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**NIGP FORUM**

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# A Buyer's Guide: How to Prepare for an RFP Evaluation Committee

*Presented by:*

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# AGENDA

## Evaluation Committee/Panel

- **NIGP's Definition**
- **The Purpose**
- **Member Selection**
- **Planning**
- **Pre-Proposal Conference**
- **Vendor Presentations**



# AGENDA

- **Evaluations**
- **Best and Final Offer (BAFO)**
- **Awarding Process**
- **Mandatory Standstill**
- **Wrapping up**



# WHY AN RFP?

An RFP is used when price is a consideration, but not the most weighed factor. Other factors considered include:

- **Qualifications in Relation to Specific Project to be Performed**
- **Experience, Competence, and Capacity for Performance**



# **NIGP'S DEFINITION OF AN EVALUATION COMMITTEE**

## **NIGP DEFINITION #1:**

**A component of the Request For Proposal (RFP) process, whereby a committee is established to conduct interviews and negotiations during proposal evaluation for a specific product or service. Usually is composed of representatives from the functional area identified in the Statement of Work (SOW) and may be chaired by a procurement representative.**



# PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE

The purpose of the committee is to carefully vet a proposal(s) in order to provide a recommendation for award to an Offeror that provides the best possible solution (value) for the entity.



# HOW MANY?

## COMMITTEE SIZE

- The average committee consists of 3-5 members, including the chairperson.
- Circumstances may require a % of the committee be comprised of members that are not part of the entity.

*Always pick the committee before the RFP is released to the Public.*



# CHOOSING MEMBERS

## PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS:

- “Prospective members should be evaluated in these and other areas: previous experience; personal interest; availability; competencies and proficiencies; and ethics.”

**Michael Bevis, CPPO, C.P.M., PMP**



# SELECTION

## SELECT THE COMMITTEE

1. Chairperson
2. Finance
3. End Users
4. Subject Matter Experts
5. Peripheral Departments
6. The Buyer – non-voting facilitator, but if there is a tie the buyer will break the tie.



# SELECTION

## CHAIRPERSON

- Understands the results the entity wants to achieve.
- Listens well and can interpret what the committee members are saying.

## FINANCE

- Reviews the Offerors financials in the proposal and provides their professional opinion as to financial stability of the companies.



# SELECTION

## END USERS

- Who will be using this program, system or services?
- How many should serve on the committee?
- How many from one department?
  - Don't load up!
- Elephant in the room? The BOSS.



# SELECTION

## SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

- Who has working knowledge of what the entity is wishing to purchase? The person who helped write the scope and specifications of the RFP.

## PERIPHERAL DEPARTMENTS

- What other peripheral departments will be impacted by the RFP?



# SELECTION

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Will the community at large be affected by this decision? If so, who should represent them?



# SELECTION

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### – Time

- **Verify all members can commit their time. Some projects could take 3-6 months or even longer.**
- **Members should attend every meeting. Video conferencing or conference calls may be acceptable.**
- **Be organized – your are spending x hours of your organizations time.**



# SELECTION

## FINAL APPROVAL

- After the committee is selected, seek approval by the Purchasing Agent.



# PLANNING

## PREPARATION & PLANNING

- Advance planning is important for the timely and proper conduct of the evaluation process.
- It is recommended that the evaluation panel hold a preparatory/planning meeting before the requested documentation is received. All members of the evaluation panel should understand:



# PLANNING

## PREPARATION & PLANNING

- The process to be followed
- Signing a “no conflict of interest statement”
- How criteria and scoring will be applied
- Legislative constraints
- Responsibilities while serving on the panel
- Timescales for the evaluation process
- The agreement to an evaluation timetable



# PLANNING

## MEETINGS

- Number of meetings depends on the complexity of the RFP and the number of proposals received.
- Estimate 4 hours per vendor presentation, if applicable.
- Create an Agenda and timeline for every meeting.



# MEETING INVITES

## SEND THE FIRST INVITATION

- Use your company’s calendaring system for internal invitations.
- If committee members are external to your organization, send a “return receipt” email and follow up with a phone call.



# INVITATION CONTENT

## WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Include the names and titles of the Evaluation Committee members.
- Reference the RFP number, title and date of release to the public.
- Date/time/location of tentative meetings



# WHAT TO INCLUDE

## AGREEMENT

- **Attach an Evaluation Committee Agreement.**

**All members should sign a declaration of impartiality and non-disclosure or similar kind of declaration before they start to evaluate the submitted documentation.**

**By signing this they are saying they are not associated with any of the Offerors and agrees to not disclose any information to the Offerors or any other person not associated with the evaluation process.**



## EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEMBER AGREEMENT

As a member of an Evaluation Committee I realize the importance of my undertaking and understand the following guidelines for serving as a member of this team:

- I can and will evaluate the proposal responses in a competent, conscientious, and unbiased manner.
- In order to prevent outside interference with the process and maintain an environment of objectivity, I will not discuss the evaluation with those outside of the evaluation team prior to the procurement award. I further understand that if such discussion occurs, I maybe removed from the evaluation team.
- I will maintain my independence in this evaluation but understand that as a team we are striving for a consensus score and will participate in the process to reach that objective.
- I will represent my department and its objectives but *I understand the purpose of this committee is to seek out what is in the best interest of (insert your entity here).*
- If during the evaluation process I feel that I cannot fulfill my obligation to this process, that I will notify the Buyer, and request to be excused from the panel.

