

2.104 Request for Proposal

(For procurement of construction, an IFB must be used; refer to [Policy 2.105 Invitation for Bid \(For the Procurement of Construction\)](#).)

The purpose of a Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit bids with specific functional or technical requirements that will allow the Project to make a selection based on the best suited proposal, rather than price alone.

I. Details of Policy

An RFP should only be used when it is necessary to establish the basis for selection of a product, equipment, or service on factors other than the lowest price. Factors such as vendor qualifications, service quality, subject matter expertise, and financial stability may contribute to the selection of the best proposal. Typically, this occurs in acquisitions meeting the following criteria.

- A. They involve products, equipment, or services with highly technical, specialized, and complex specifications that need to be produced or developed, or where all specifications are not known or no one vendor is expected to meet all specifications and an award will be based on “best fit” in addition to price;
- B. Clear and concise specifications are not available; or
- C. It is necessary to select a vendor based on an evaluation of factors (e.g., experience, track record) in addition to price.

Since vendor selection under an RFP is not based solely on price, the [Attachment 1 Determination of Cost or Price Reasonableness](#) form is required for all RFPs. Under no circumstance should an RFP be used to acquire “off the shelf” or otherwise standard and typical items (e.g., office supplies and office furniture).

A Request for Quotation (RFQ) should be used when the detailed specifications for the goods or services are known and can be easily described, such that the awarding of the contract will be based solely on price. For additional guidance, refer to [Policy 2.103 Request for Quotation](#).

II. Responsibilities

A. Principal Investigator

1. Develop a draft RFP. Provide a draft RFP to the FA (any dollar amount) and RCUH Procurement (if \$25,000 or greater) for review.
2. Work with the FA to post and distribute the RFP, and during the subsequent RFP award process.

B. Fiscal Administrator

Work with the Principal Investigator to (a) develop a draft RFP, (b) issue the RFP, and (c) award the contract to the highest ranked offeror.

III. RFP Format and Content

The following items should be included in an RFP:

- A. Notice to Offerors** – This serves as a legal notice and includes instructions and information on the date, time, and location where the RFP can be obtained and submitted. The contact information provided in the RFP should be the project's contact information. The notice should contain instructions and information to offerors, including pre-proposal conferences, question and answer sessions, if any, and the date, time, location, and preferred means of submission for all proposals. All RFPs must be adequately publicized via the Project's website and other appropriate means (e.g., sending the RFP to a pre-qualified short list, publication in newspaper of general circulation, SuperQUOTE, etc.). Solicitations must contain all necessary RCUH requirements for an RFP, and clearly state that an award will be made by RCUH to the highest evaluated or ranked proposal.
- B. Administrative Overview** – Provide an explanation of the solicitation, schedule of key dates, guidelines to be followed, and administrative information that may include disqualification of proposals, listing of contact persons, priority listing of offerors, best and final offers (if applicable), etc.
- C. Statement of Work** – This section describes what is being solicited and identifies the scope of work to be performed. The contents should explain all requirements in detail and may include major areas such as overview, project objectives, description of requirements and deliverables, schedule and timeline, technical specifications of the goods or services to be procured, analysis of the current environment, reports that may be required, responsibilities of the contractor, and minimum and desirable qualifications of the vendor.
- D. Proposal Requirements** – Provide details and explain what the prospective vendor must submit. The objective is to obtain consistent proposals from vendors so that a valid comparison of competing proposals can be made. This section may include an introduction, a requirement for a proposal letter, a discussion of the offeror's background or experience, a personnel listing of staff assignments, the offeror's

approach or plan in fulfilling the requirements and timeline/deadlines, a requirement for samples of the offeror's work product, a request for references and professional contacts, and a price proposal that includes detailed cost breakdowns. The RFP must clearly identify the information and/or items to be submitted with a proposal, and all the factors to be used in evaluating proposals, including any appendices.

- E. Evaluation of Proposals and Basis for Award** – The basis for determining the best qualified offeror must be disclosed in the RFP. The RFP must identify all of the requirements an offeror must fulfill and all the factors and/or criteria to be used in evaluating proposals, as well as the corresponding scoring and/or relative weighting of each criteria and/or factor. This criteria should be appropriate for the product and/or service required, and may include an assessment of the offeror's qualifications and experience, references and prior relevant work experience, the offeror's plan or approach to accomplish the scope of work within the stated timeline, and the price or cost of the proposal. When appropriate, consideration should be given to the offeror's integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources.
- F. General and Special Conditions** – The RFP should identify the contractual terms and conditions applicable to the procurement, including a copy of either the standard RCUH Attachment [8a](#) or [8b](#) Agreement for Services terms and conditions. It is important to inform each offeror of any special requirements that will be imposed (e.g., standards of conduct, federal certifications, liability or professional insurance requirements, warranty provisions, disclaimers, etc.).
- G. Proprietary Information** – The RFP should contain a statement that offerors may designate in writing portions of the proposal that contain trade secrets or other proprietary information that should remain confidential, subject to disclosure laws, and that the material so designated should be readily and easily separable from the proposal to facilitate the disclosure of non-confidential information.

