How do I respond to an RFP?

Lauren Linakis
Associate Director
LaGuardia PTAC
LaGuardia PTAC

• LaGuardia PTAC assists businesses in marketing their goods and services to the government

• We strive to simplify the steps to sell to the government

• We offer procurement technical assistance and training workshops to meet the needs of any size business, including minority-owned small businesses, service disabled veteran/veteran owned small businesses, and women owned small businesses

• LaGuardia PTAC is one of 98 PTACS nationwide
LaGuardia PTAC’s Services

- One-on-one business counseling to help clients succeed in government contracting
- Review bids, proposals, and GSA schedules for completeness and accuracy
- Procurement regulations assistance
- Assist MWBEs and Veterans in obtaining the appropriate certifications
- Research and analysis of government procurement trends
- Access to government contracting opportunities through our Bid Match software
- Assistance with marketing to government agencies
- Providing opportunities for small businesses to participate in networking and learning events, where they meet with decision makers

Government Contracting from Start to Finish!
LaGuardia Business Services

• Small Business Development Center
  • Helps businesses create a business plan, discover sources of funding, prepare for e-commerce, develop marketing plans
• Health Care Navigator
  • Provides information on the ACA and the insurance products available through the NY State of Health.
• Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses
  • Business management education program that helps you develop the skills you need to grow your company
• Small Business Transportation Resource Center
  • Helps businesses prepare and compete for transportation-related contracts at the federal, state, and local levels
• NY Designs
  • Business incubator for companies pursuing design and/or technology ventures
Visit www.laguardiaptac.org to register!

- **Thursday, May 5:** MWBE Certification Bootcamp
- **Thursday, May 19:** Certifying as a Veteran with the Federal Government and New York State
- **Thursday, June 2:** How to find Government Contracting Opportunities
- **Friday, June 10:** 14th Annual Small Business and Procurement Expo – register now! [https://lagcc2016.eventbrite.com](https://lagcc2016.eventbrite.com)  
  10% discount code for webinar attendees: lagccwebinars
Today’s Objectives

• Businesses will understand how the Federal, New York State, and New York City governments purchase

• Businesses will better understand how to respond to Federal, New York State, and New York City Request for Proposals, or Solicitations.
What is an RFP?

Requests for Proposals are used to communicate government requirements to prospective contractors and to solicit proposals.

RFPs will, at a minimum, describe the:

- Government’s requirement
- Anticipated terms and conditions that will apply to the contract
- Information required to be in the offeror’s proposal
- Factors that will be used to evaluate the proposal and their relative importance
A little homework

- Create a business plan – without a strategy, a small business has no road map to follow when identifying and pursuing opportunities
- Identify your core business capabilities
- Identify your Government business codes
  - NAICS, PSCs, NIGPs
- Identify your geographic service area(s)
- Get registered (PIP and SAM.gov)
- Get certified if you are eligible
- Gather anticipated documents together:
  - Project experience
  - Resumes
  - References
  - Quality assurance plan
  - Organizational charts
General Acquisition Process – How RFPs are Created

First Phase

• Mission Review
• Needs Determination
• Requirements Determination
• Define/Describe Requirements (Scope)

Second Phase

• Acquisition Planning
• Solicitation Phase
• Evaluation
• Negotiation
• Contract Award
• Contract Administration
• Contract Close Out
General Acquisition Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probability of Win</th>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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<th>Phases of Opportunity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Identify</td>
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<td>Qualify</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award</td>
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</table>
The Federal Government
How the Federal Govt Buys

- Above $700,000
  - Negotiated acquisitions require a subcontracting plan (or $1.5 million for construction) (FAR 19.702)

- $700,000
  - > $150K Full & Open Competition or Other than Full & Open Competition unless small business “Rule of Two” applies (FAR 19.502-2)

- $150,000
  - > $25K Must be advertised at FBO.GOV unless exceptions apply (FAR 5.202)

- $25,000
  - -- $15K to $25K Displayed in public place or by appropriate electronic means

- $15,000
  - Government Purchase Card (GPC) Sole source allowed; Small business set asides & SAP not mandatory

- $3,500

- $25K

- $0

Mandatory Small Business Set-asides.

May use Simplified Acquisition Procedures (SAP)
Find Opportunities: Where?


