Creating Responsive Proposals

Presented by Lillian Sunwall - GF PTAC Director

Module 3: Execution

– Organizing a responsive proposal
Workshop Overview

Four Weeks – 4 Modules

**Module 1** - The Preliminaries (Learning the “rules of the road”)
-  Wednesday, February 23rd - *Completed*

**Module 2** – Preparation (Getting Ready to Write a Proposal)
-  Wednesday, March 2nd - *Completed*

**Module 3** – Execution (Organizing a responsive proposal)
-  Today, March 10th

**Module 4** – Follow-up (Building a relationship, win or lose)
-  Wednesday, March 16th

*(Exercises (8 along the way!) Putting what you learn into practice)*
Execution

Here’s what we’re going to cover today:

- Reading RFP (Request for Proposal).
- Digesting SOW (scope of work).
- Determining your potential.
- Understanding T&C (Terms and Conditions).
- Mastering evaluation criteria.
- Assigning responsibilities/schedule.
- Following, Completing, Submitting
Execution

Reading the RFP Document:

- Read and re-read it!
- Assume nothing.
- Understand everything.
- If given the opportunity, submit questions.
- Order any specs and standards immediately.

**Bonus:** Be aware of the type of solicitation and type of pricing.

(next 4 slides ...)
Recognize there are different forms of solicitation documents:

- Sources Sought (market survey)
- Pre-solicitation
- Combined Synopsis/Solicitation
- Solicitation
- Request for Proposal (RFP)
- Invitation to Bid (IFB)
- Request for Quote (RFQ)
Special process for A&E services

Architectural/Engineering services are solicited differently.

Multi-stage process:

✓ Submit proposals.

✓ Gov’t makes “short list” of qualified firms/teams.

✓ Firms/teams interviewed and ranked.

✓ Price is then negotiated with firm/team ranked #1.
Pricing Types

**Fixed price:**
- Most common; government prefers.

**Cost:**
- Used only when cost can’t be fixed.
  - *(Examples: Cost Reimbursement, Incentive Fee, Time & Material.)*

*The solicitation document will tell you which form of pricing is expected.*
Risks in relation to contract types

Risks and Contract Types

- Seller’s Risk
  - High
- Buyer’s Risk
  - High

- FFP
- FP/EPA
- FPI
- LH
- T&M
- CS
- CR
- CPIF
- CPFF
- CPPC

- Buyer’s Risk
  - Low
- Seller’s Risk
  - Low

- Fixed-Price
- T&M
- Cost-Reimbursement
Digest the Statement of Work (SOW):

- Make sure you can perform all the work.
- If not, call in others who can assist.
- Begin to articulate *why you should be awarded the contract* ...
- ... And plan to incorporate this thinking into your proposal.
- ... And be prepared to *rate yourself objectively* against any evaluation criteria.
Execution

Determine your potential:

- Opportunity consistent with your business plan?
- Adequate capacity, equipment, personnel?
- Sufficient Experience?
- Can you beat the competition?
- Manageable Risk?
- Can you make money?
- Make a “Go/No-Go” decision
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bid Factors</th>
<th>Bid Factor Scoring Scale</th>
<th>Estimated Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Are you known by the client?</td>
<td>Unknown to this client</td>
<td>Known to client, but not fully cultivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is this the first you heard of procurement?</td>
<td>Did not expect RFP; unprepared</td>
<td>Generally up-to-date; no major negatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is our overall technical capability/position?</td>
<td>Not qualified; weak relevant experience</td>
<td>Capable; understand problem; experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Can we provide proof of qualified staff?</td>
<td>Limited in-house staff available</td>
<td>Good in-house staff available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are subcontractors needed?</td>
<td>Yes, but will dilute position</td>
<td>Yes, but will have little or no effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What is the financial potential?</td>
<td>Marginal long term; no short term return</td>
<td>Good long term; questionable short term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Can we respond with a complete, compelling proposal?</td>
<td>Unclear understanding of problem/project needs; limited response</td>
<td>Understand problems, project &amp; client needs; can respond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Who are our competitors?</td>
<td>Competitor is strongly favored or UNKNOWN</td>
<td>Open competition with no strong favorite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Is project within our geographic region?</td>
<td>Poor geographic presence/experience</td>
<td>Good geographic presence/experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What is our pricing competitiveness?</td>
<td>Must cut corners; cost share; risky</td>
<td>Reasonable &amp; competitive; reasonable risks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total score of factors evaluated