The applicable Attachment [56a](#) or [56b](#) Request for Proposal Template is available as a starting point for the preparation of an RFP. The gray highlights in the template indicate areas in which wording specific to your proposal should be inserted. The RFP should be tailored to meet the needs of the procurement.

IV. Preparing an RFP

When preparing an RFP, the following steps should be followed:

- A. Use either the Attachment [56a](#) or [56b](#) Request for Proposal Template as a starting point.** The RCUH standard RFP template uses gray highlights to indicate places where information specific to your RFP needs to be inserted.
- B. Administrative Overview (Section 1 of the RFP template)**
 - 1. Determine your timetable for the steps in the RFP process (Section 1.2 of the RFP template).

2. Decide on the email address to be used to receive questions from potential offerors about the RFP (Section 1.4 of the RFP template), or other method(s) to receive questions.
3. Decide on a website address where the questions and answers will be posted (Section 1.4 of the RFP template), or other method(s) for dissemination. As an alternative method, develop a form for providing updated questions and responses, using the same dissemination method that was used for the RFP.
4. Decide on a physical address and/or email address where the proposals are to be submitted (Section 1.10 of the RFP template).

C. Write a Statement of Work (Section 2 of the RFP template), and review the Statement of Work to ensure that it is clear, concise and complete. Ensure that the following are included:

1. Detailed description of deliverables, including detailed specifications, as necessary.
2. Deadline for each deliverable.
3. Acceptance criteria for each deliverable.
4. Warranty requirements, if applicable.
5. Requirements that the vendor provide training, if applicable.
6. Requirements that the vendor provide operating manuals or other documentation, if applicable.

D. Write the Proposal Requirements (Section 3 of the RFP template).

1. Use the structure in Section 3 of the RFP template. For each subsection of the Proposal Requirements, include detailed instructions, such that those responding to the RFP are required to provide exactly the information you desire in the format you desire.
2. If you have written a detailed Statement of Work, the Technical (Section 3.1.2 of the RFP template) and Schedule (Section 3.1.3 of the RFP template) portions of the Proposal Requirements can, for the most part, refer back to the Statement of Work.
3. For the Price Proposal instructions (Section 3.1.5 of the RFP template), require detailed information that includes the quantity and unit cost of the components of the goods or services, or a detailed budget with all cost elements. For the procurement of services, require the number of hours, rate type and hourly rate for each person in a spreadsheet format. This will enable you to verify the calculation of the total price proposed. Also consider including a template for the format you require.

4. References (Appendix C of Section 3.1.6 of the RFP template) – Decide how many references to require, and how many years of prior similar contracts you would like to see listed by the offeror.

E. Write the Criteria for Evaluation (Section 4 of the RFP template).

1. If possible, choose the evaluation committee (at least three (3) individuals) prior to writing the Criteria for Evaluation. The evaluation committee must have adequate qualifications in the subject matter of the procurement (skills and knowledge about the scope of work), and should provide input for determining the details of the scoring method and/or participate in a draft version of the Criteria for Evaluation. All members of the committee must attest to their impartiality by completing [Attachment 52 Affidavit Serving on an Evaluation, Review, or Selection Committee](#).
2. Develop and finalize the scoring method that will be used to evaluate the proposals. Determine how to assign the maximum number of points to each category (e.g., technical, price, references, qualifications, etc.).
3. Within each category, you may want to assign points on a more detailed basis, especially in the technical category.
4. All items listed in the Proposal Requirements should be included in the Criteria for Evaluation and scored in accordance with the scoring method described.
5. Determine whether there are any criteria that you consider “pass/fail” criteria. Typically, failing one such criterion would render a proposal non-responsive.
6. Include a detailed description of the scoring method in the RFP.
7. If you anticipate that you may want to have offerors make presentations to the evaluation committee, this requirement must be stated in the RFP (Section 4.5 of the RFP template). Presentations are highly desirable when it is important to meet the offerors’ personnel who will be providing the services and with whom you will be working closely throughout the duration of the project.
8. If possible, develop and finalize the evaluation form (the Project must have a formal, written method for conducting evaluations of the proposals received and for selecting the awardee based on the scoring criteria and factors provided in the RFP). The reason for doing this now, rather than after the RFP has been issued, is that in many cases developing the evaluation form brings to light details that will cause you to revise how the evaluation criteria is described. Refer to the [Attachment 53 Sample Proposal Evaluation Form](#) for guidance. Note, however, that each project should tailor the point/weight assignment and evaluation criteria based on the project’s RFP and individual requirements.

- F. Based on the estimated dollar value of the proposed Statement of Work, establish the appropriate levels of internal administrative review of the draft RFP by the PI’s research unit.**

- G. If the estimated dollar value is \$25,000 or greater, RCUH Procurement must review the RFP before it is issued.
- H. Issue the RFP. Prior to issuance, details about the RFP should remain confidential.