- Federal Procurement is governed by the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) - [https://www.acquisition.gov/?q=browsefar](https://www.acquisition.gov/?q=browsefar)

- All opportunities above $25,000 are on Fed Biz Opps (FAR Part 5)

- Purchases between $3,500 and $150,000 are set aside for small businesses (FAR Part 19)
Search more than 29,000* active federal opportunities.

**ATTENTION:** Agency users are responsible for properly uploading controlled, unclassified materials to FBO using the access control procedures for document packages and attachments detailed in the FBO Buyers Guide. Do not upload ANY classified materials to FBO.

**Important Password Update** - Mandatory reset of passwords is required every 90 days. Registered users will receive an email notification to remind them of this requirement. If your account has been disabled, contact the Federal Service Desk at 866-606-8220 (Monday - Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET)

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**Buyers / Engineers**
Government users may post, manage, and award opportunities.

**Vendors / Citizens**
Vendors and citizens may search, monitor, and retrieve opportunities.

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**User Guides**
- Buyer
- Vendor
- Engineer
- Location/Agency Admin

Use Adobe Acrobat Reader to view files in PDF format.

**Demonstration Videos**
Learn about FBO features and functionality in on-line videos.
FBO.gov – Key Tips

• Once you conduct a search, a list of opportunities will appear.
• You can see the subject line, the agency buying the good/service, the type of procurement, and the issue date
• To view an opportunity, click on the hyperlink

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Agency/Office/Location</th>
<th>Type / Set-aside</th>
<th>Posted On</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mining Industry Surveillance System - Phase I Stone / Sand and Gravel</strong>&lt;br&gt;2015-N-19600&lt;br&gt;R – Professional, administrative, and management support services</td>
<td>Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Acquisition and Assistance Field Branch (Pittsburgh)</td>
<td>Solicitation (Modified)</td>
<td>May 06, 2015</td>
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| **J-Repair Services, Calibration, & Software Updates of Pacific Instruments**<br>W01ZK-15-T-0171<br>J – Maintenance, repair & rebuilding of equipment | Department of the Army Contracting Command ACC-APG-TEAN
CONTRACTING DIV | Combined Synopsis/Solicitation / Total Small Business | May 06, 2015 |
| **Vertical Replenishment & Rotary Wing Logistic Services Detachment**<br>A - N62387-15-R-8008<br>V – Transportation, travel, & relocation services | Department of the Navy Military Sealift Command MSC DC N62387 | Combined Synopsis/Solicitation (Modified) | May 06, 2015 |
| **J-UJ004-Education Services**<br>N0019815T0099<br>U – Education & training services | Department of the Navy Naval Supply Systems Command NAVSUP Fleet Logistics Center Norfolk | Solicitation (Modified) / Total Small Business | May 06, 2016 |
| **Notice of Intent to Lease Space Using Other Than Full and Open Competition**<br>3TN0157<br>X – Lease or rental of facilities | General Services Administration Public Buildings Service (PBS) Leasing Division Region 4 (4FR) | Presolicitation (Modified) | May 06, 2015 |
FBO.gov – Key Tips

• The opportunity lists a short description with the bid documents on the side.

• Download all bid documents and follow the application directions.

• You could also add yourself to the interested vendors list so that you can get updates on the bid.
Dissecting the Federal RFP

- **Part I: The Schedule** *(becomes part of the contract)*
  - A: Solicitation/contract form *(cover page)*
  - B: Supplies/services and prices/cost *(what/how many)*
  - C: Statement of Work *(describes and defines required services)*
  - D: Packaging and Marketing *(how to pack/box/mark)*
  - E: Inspection and Acceptance *(shipping)*
  - F: Deliveries/Performance *(when/where/duration)*
  - G: Contract Administration *(post award contracts/payment process)*
  - H: Special Requirements

- **Part II: Contract Clauses** *(becomes part of the contract)*
  - I: Contract Causes *(boring, but very important)*

- **Part III: List of Documents, Exhibits, and other attachments** *(becomes part of the contract)*
  - J: List of Attachments

- **Part IV: Representations and Instructions**
  - K: Representations, certifications *(read carefully – do not make false claims)*
  - L: Instructions to offerors *(follow directions!)*
  - M: Evaluation factors *(grading system)*
Dissecting the Federal RFP

SOLICITATION, OFFER AND AWARD

1. This Contract Is A Rated Order Under DPAS (15 CFR 700)
   Rating: 

2. Contract Number
   W52P1J-16-R-0047

3. Solicitation Number

4. Type of Solicitation
   - Sealed Bid (IFB)
   - Negotiated (RFP)

5. Date Issued
   2016APR11

6. Requisition/Purchase Number
   SEE SCHEDULE

7. Issued By
   ARMY CONTRACTING COMMAND - RI
   CCRD-RT
   ROCK ISLAND, IL 61299-8000
   BLDGS 60 & 62

8. Address Offer To (If Other Than Item 7)

   Code: W52P1J

NOTE: In sealed bid solicitations ‘offer’ and ‘offeror’ mean ‘bid’ and ‘bidder’.