I have read and understand the expectations of the Evaluation Committee Agreement:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# AGREEMENT

# WHAT TO INCLUDE

## LAWS

- Include pertinent disclosures:
  - Sunshine Law
    - public record
  - Unlawful activity
    - Sharing competitive bidding information
    - Altering or amending a submitted bid, document or other supporting materials, or bid results



# WHAT TO INCLUDE

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Evaluation criteria listed in the “Consideration for Award Section.”
  - Scoring and rating details must be identified and included in the RFP for evaluation criteria



# WHAT TO INCLUDE

## EVALUATION FORMS

- Attach a copy of the RFP and Evaluation Form.



# EVALUATION FORM

Awards - RFP Weighted Evaluation Forms

EVALUATION SCORE SHEET FOR PROPOSALS  
Weighted 65 / 35 Technical / Cost, adjusted for other factors as noted.

## A. TECHNICAL CRITERIA

	Available Points	Points Awarded
1. Responsiveness of the proposal in clearly stating an understanding of the work to be performed.	45	
a. Responsiveness to RFP requirements.	10	
b. Comprehensiveness of work plan.	20	
c. (1) Realistic time estimates of each element of the RFP and (2) the estimated number of hours for each person assigned.	15	
2. Technical experience of the firm.	20	
a. Expertise in the workers compensation area.	10	
b. Expertise in the insurance industry.	5	
c. References (Include contact documentation if necessary, see compliance checklist. If the Office of the State Auditor has experience with the firm contacting references may not be necessary.)	5	
3. Qualifications of persons assigned to the evaluation. Education, including training received during the past three years, position in the firm, and years and types of experience will be considered. Determined from resumes submitted.	30	
a. Qualifications of supervisory personnel and the evaluation team doing work.	15	
b. Amount and applicability of directly related training.	5	
c. General direction and supervision to be exercised over the evaluation team by the firm's management personnel.	10	
4. Firm size, structure and resources available.	5	
<b>Total Technical Score</b>	<b>100</b>	
Technical Score for this Firm / Highest Technical Score Received =	% x 65 =	

## B. COST:

Lowest Cost of All Bids / Cost of Bid for This Firm =	% x 35 =	
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Technical and cost - Maximum/Actual Points	100	
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C. Clarification of Offers (if necessary, only after initial evaluation meeting)  
In order to determine if a proposal is reasonably susceptible for award, communications by the Procurement Officer are permitted with an offeror to clarify uncertainties or eliminate confusion concerning the contents of a proposal and determine responsiveness to the RFP requirements.



# WHAT TO INCLUDE

## TIMELINES

- RFP Timeline Dates:
  - RFP issued
  - Amendment(s) issued
  - Pre-Proposal Conference (include time/location)
  - Due date of RFP Proposals
  - Committee meeting times
  - Due date of scoring sheets (prior to first meeting)
  - Presentations, if applicable (include time/location)



# WHAT TO INCLUDE

## DOCUMENTS

- Be clear that the RFP and any Addenda must be read and reviewed prior to the first meeting.
- Thank them for their service to their entity.
- Your contact information



# PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE

- **Should the Evaluation Committee attend the Pre-Proposal Conference?**
- **What can they learn from this meeting?**
- **Why is anonymity key?**



# FIRST MEETING

## MEETING AGENDA

- Provide sign-in sheet (required by Sunshine Law).
- Explain the committee's role.
- Collect committee Agreements.
- Provide scoring sheets
- Review proposal(s) – ask for clarifications

**Leave biases at the door!**



# NEXT STEP

**Chairperson will assign member(s) to check at least three references using a standard form. These will be discussed at the second meeting.**



# CHECK REFERENCES

REFERENCE QUESTIONNAIRE Reference Check Form

RFP# XXXX-XX RFP Description

Name of Reference Checker: Kim Hopkins-Will

Proposer: Vendor

Reference person called \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Organization called \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> call date & time: \_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> call date & time: \_\_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> call date & time: \_\_\_\_\_

## Background Information (Warm-up Questions):

What is your current or past business relationship with the proposer?

What product did you purchase from vendor?

Reference Rating Questions: On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest rating and 1 the lowest, how would you rank the following:

How cooperative and responsive was the proposer during the submittal process (schedule, shop drawings, etc.) \_\_\_\_

How satisfied was the owner with daily operations on the project? \_\_\_\_

How effectively did offeror address problems that arose during the project? \_\_\_\_

Did you work out any payment plans when you purchased the item? Yes or No

How satisfied was the owner with the finished product? \_\_\_\_

Would the client hire the Proposer for future work?  YES  NO

Is there anything you care to share with me regarding their product?