V. Evaluation of Proposals and Awarding of the Contract

When evaluating a proposal and awarding a contract, the following steps should be followed (note that RCUH must approve the selection prior to an award being made):

- A. **Form the evaluation committee** if this was not completed at the time the Criteria for Evaluation was created (see Section IV.E.1, above), and have each committee member sign [Attachment 52 Affidavit Serving on an Evaluation, Review, or Selection Committee](#).
- B. **Prepare the evaluation form** if this was not completed at the time the Criteria for Evaluation was created (see Section IV.E.8, above).
- C. **Perform the initial proposal evaluation** – Have each committee member carefully review each proposal. As part of the evaluation process, the committee may ask offerors questions or request information to clarify their proposals. However, the purpose of the inquiry is solely to clarify information already in the proposal. No new information can be accepted from the offeror.
- D. **Score each proposal.**
 - 1. Use the evaluation form to score each proposal.
 - 2. Individual vs. Group Scoring – At the project’s discretion, each committee member may individually score each proposal, or the committee may meet to score each proposal together, resulting in one group score for each proposal. However, it is generally recommended that the scoring be done individually, followed by compiling a combined score of all individual scores.
 - 3. If individual scoring is performed, prepare a summary selection sheet that lists the individual scores and the combined score.
- E. **Require oral presentations if needed.** If the project would like the option to require oral presentations, the following language (or similar acceptable language) must be included in Section 4.5 of the RFP template: “Following the scoring and ranking of proposals, RCUH may elect to have the offerors make presentations of their proposals to RCUH; however, no new information can be presented. If there are more than three (3) proposals submitted, RCUH may elect to limit the number of offerors eligible to make presentations, to a priority list of offerors (comprised of at least the three (3) highest ranked qualified offerors). If, after presentations by the offerors, RCUH determines that an amendment to the RFP is needed, the offerors will be permitted to submit a new proposal or amend their first proposal, which will be considered their best and final offer (BAFO), and rescored.”

- F. Prepare a revised summary selection sheet and have each committee member sign (if V.E. applies).
- G. The Fiscal Administrator/Designated University Official (FA/DUO) must review the RFP, the preliminarily selected proposal, and the summary selection sheet. The FA/DUO should ensure that (1) the preliminarily selected proposal is responsive to the RFP, (2) the scope of work is allowable under the award, and (3) the summary selection sheet is mathematically accurate and the scoring follows the method described in the RFP.
- H. Submit hard or electronic copies of the following to RCUH Procurement for review and approval (this is required for all procurements via RFP of \$25,000 or greater):
 - 1. RFP
 - 2. All summary selection sheets
 - 3. Highest scored proposal
 - 4. [Attachment 52 Affidavit Serving on an Evaluation, Review, or Selection Committee](#)
- I. Award the contract to the highest ranked, responsive, and responsible offeror whose proposal is determined in writing to provide the best value to RCUH (taking into consideration price and the evaluation criteria provided in the RFP and the final scoring outcome), after approval by the FA/DUO and RCUH Procurement.
 - 1. Ensure that the scope of work is consistent with the RFP and awardee's proposal.
 - 2. Ensure that the terms and conditions are consistent with the RFP. The RCUH RFP template includes the General Conditions and Special Conditions from the standard RCUH Agreement for Services template.
- J. If a debriefing is requested in writing by a non-selected offeror, inform RCUH Procurement. The debriefing can be conducted by the PI.
- K. Ensure that the Project's final procurement file (hard or electronic) includes the following and is retained for the same retention period as the project file:
 - 1. Method used to disseminate the RFP.
 - 2. List of vendors to whom the RFP was distributed, including the method used for their selection.
 - 3. All formal written communications (questions and answers).
 - 4. Reference verification notes.
 - 5. All offeror proposals (original or copy).
 - 6. A description of the criteria used to determine who was invited to make a presentation.

7. BAFOs (if applicable).
8. Proposal evaluation forms and a summary selection sheet signed by all evaluation committee members.
9. Committee members signed [Attachment 52 Affidavit Serving on an Evaluation, Review, or Selection Committee](#).
10. RFP and any addenda.
11. Executed contract resulting from the RFP.

VI. Relevant Documents

[Attachment 1 Determination of Cost or Price Reasonableness](#)

[Attachment 8a Agreement for Services \(UH\)](#)

[Attachment 8b Agreement for Services \(Direct Projects\)](#)

[Attachment 52 Affidavit Serving on an Evaluation, Review, or Selection Committee](#)

[Attachment 53 Sample Proposal Evaluation Form](#)

[Attachment 55 Request for Proposal \(RFP\) Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)

[Attachment 56a Request for Proposal Template \(UH\)](#)

[Attachment 56b Request for Proposal Template \(Direct Projects\)](#)

[Attachment 56a Request for Proposal Template \(UH\) SuperQUOTE](#)

[Attachment 56b Request for Proposal Template \(Direct Projects\) SuperQUOTE](#)

[Policy 2.103 Request for Quotation](#)

[Policy 2.105 Invitation for Bid \(For the Procurement of Construction\)](#)

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