SOLICITATION

9. Sealed offers in original and ______ copies for furnishing the supplies or services in the Schedule will be received at the
   place specified in item 8, or if handcarried, in the depository located in
   ________________ until
   02:00pm (hour) local time 2016APR11 (Date).
   Caution - Late Submissions, Modifications, and Withdrawals: See Section L, Provision No. 52.214-7 or 52.215-1. All offers are subject to all terms and
   conditions contained in this solicitation.

10. For Information
   Call:

   A. Name
      DANETTE D. WILSON

   B. Telephone (No Collect Calls)
      Area Code: 309
      Number: 782-6607
      Ext.

   C. E-mail Address
      DANETTE.D.WILSON.CIV@MAIL.MIL

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<td>Contract Administration Data</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Evaluation Factors for Award</td>
<td>41</td>
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OFFER (Must be fully completed by offeror)
Dissecting the Federal RFP

Read everything!

But these particular documents will help you decide if this is the right opportunity for you:

• Part I: The Schedule
  o A: Solicitation/contract form
    • Main takeaways to understand if it's in your industry, geographic area, and if you're excluded by certification
  o B: Supplies/services and prices/cost
    • Can provide clues on the amount of work required, and the expected value of the contract
  o C: Statement of Work
    • The technical aspects of the work – are you capable? Do you need to partner? Do they have someone else in mind?
Dissecting the Federal RFP

- Part IV: Representations and Instructions
  - L: Instructions to offerors – follow the rules!
    - “The proposal shall be prepared in a clear, legible, practical manner. Five separate volumes shall be submitted. Unless specifically requested, pricing information shall not be contained in any volume except the Price Volume. Each volume shall have an introduction and table of contents. Each volume must be indexed and tabbed. Each page is defined as one sheet, one side. Excess pages will be removed from the back of each volume and will NOT be read or evaluated. Pages must be 8.5” x 11, and 12 point font or greater, Arial font, single-spaced, typed in black on white background (black on white requirement does not apply to graphics, photos, etc., company stationary and logos are acceptable). Font requirements apply to bullets and other special text”

  - M: Evaluation factors
    - What areas should our proposal focus on?
    - LPTA vs. Best Value
The New York State Government
New York State Contract Reporter

New York State adheres to procurement guidelines (http://ogs.ny.gov/bu/pd/Docs/Guidelines.pdf) and Article 11 of the New York State Finance Law

- Official website of New York State procurement activity
- Who advertises on NYSCR?
  - State agencies
  - Authorities
  - State/City universities
  - Public benefit corporations
  - Some municipalities, museums, libraries, and schools, prime contractors
• All purchases valued at $50,000 and above are on New York State Contract Reporter

• Anything below $50,000 is advertised directly through the agency
What types of ads are on NYSCR?

• Discretionary Spending
  o $50,000 - $200,000 for all agencies
  o $50,000 - $125,000 for CUNYs/SUNYs
  o Contracts limited to small businesses, SDVOBs, MWBEs
  o Excludes construction
  o Does not require formal competitive procurement process

• Competitive bids
  o $200,000 and above
  o Contracts open to all businesses
  o There are goals attached to these contracts – usually 15% for MBEs and 15% for WBEs
Competitive Bids on NYSCR

• Invitation to Bid
  o Used in procurement of commodities
  o Awarded to the responsive and responsible bidder on the basis of lowest price

• Request for Proposal
  o Used for procurements when factors in addition to cost are weighted
  o Awarded to the responsive and responsible bidder offering the best value
Components of a New York State RFP

• Table of contents
• Description of program objectives and background
• Scope of services
• Detailed requirements/specifications
  o Technical proposal submission requirements
  o Cost proposal submission requirements
  o Single award/multiple award
• Performance standards
• Overview of the solicitation process
### Timeline and Calendar of Events

University at Buffalo  
Request for Proposal 15DSL0124  
Custodial Management Services

