



HOW TO RESPOND TO A PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Presentation – September 15, 2016

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Agenda

- **Welcome**
- **Introduction**
- **General Rules**
- **Procurement Methods**
- **Request for Proposal Essentials**
- **Evaluation Process**
- **Pitfall's to Avoid**
- **Tips for Doing Business**

“General Rules”

- **Everyone participates**
- **No such thing as a “dumb” question**
- **Cell phones on VIBRATE**
- **We are Prince George’s County**
- **There will be a break**

Introductions

- **Your Name**
- **Your Company**
- **Whether you are a Prince George's County Certified Firm**
- **Goal or Expectation for today**

Procurement Principles



Integrity, confidence in the fairness and accountability of the procurement process

Promote opportunities for County, small and minority business enterprises



Foster greater open competition

Promote positive relationships



Provide timely and impartial resolution of disputes

Provide "Best Value" for the taxpayers



Procurement Methods

- Invitation for Bid
 - Award is made to the lowest responsive, responsible Bidder
- Multi-Step Invitation for Bid
 - Award is made to the lowest responsive, responsible Bidder whose technical response has met the minimum technical score
- Request for Proposal ("RFP")
 - When price is not only determining factor. Proposal Analysis Group ("PAG") is appointed to evaluate proposals and recommend best value award to Purchasing Agent.

Request for Proposal (RFP)

- Used when
 - Requirement is more loosely defined
 - Customer seeking the best solution to meet their requirements
 - Factors other than price are important
 - Negotiation is optional

Request for Proposal (RFP)

(Cont.)

- Publicly advertised
- Pre-Proposal conference
- Specific closing time announced not public opening
- Vendor response consist of
 - Technical proposal
 - Cost Proposal

Request for Proposal (RFP)

(Cont.)

- Proposal Analysis Group (PAG)
- Evaluates Proposals
- Ranks Offerors
- Requests oral presentations or demo's
- Negotiates with top rated Offerors
- Best and Final Offers
- Recommends award

Where to Start

- Read the entire solicitation once, then read it again and again!
- Read all of the instructions and explanations to ensure that you understand the County's requirements
- Be aware that information critical to your Proposal may be scattered among many sections of the RFP

TO Propose or NOT TO Propose

- Is the Project too big or too small?
- Is the Project outside your experience and available resources (human and financial) ?
- Is the timing right? Are you too busy?



Ask Questions

- Questions can be submitted in writing to the Procurement Officer
- Attend the Pre-Proposal Conference
- Some solicitations specify a date by which questions are due
- Be aware that the County's response to all submitted questions are distributed through a written addendum to the solicitation
- Verbal information is not binding. Get it in writing.

Scheduling

- Make a schedule and stick to it!
- Make sure you leave plenty of time for copying, binding and delivering the proposal ON TIME
- Distribute the schedule to all members of your team

Mandatory vs. Desirable Criteria

- **Mandatory Criteria**
 - Describes the features your proposal **must** have or elements it must contain, in order to receive further evaluation
- **Desirable Criteria**
 - Represents the features and/or functionality that the County would **like to see** in your proposal. Your score in this section indicates how far your proposal goes in providing what the County is seeking to procure

Essentials

- Proposal is professional
- Proposal is organized & Tabbed per the technical Response criteria
- Proposal demonstrate vendors understanding of the proposal requirements
- Proposal provides evidence of sufficient resources (human & financial)
- Proposal contains a quality control process/program

Essentials (Cont.)

- Address transition plan
- Training program included & adequate
- Backup plan for continuity of services
- Address hiring policy retention strategy
- Details to protect approach

Essentials (Cont.)

- Experience meets the requirements of the Proposal
- Identify Inspection/maintenance program for equipment
- Background check process/documentation
- Provide complete/updated references information

Evaluation of the Proposal

- Evaluation is conducted by a Proposal Analysis Group
- Proposals are reviewed by Procurement to ensure they meet the mandatory requirements
- Proposals that meet the mandatory requirements are distributed to the Proposal Analysis Group
- Proposals are scored based upon the evaluation criteria established in the RFP

Evaluation Criteria

- Experience
- Licenses and qualifications of the firm
- Qualifications of key employee and subcontractors
- Capacity to perform the work
- Quality Control and safety programs
- Past performance based on references and past County performance

Evaluation Criteria (cont.)