# FINANCIALS

- **The Finance staff will check vendor's financials— preferably the last two year's Income Statements and Balance Sheets.**
- **The Finance staff is providing their opinion of the solvency of the entity based off the information provided.**



# CLARIFICATIONS

## CLARIFICATION OF PROPOSALS

**NIGP's Online Dictionary of Procurement Terms,  
Clarification is defined as:**

- **A communication with an Offeror for the sole purpose of eliminating minor irregularities or apparent clerical mistakes in a proposal; may be initiated by either Offeror or purchaser; does not give Offeror an opportunity to revise or modify its proposal, except to the extent the correction of apparent clerical mistakes results in revision.**



# CLARIFICATIONS

## CLARIFICATION OF PROPOSALS

- Any clarification must be in writing and provided to all Offerors, if it applies to all Offerors.
- The evaluation committee must agree on any request for clarification before it is sent.
- Individual panel members are not allowed to contact potential supplier's directly to receive clarification information.



# 2<sup>ND</sup> COMMITTEE MEETING

## MEETING AGENDA

- Provide a sign-in sheet.
- Review vendor references and financial information.
- Review clarifications received from vendors.
  - If available, send information to committee prior to meeting
  - If results of scoring are close and the committee has questions and feels it necessary to bring in the top two/three vendors for presentations, then set up the meetings.



# SHORT LIST

- **Send each shortlisted Offeror an email notating the place/time/location of the meeting.**
- **Provide an agenda and leave enough time for question/answer session from the committee.**
- **Request the Offerors provide the names and titles of the representatives who will be in attendance.**



# BEST AND FINAL OFFER

- After presentations, the committee evaluates the vendors' presentations and reflects the scores accordingly.
- Next, you may send the Offerors a Best and Final Offer (BAFO) letter. This allows the shortlisted vendors to “typically” sweeten their proposal. It is not always price, but possibly adding services they didn't add in the original proposal.
- The BAFO must be evaluated by the Evaluation Committee



# SAMPLE BAFO LETTER

[Vendor Name]

[Address]

Re: RFP# \_\_\_\_\_, [Title]  
Best and Final Offer Notification Letter

Dear [Contact Name]:

I am pleased to advise that [Vendor Name] has been selected as a finalist for the above referenced Request for Proposal (RFP). This is your notice that (insert your entity) is requesting a Best and Final Offer (BAFO).

In accordance with the RFP Events Schedule on page \_\_ of the above referenced RFP, [Vendor Name] is required to submit a Best and Final Offer by 2:00 P.M. Pacific Standard / Savings Time on [Date]. If your firm does not submit the BAFO by the required date and time, they may be eliminated from consideration. The BAFO must be received by the Purchasing Manager by the submission deadline. The BAFO may be submitted by email (Adobe Reader format) with a signed original to follow.

The BAFO requirements follow: (List all items in question or requiring clarification)

Finally, [Vendor Name] is encouraged but not required, to submit an amended cost proposal (RFP Price Form).

If you have any questions concerning the content of this notification letter or the requirements of the Best and Final Offer, please call or email.



# AWARD

- After final reviews of the scores, if there is a clear winner and the committee has reached a consensus to award, document the justification for award and present it to the Purchasing Agent for approval.
- Do not reveal any scores to the Offerors until after an award has been made.

**Note: The Procurement Agent makes the final decision.**



# REPORT

- **A report should be prepared by the chairperson of the evaluation panel with support from the committee members. It should contain:**
  - **Names of the members of the panel**
  - **Description of the contract which is the subject of the evaluation process**
  - **Name of unsuccessful Offerors**
  - **Clear summary of the activities, analysis, and results carried out by the evaluation panel**
  - **Clear justification for the recommendation that is being made**
  - **Attachment of all documentation drawn up by the evaluation panel during the performance of its task.**



# AWARD NOTICE

- **Once the award approval has been given, the contracting authority shall notify the successful Offeror in writing that their submission has been accepted for contract award. All other Offerors must also be notified of the final decision to award.**



# MANDATORY STANDSTILL

- Always keep good notes and have the committee members keep their materials until past this time.
- Following written notice of award, a Mandatory Standstill period (3-15 calendar days depending on applicable law and practice) must elapse between the award notification and signing of the contract. Once the standstill period has passed, the contracting authority may continue with the conclusion of the contract in accordance with the conditions that were set forth in the contract notification/solicitation documents.



# WRAPPING UP

- **Binder Recycling**
- **Shred documents when applicable**
- **Always recycle when possible.**
- **Keep a copy of all of the original documents, including the unsuccessful proposals in the RFP box.**



# THANK THE COMMITTEE

- Remember to thank the Evaluation Committee members for their service to their entity.

*Thank You*



# **SPEAKER CONTACT INFO**

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