#### Timeline of Events

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issuance of Notice (NYS Contract Reporter ad published)</td>
<td>4/11/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference/Walkthrough</td>
<td>5/4/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for Submission of Questions</td>
<td>5/11/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers Issued to All Bidders</td>
<td>5/18/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bid Opening Date</td>
<td>5/31/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidder Presentations (week of)</td>
<td>6/13/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notice of Award (approximate)</td>
<td>6/27/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Sent to Vendor for Signature (approximate)</td>
<td>7/11/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed Contract sent to AG/OSC for Approval (approximate)</td>
<td>7/25/16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commencement of Contract (anticipated)</td>
<td>11/9/16</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Components of a NYS RFP, Cont.

- Method of award and evaluation criteria

6. **Method of Award**
   
   a. Bids must be submitted on time, and in full. CMFs that meet the requirements of the bid will be scheduled for an onsite presentation.
      
      i. The CMF will be given up to two (2) hours for the presentation. For the CMF’s convenience, there will be access to a computer, along with a screen and projector.

      ii. Presenters for the CMF may include the following:
          1. Proposed Director
          2. Proposed Assistant Directors (2)
          3. Proposed Training Manager
          4. Up to two (2) additional CMF representatives

      iii. The presentations will be evaluated according to the Award Criteria.

   b. Award Criteria:
      
      | Category        | Percentage |
      |-----------------|------------|
      | Technical       | 32%        |
      | General         | 29%        |
      | Price/Cost      | 30%        |
      | MWBE/SDVOB      | 9%         |

Based on the evaluation criteria of Sections I, II, III, and IV, in conjunction with Attachment A: Management Services, Salaries, and Benefits Fee, and the presentation, with a range of 0-100 points. Each evaluator will score the RFP/presentation and total the criteria. The bidder with the highest Grand Total points, that is deemed to be responsive and responsible, will be awarded a contract. The University reserves the right to make awards within one hundred twenty (120) days after the bid opening, during which period bids shall not be withdrawn unless the bidder specifically states in the bid that the acceptance thereof must be made within a shorter specified time.
Components of a NYS RFP, Cont.

• Offeror's minimum qualifications

7. Qualification of Bidder/Contractor/Submittals

The Bid will be awarded only to a responsible Bidder, qualified by experience and in a financial position to provide the items and services specified. In order to facilitate prompt award of the Bid, the Bidder shall attest to the following:

a. The Bidder shall be experienced in the supervision of a service of this scope with at least five (5) years’ experience in this type of work. The actual work shall be done by qualified and experienced employees working under his supervision or under the supervision of an experienced Director who has also been doing this type of work for at least five (5) years. Please provide documentation of experience, per Section IV of the bid.

8. Financial Qualifications

a. The bidder must be in a financial position to perform the duties and responsibilities of the Contract.

b. It is mandatory that all bidders submit financial data, which would adequately reflect their financial stability, hence support the execution of a contract/purchase order. Such information includes:

   i. A credit report

   ii. The most recent two audited annual reports

   iii. Annual financial statements

c. This information will be held in confidence. The University reserves the right to reject any bidder who does not demonstrate stability sufficient for the scope of this bid.
Components of a NYS RFP, Cont.

• Mandatory requirements
• Reserved rights
• Method for issuing clarifications or modifications to the RFP
• Contract terms and conditions
• Procurement policies, statutes, and disclosures
  o Appendix A (standard clauses)
  o Vendor Responsibility
  o Procurement lobbying law
  o MWBE law
  o Debriefing language
  o Protest procedures
  o Sales and compensating use tax
Other Possible Content in a NYS RFP

- Prequalification criteria
- Risk management/required assurances
- Cost adjustments
- References
- Insurance
- Prevailing Wage
- Consultant Disclosure Legislation
The New York City Government
New York City
City Record: https://a856-cityrecord.nyc.gov/Section

- **ADVANCE SCIENTIFIC EQUIP. INSTRUMENTS-GAS CHROMATOGRAPH/ MASS SPECTROMETER (GC/MS)-NYPD**
  - From Citywide Administrative Services
  - Award: 4/1/2016

- **EQUIPMENT, PARK AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**
  - From Citywide Administrative Services
  - Solicitation: 4/1/2016
  
  A copy of the bid can be downloaded from the City Record Online site at www.nyc.gov/cityrecord. Enrollment is free. Vendors may also request the bid by contacting Vendor Relations via email at dcasdmssbids@dcas.nyc.gov, by telephone at (212) 386-00...

