

## **Guidance on Purchases Between \$10,000 and \$25,000 Posting Simplified Acquisition Solicitations on the Web**

The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) requires that, if a written solicitation will be used for a proposed purchase expected to exceed \$10,000, but not expected to exceed \$25,000, the contracting officer must display a notice on a public bulletin board or Web site. ED posts these notices on the OCF&CIO Web site.

Prepare notice - The Executive Office prepares the notice in accordance with FAR 5.101(a)(2). A copy of the solicitation (e.g., a RFQ) may be used as the notice. Creating a RFQ in CPSS and using a "snapshot," of it as the notice is usually the simplest and fastest method. The FAR requires that the notice:

- Include a clear and concise description of the supplies or services required;
- Not restrict competition unnecessarily;
- State that all responsible vendors may submit a quotation which, if timely received, will be considered by the agency;
- Be informative enough to allow a vendor to make an informed business judgment as to whether a copy of the solicitation should be requested;
- Give vendors a reasonable amount of time to request a solicitation and submit a quotation;
- Alert vendors to any unusual circumstances.

In accordance with the FAR, the notice must be posted not later than the date the solicitation is issued and that it remain posted for at least 10 days or until after quotations have been opened, whichever is later. However, the FAR does not prohibit the contracting officer from establishing a response date that is less than 10 days after the notice was posted, as long as the contracting officer allowed vendors a "reasonable time" to respond to the solicitation.

E-mail notice to CPO - The Executive Office e-mails the notice and any related materials to Gary Weaver in the Office of the Director of Contracts and Purchasing Operations (CPO). CPO greatly appreciates advance notice of upcoming postings. The Executive Office includes the following files as attachments to an e-mail:

- *Solicitation Description File* - A file containing the solicitation number (if any), solicitation title, quotation/proposal due date, brief description of solicitation, address to which proposals should be sent, and names and formats of any attached files.
- *Statement of Work (SOW)* - An ASCII file of the SOW, if one will be used. The SOW may be created with a word processor and then saved as an ?ASCII DOS Text? file.
- *RFQ or other solicitation* - An ASCII file of the RFQ or other solicitation (e.g. a letter to

potential vendors). The Executive Office produces the file by preparing the RFQ in CPSS and taking a "snapshot" of it. A separate notice may be posted in lieu of posting the solicitation.

- *A separate notice* - If the solicitation will not be posted on the Web, the Executive Office prepares a separate notice and attaches it as an ASCII file.
- *Attachments* - Any additional files vendors may need to develop quotes or proposals, such as deliverable descriptions, past performance forms, pricing spreadsheets, statutes, etc. These files may be in their native formats (e.g., MS-Word, Lotus 1-2-3, Excel, WordPerfect, etc.) or may be converted to ASCII, HTML or RTF. Adobe PDF format is not preferred, since it is incompatible with most software readers for the blind.

CPO posts notice - CPO reviews the notice. If any changes are needed. CPO will assist the Executive Office. CPO then posts the notice and related documents on the Web. It normally takes less than two days to post solicitations on the web, if all files are received. After files have been posted, CPO sends the Executive Office a confirmation via e-mail. Executive Offices may wish to verify the posting on the web site as a safeguard.

Issue solicitation - As soon as the notice is posted on the Web, the Executive Office may issue the solicitation. The Executive Office may wish to send a copy of the solicitation to three vendors, in case vendors do not respond to the Web posting.

Keep CPO informed - The Executive Office informs CPO of any amendments or other changes regarding the procurement or files (e.g., if the closing date has changed). The Executive Office notifies CPO when the files should be removed from the Web site. CPO moves postings to an archive area, where they remain accessible on the Web.

Proceed with award - The Executive Office completes the purchase and awards an order to the selected vendor.

<sup>1</sup>A written solicitation may be a request for quotations (RFQ) or simply a letter request. A written statement of work followed by an oral request for a quotation would also be considered a written solicitation.

<sup>2</sup>If no written solicitation will be used, the contracting officer need not comply with the posting requirements. Thus, when oral solicitations are used, i.e., phone calls are made to get quotes, no notice or solicitation needs to be posted on the Web page.

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