Maximum potential score (number of factors evaluated times 10)

Decision (Total score should be about 75%+ of maximum score for a “Go” decision, or better than the top competitor.)
Execution

Understand the Terms and Conditions:

- Often called the “boilerplate.”
- Don’t discount their importance.
- No shortcuts – read (T’s & C’s).
- Do your Research.
- The government expects you to understand T’s & C’s.
Execution

Master the evaluation (selection) criteria:

- Understand the grounds for selection.
- Evaluate as if you are the Buyer.
- No shortcuts – read (T’s & C’s).
- Keep selection criteria available.
- Incorporate into your proposal.
Execution

Assign responsibilities & update schedule:

- Know everyone’s roles, who’s in charge, deadlines.
- Update schedule daily.
- Establish back-up plans.
- Allow time for delivery.
- Use Gant chart.
### Proposal Preparation - SOL # A-07-12345

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent Complete</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>November</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>Read RFP, Prepare Questions</td>
<td>10/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>11/6</td>
<td>Submit questions to agency.</td>
<td>10/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11/2</td>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>Assign proposal team.</td>
<td>10/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>Attend pre-proposal conference.</td>
<td>10/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11/3</td>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>Prepare technical proposal.</td>
<td>11/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>Prepare price proposal.</td>
<td>11/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>11/20</td>
<td>Blue team review and feedback.</td>
<td>11/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11/20</td>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>Red team scoring and feedback.</td>
<td>11/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>Revisions.</td>
<td>11/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>Final assembly of proposal for delivery.</td>
<td>11/30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Execution

Follow all instructions, complete proposal, submit:

- Attention to detail – paramount!

- Proposal-writing instructions in RFP.
  - RFP – section L or M in federal RFPs.

- Proposal judged now as your work later.

- If requirement is 10 questions, answer 10.
  - Not 9 or 11.

- You can’t be late!
 Execution

✓ 10 Proposal Writing Tips:
  ▪ We’re not here to teach a course on English
  ▪ Must have a good writer on the team!

✓ 10 Insights about How Proposal Reviewers Operate:
  ▪ Understand how they think, and you’ll write a better proposal!
Summary/Review

**What we just covered:**

- **Reading** the RFP thoroughly.
- **Understanding** the SOW.
- **Objectively** assessing your potential to win.
- **Mastering** the selection criteria.
- **Scheduling** proposal prep process.
- **Following** all instructions.
- **Writing** tips and insights.
An Exercise

Putting what You learned into Practice

RFP

Avalanche Control
Skagway, Alaska
AVALANCHE CONTROL – SKAGWAY, ALASKA

OFFERORS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO RETURN THIS FORM.

Important Notice: If you received this solicitation from the State of Alaska’s “Online Public Notice” web site, you must register with the procurement officer listed in this document to receive subsequent amendments. Failure to contact the procurement officer may result in the rejection of your offer.

ISSUED BY: Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Division of Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS)

AVALANCHE CONTROL SKAGWAY, ALASKA
RFP 2519S030
Issued October 5, 2019

This RFP is intended to result in the award of a contract to provide an avalanche specialist to assist ADOT&PF in developing and conducting an avalanche control program for the Klondike Highway in Skagway, Alaska.

SEC. 1.01 PURPOSE OF THE RFP
The Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), Division of Maintenance & Operations (M&O) is soliciting proposals from qualified offerors to provide an avalanche specialist to assist ADOT&PF in developing and conducting an avalanche control program for the Klondike Highway in Skagway, Alaska. The avalanche specialist must be proficient in avalanche forecasting, physically able to...
access appropriate snow fields and dig test pits, experienced and knowledgeable in the operation of the Falcon GT avalauncher and experienced in developing avalanche control programs.

It has become clear that the escalating use of the highway has increased the Avalanche Hazard Index from index values near fifty, as calculated in the 1987 study when scaled to 150 vehicles per day, to index values exceeding one hundred when scaled to 750 vehicles per day in April 2013. Acceptable standards and prudence dictate that any roadway where the avalanche hazard index approaches or exceeds one hundred be watched by a full-time avalanched specialist.

Successful performance of this contract will require the avalanche specialist to be on location in Skagway, Alaska and on the Klondike Highway during the winter period from January 15 through May 15 each year.