- County-based business or Minority Business Requirements
- Implementation Plan and or timeline for associated tasks

Cost and Price

- Direct Labor
- Material Costs
- Equipment Costs
- Overhead Costs
- Profit

Social and Economic Factors

- Non Discrimination
- County Based Businesses
- Wages and Benefits
- Job Safety
- Employees are County Residents

“Going Green”

- Strategies and equipment
- Life cycle costing
- Leadership in energy and environmental
- Economic impact on the community

Pitfalls to Avoid

- Vendor repeats scope of work word for word (reflects vendors lack of understanding)
- Proposal fails to address all areas of the solicitation
- Failure to include licenses and permits as required

Pitfalls to Avoid (cont.)

- Minority Business Enterprise Utilization Plan/County-Based Business Plan missing or incomplete
- Underestimating the evaluators. Proposals that contain too much “glitz” and little substance will not score well
- Failure to follow the Proposal instructions regarding organization of the Proposal, inclusion of required information

Pitfalls to Avoid (cont.)

- Failure to take the evaluation criteria into consideration when preparing your response
- Failure to understand and to demonstrate an understanding of the County's requirements
- Failure to tailor your response to the specific Proposal

Pitfalls to Avoid (cont.)

- Failure to include all of the information requested by the County
- Submitting an unprofessional proposal (typos, blank pages, unnumbered pages, etc.)
- **FAILURE TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL BEFORE THE DATE AND TIME SPECIFIED!**

First Impressions

- Your proposal should be professional and organized
- Use a binding method that works
- Make as much materials as possible look like it was created specifically for this solicitation
- Avoid cross-references to the extent possible- it makes it difficult for evaluators to evaluate the proposal if they have to jump between sections in order to get the full picture.

First Impressions (cont.)

- Use section headings
- Always number pages
- Related topics should be kept together and most statements should not be repeated
- Make sure each copy of the proposal is completed
- The proposal should be easy to read and understand. You want to make sure the evaluation team gets the right message.

Proposal Strengths

- Professional and organized
- Is clear and detailed as appropriate
- Contains a detailed project approach addressing all aspects of the solicitation
- The proposal contains reference for work similar to solicitation with current contact information

Proposal Weaknesses

- Document is not professional, not organized
- Document does not respond to every technical element to the solicitation
- Document does not demonstrate vendors clear understanding of the requirements of the solicitation
- Document reflects lack of resources
- Document does not include a quality control process

Proposal Weaknesses (cont.)

- Performance tracking process
- Training program weak or missing
- No backup plan for continuity of services
- Hiring policy weak or missing
- Project approach weak or missing
- Experience does not meet the requirements of the solicitation
- Inspection/maintenance program for equipment if appropriate

Mistake in Proposals

- Failure to acknowledge amendments
- Failure to sign the proposal
- Failure to enclose product literature
- Failure to submit the required number of copiers
- Failure to include bid bond
- Failure to provide required subcontractor list
- Failure to separate technical from cost proposal

Tips for Doing Business

- Attend Pre-proposal Conferences
- Make Sure You Understand The Requirements – Ask Questions
- Be Cost Competitive
- Look for Partnerships with Other Vendors
- Deliver Proposals on Time

If You Win...**CELEBRATE**



If you Lose

- Arrange a debriefing with the Procurement Officer to find out the reasons for your loss
- Try not to get discouraged
- Apply what you have learned on your next proposal



Contact Information

- **Contract Administration & Procurement (CA&P) Division**
 - 301-883-6400
 - 301-883-6440 (fax)
 - Website: <http://procurement.mypgc.us>
Website: <https://emaryland.buyspeed.com/bsa>
- **Supplier Development & Diversity Division (SDDD)**
 - 301-883-6480
 - 301-883-6479 (fax)
 - Website: <http://diversity.mypgc.us>



Prince George's County is the Place to be....
Thank You

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