- **LIQUID CAUSTIC SODA - DEP (BWT)**
  - From Citywide Administrative Services
  - Award: 4/1/2016

- **PET SUPPLIES FOR OEM**
  - From Citywide Administrative Services
  - Award: 4/1/2016

- **TRUCK RADIO EMERGENCY PATROL - NYPD**
How New York City Purchases

- **Purchases under $20,000 ($35,000 for construction)**
  - Simple transaction between buyer and seller – no formal advertising required

- **Purchases $20,000-$100,000 ($35,000-$100,000 for construction)**
  - 5 vendors + 10 certified MWBEs are randomly selected from PIP in a commodity code
  - Contracting officer can add as many MWBEs as s/he wants when sending the solicitation
  - Awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder

- **Purchases above $100,000**
  - Publicly advertised on the City Record
  - Competitive Sealed Bids (used for goods, construction, and standard services)
  - Competitive Sealed Proposals (used for human and professional services)

Rules can be found at:
Components of an NYC Competitive Sealed Proposal

- Agency issues an “invitation to bid” via email and online, which will contain the RFP
  - Bid or no bid form
  - Instructions regarding submission
  - Calendar of events
  - Scope of Work
  - Contract terms and conditions
  - Evaluation criteria
  - Statement on MWBE utilization
  - Where applicable, a notice that award is subject to the completion of a VENDEX profile
  - Statement regarding prevailing wage, if applicable
  - If applicable, a request for description of industry experience
Components of an NYC Competitive Sealed Proposal

• Agency issues an “invitation to bid” via email and online, which will contain the RFP
  o If applicable, a request for past performance references

  Queens Library
  “Enrich your life”

  RFP # 916-1
  Security Guard Services

12. Provide a minimum of three (3) recent clients as references that best represent your ability to perform the tasks described in this RFP (a “Reference Client”). Provide the Reference Client’s name, contact person, title, address, and telephone number. Please provide details on the work performed for each Reference Client, including, the length of any contract and explanation of how the work performed is similar to the work required by the Library, as well as any other pertinent information relevant to representing your qualifications to perform the work.

  o If applicable, a request for staff capability and resumes
How do I respond to an RFP?
How do I respond to an RFP?

Read Read Read!

• Read the RFP once to understand if you are eligible for the work
  o Does it ask for your core capabilities?
  o Does it seem like its meant for another firm?
  o Is there enough time to apply?
  o Is it set-aside or goaled for a certified business?
  o Is it within your geographical reach?
  o Are you able to perform the work/do you have past experience in performing the work?
  o Am I able to be a responsible and responsive vendor on this project?

• Read the RFP a second time to understand the technical aspect of the work
  o Determine what % of the work can be done in house and where the gaps are
  o Begin to determine how you would price the work
  o Do you think you can be competitive?

• Read the RFP a third time to understand how to apply
How do I respond to an RFP?

• Ask as many questions as possible – assume nothing
  o There is usually a Q&A period where you can submit questions
  o **After** you read through the RFP, ask any questions that you are unsure of – do not ask basic questions that are answered in the RFP
  o Read through the answers to the questions to determine if:
    • There is an incumbent
    • Was there are previous contract number?
    • Were there any technical ambiguities clarified?
    • Were any of the original technical requirements expanded or reduced?
    • What is the **real need**? How can I **bring value** to the agency?

• Carefully consider your key personnel
  o Read the education and experience requirements, and exceed them
  o Tailor their resumes to be as closely linked to the deliverables as possible
How do I respond to an RFP?

Don’t let an RFP bankrupt your business!

- Common pitfall: your budget is unreasonable – that means you are either too low or too high!

- The government is risk-averse – if they see a bid whose price is considered unreasonably low, they can justify rejecting it
  - The government does not want to award a contract to the lowest bidder, only too see them fail halfway through the project

- The government also wants to save the tax-payers money, and so if your bid is unreasonably high, they can justify rejecting it.

- Do your research
  - Ensure that your pricing includes all of your cost – overhead, insurance,
  - Understand if you are competitive
  - Look at past contracts (submit a FOIA or FOIL if you need to) to see how they were priced
  - Collect intelligence
How do I respond to an RFP?

Understand the Evaluation Criteria

• The evaluation criteria is your guide!