SEC. 1.08 RETURN INSTRUCTIONS
Offerors must submit One (1) hard copy original of their proposal, in writing, and TWO CDs or thumb drives containing an electronic copy of the entire proposal. One CD or thumb drive will contain the transmittal information and the technical proposal. One CD or thumb drive will contain the cost proposal. The proposal response should be addressed to the procurement officer in a sealed package. The cost proposal included with the package must be sealed separately from the rest of the proposal and must be clearly identified.

Emailed, faxed or oral proposals will not be accepted. An offeror’s failure to submit its proposal prior to the deadline will cause the proposal to be disqualified. Late proposals or amendments will not be opened or accepted for evaluation.

Please take into consideration that due to weather, scheduling, and location there is no overnight delivery service to Juneau, Alaska.

DELIVERABLES
The Contractor will perform the following tasks:
1. Assess avalanche hazard daily, produce a forecast for AK DOT&PF operations, and recommend course of action appropriate for level of hazard.
2. Take daily weather observations and continuously monitor weather for effects on snow stability.
3. Observe, record, and analyze activity on the Klondike Highway corridor (approximately mile post 6 to 14).
4. Periodically dig snow pits, perform snow stability tests in representative avalanche starting zones and track snowpack metamorphism.
5. Establish and maintain a database of weather and snow observations.
6. Recommend method of avalanche control required and coordinate road closure and manpower logistics with station foreman, supervisors, and other agencies as needed.
7. Work with DOT lead gunner on Falcon GT avalancher fire missions; assist in determining target selection, number of rounds, gun mount sequencing, and road closure “windows”; responsible for crew safety, upkeep of required documentation of explosives program.
8. Working with the DOT Skagway foreman and crew; coordinate avalanche cleanup activities and subsequent road opening for safety of the crew and public.
9. Recommend procurement of avalanche rescue and personal safety equipment. Ensure its availability and functionality by periodic testing, inventory and maintenance.
10. Conduct weekly avalanche forecasting training (including field techniques) to a crew of up to six personnel.
11. Conduct training in Falcon GT avalancher firing and safety procedures and record keeping, for a crew of up to six personnel. Train personnel in basic avalanche safety: the nature of avalanches, local avalanche terrain, operating safely in avalanche areas, and avalanche response and rescue.
12. Refining the firing table (position, pressure, elevation, and azimuth) for up to five avalanche control locations on Klondike Highway.

SEC. 4.01 PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT
The state discourages overly lengthy and costly proposals, however, in order for the state to evaluate proposals fairly and completely, offerors must follow the format set out in this RFP and provide all information requested.

The following instructions describe the format of how the offeror’s proposals should be assembled, and the order in which the proposal is be submitted. These instructions are provided to ensure a complete submission of the information necessary for an equitable analysis and evaluation of proposals submitted in response to this RFP. Each offeror must provide every component listed below, in the order shown, using the format described for each component. A proposal may be rejected if it is incomplete or conditional in nature.
The RFP response will contain three (3) sections: (1) Proposal Transmittal with Checklist, (2) Technical Component, and (3) Cost Proposal.

Proposal Transmittal

The following summary provides the required content and sequential order in which proposals are to be presented. For easier identification of RFP requirements and documentation, DOT&PF recommends that all proposals are assembled as indicated in this section. An offeror’s failure to include these items in their proposal may cause their proposal to be determined non-responsive and the proposal may be rejected. At the discretion of the offeror, other items not identified may be supplied with the proposal if the offeror feels that the additional information is pertinent to their proposal response. This list is not all inclusive.

The following information MUST be addressed in the letter or as an attachment within the transmittal section.

- Authorized signature (Section 1.09 (a))
- Offeror’s Certification A-H (Section 1.09 (b))
- Vendor Tax ID proof OR Vendor Tax ID number (Section 1.09 (c))
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure (Section 1.09 (d))
- Federal Requirements (Section 1.09 (e))
- Review Insurance Requirements (Section 3.16)
- Valid Alaska Business License Proof (Section 6.02)
- Alaskan Bidder’s Preference Statement <if applicable> (Section 6.12)
- Alaskan Veteran Preference Statement <if applicable> (Section 6.13)
- Review & Agree to Standard Contract Provisions (Section 7.01)
- Disclosure of Proposal Contents <if applicable> Section 7.07
- RFP Amendments: All amendments issued for this RFP that require acknowledgement must be signed and included with the proposal [enclose only required signed amendments].
- RFP Submittal Checklist: The checklist is an integral part of the RFP; it must be signed and be included in the Proposal Transmittal Section (Attachment #6).
Technical Component

- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Prior Experience Evidence (Section 1.05)
- Experience and Qualifications (Section 4.03)

Overall Technical Proposal Contents: The technical proposal must include the information outlined in Section 1.05 Prior Experience, and Section 4.03 Experience and Qualifications of this RFP. All proposals will be evaluated against Section 5 of this RFP. At a minimum, the following sections must be addressed within the Technical Proposal. No cost information may be included in the technical proposal.

