</li> </ul> <p>Moderate to low risk that experience, past performance history, and qualifications would threaten acceptable and on-time performance; State involvement likely may exceed normal contract administration and that reasonably required to integrate the solution into existing business process, but involvement likely will not exceed available resources.</p>   |
| 71-85<br>good       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offeror and its personnel are well qualified and have meaningful, directly relevant experience with projects substantially equivalent in scope to this project</li> <li>• Past performance, experience, and qualifications create favorable impressions about offeror's ability to complete the project on-time or perhaps early</li> </ul> <p>Not more than low risk that experience, past performance history, and qualifications would threaten acceptable and on-time performance; State involvement not likely to exceed normal contract administration, and involvement will not exceed available resources or expected States' involvement necessary to make the solution viable and achieve successful completion on-time.</p> |
| 86-100<br>excellent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offeror and its personnel are well qualified and have recent, extensive, directly relevant experience with projects substantially equivalent to this project</li> <li>• Past performance, experience, and qualifications are exceptional and clearly demonstrate a likelihood of on-time or even early successful completion of the project</li> </ul> <p>Very little to no risk from past performance, experience, or qualifications that would threaten acceptable and on-time performance. State involvement will not exceed normal contract administration. Little or no States involvement in making the solution viable except as necessary to integrate the solution into the States' existing processes.</p>                   |