• Does the evaluation criteria heavily weigh:
  o Technical expertise
  o Past performance
  o Pricing
  o Organizational capability
  o Financial capability
  o Quality Assurance

• Other things to keep in mind:
  o Risk!
  o Value!
How do I respond to an RFP?

Write a customer-focused proposal!

- Ensure your proposal demonstrates a complete understanding of the customer’s needs
  - Gather as much intelligence as possible
  - See the bigger picture
  - Concise and simple!

- How are you going to solve their problem? How are you going to add value?

  “Price is what you pay. Value is what you get.”
  ~Warren Buffett
How do I respond to an RFP?

Be specific and detailed – even when you think you don’t need to be.

*Example: Explain your process for submitting invoices and ensuring accuracy.*

90% of responses: ABC Company will review all invoices for accuracy and completeness and submit them according to the guidelines.

10% of responses: ABC Company’s Accounting Clerk will review invoices for accuracy and completeness. All invoices will be checked to ensure the following items are present and accurate on each invoice: Contract number, remittance address, unit/quantity, price, date, point of contact, cage code, any additional items requested.

Example from CFO Leasing
How do I respond to an RFP?

Explain how and by whom the project will be managed

The government is risk averse - Your job is to ensure them you are capable and competent

• Identify the project manager
• Explain who will be staffed on the project, and the chain of command
• Explain in detail even simple things – a common question – how will staff issues be resolved?
  o What does it say per your standard operating procedures?
  o Who is responsible for hearing such issues?
  o Who will be involved in handling the issue?
How do I respond to an RFP?

Don’t use broad, unsubstantiated claims – no fluff!
The government can dismiss claims – they can’t dismiss evidence

90% of companies: Our company has 37 years of experience carrying out a variety of rigorous testing programs for the U.S. Navy and has always satisfied its customers’ requirements.

10% of companies: Our company has 37 years of experience carrying out surface warfare systems testing at the platform, system, and equipment level. This includes radar systems integration, system design and test agent services for USS TEST class, as well as directing the live-fire portions of Project XYZ, and modernization test program development and execution for Project LMN.

Example from Jeff Cuskey, Montana PTAC
How do I respond to an RFP?

Don’t just re-state the requirements – use your own words!
Tailor your proposal to the RFP – do not cut and paste

*Res Rei Development, Inc. B-410466.7 (October 16, 2015)*

- RRD bid on work with the United States Special Operations Command
- Their bid was rejected – “The business process as depicted in Res Rei’s proposal is a direct restatement of the government’s Statement of Work requirement and the offeror failed to provide details and insight into ‘how’ their technical approach will effectively manage and execute the required work.”
- Res Rei filed a protest, but it was rejected by the Government Accountability Office – it ruled that RRD simply restated the terms of the solicitation
How do I respond to an RFP?

Follow the rules!

• Follow all formatting requirements

• If there are little to no formatting requirements, try to mirror the RFP

• Make it easy for the evaluators to find information – ensure all attachments are in the correct order

• Disqualifying actions:
  o Late submission
  o Improper formatting
  o Incomplete responses
  o Poor proposal organization
  o Poorly written
  o Irrelevant past performance
  o Parroting back requirements without discussing methods

Make sure your proposal is easy to read, organized, and professional!
Win or Lose: Always ask for a debrief

- A debriefing is an opportunity for the vendor to meet in-person, talk over the phone, or correspond by email about the outcome of a competitive bid process.

E. Debriefing of Unsuccessful Proposers

Upon written request via email to William Funk, a debriefing will be scheduled with an unsuccessful Proposer after the Library has provided notice of its selection of one or more successful Proposer(s). Discussion will be limited to a critique of the proposal submitted by the Proposer requesting the debriefing. Comparisons between proposals or evaluations of the other proposals will not be discussed. Debriefings may be conducted in person or on the telephone, at the Library’s discretion.
Win or Lose: Always ask for a debrief

• **If you won**
  o Did you win by a large margin, or barely?
  o What were the strengths and weaknesses about your proposal?

• **If you lost**
  o Excellent opportunity to find out where your offer was deficient
  o What could have been better? What do I need to do to ensure I get the next award?
  o Pitch as a back-up to the awardee

• **You should ask for a debriefing ASAP**
To Recap

1. READ READ READ

2. Follow the directions!

3. Create a simple, clear message that adds value

4. Tailor your response to the RFP

5. Keep it professional!
Thank you!

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