- 4.03 – Experience and Qualifications
- 1.05 - Contractor’s Prior Experience Evidence of Qualifications

Cost Proposal

1. Title Page: Title page must include the name of the Company/Firm submitting the proposal, RFP Title, RFP number, Proposal Due Date, and must be labeled as Cost Proposal.

2. Cost Proposal Contents: The Cost Proposal included with the package must be sealed separately from the rest of the proposal and must be clearly identified and submitted based on the instructions provided in Section 1.08 and Section 4.04 of this RFP.

SEC. 5.01 EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS (50%)

Proposals will be evaluated against the questions set out below:

1) Do the individuals assigned to the project have experience with establishing avalanche control programs?

2) Do the individuals assigned to the project have experience with avalanche forecasting?

3) Do the individuals assigned to the project have experience with the use of an avalauncher, especially the Falcon GT and/or other explosive charges used for snow blasting and avalanche control?

4) Do the individuals assigned to the project have experience with training avalanche forecasting and avalanche safety procedures?
SEC. 5.02 CONTRACT COST (40%)
Overall, a minimum of 40% of the total evaluation points for each lot will be assigned to cost. The cost amount used for evaluation may be affected by one or more of the preferences referenced under Section 6.11.

Converting Cost to Points
The lowest cost proposal will receive the maximum number of points allocated to cost. The point allocations for cost on the other proposals will be determined through the method set out in Section 6.16.

SEC. 5.03 ALASKA OFFEROR PREFERENCE (10%)
If an offeror qualifies for the Alaska Bidder Preference, the offeror will receive an Alaska Offeror Preference. The preference will be 10% of the total available points. This amount will be added to the overall evaluation score of each Alaskan offeror.

SEC. 6.05 DISCUSSIONS WITH OFFERORS
The state may conduct discussions with offerors in accordance with AS 36.30.240 and 2 AAC 12.290. The purpose of these discussions will be to ensure full understanding of the requirements of the RFP and proposal. Discussions will be limited to specific sections of the RFP or proposal identified by the procurement officer. Discussions will only be held with offerors who have submitted a proposal deemed reasonably susceptible for award by the procurement officer. Discussions, if held, will be after initial evaluation of proposals by the procurement officer or the PEC. If modifications are made as a result of these discussions, they will be put in writing. Following discussions, the procurement officer may set a time for best and final proposal submissions from those offerors with whom discussions were held. Proposals may be reevaluated after receipt of best and final proposal submissions.

If an offeror does not submit a best and final proposal or a notice of withdrawal, the offeror’s immediate previous proposal is considered the offeror’s best and final proposal.

SEC. 6.07 CONTRACT NEGOTIATION
After final evaluation, the procurement officer may negotiate with the offeror of the highest-ranked proposal. Negotiations, if held, shall be within the scope of the request for proposals and limited to those items which would not have an effect on the ranking of proposals. If the highest-ranked offeror fails to provide necessary information for negotiations in a timely manner, or fails to negotiate in good faith, the state may terminate negotiations and negotiate with the offeror of the next highest-ranked proposal. If contract negotiations are commenced, they may be held in the Administrative Services Director’s conference room on the 3rd floor of the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities Building in Juneau, Alaska.

If the contract negotiations take place in Juneau, Alaska, the offeror will be responsible for their travel and per diem expenses.
Exercise

**RFP - Avalanche Control**

1. What must be done to make sure you receive amendments to the RFP?

2. Since this work simply involves “avalanche forecasting,” no one actually has to be on site, correct?

3. Is emailing the proposal okay?

4. Since the State is going to hold discussions and negotiations, can I use those steps to “clean up” any shortcomings in my proposal?
Upcoming Workshops

Next Week – 1 Module Remaining

**Module 4** – Follow-up (Building a relationship, win or lose)
✓ Wednesday, March 16th
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Thank You!