

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS**

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES GOVERNING REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS

A. General

1. This solicitation document, the evaluation of proposals, and the award of any contract shall conform with current competitive bidding procedures as they relate to the procurement of goods and services. A vendor's proposal is an irrevocable offer for 30 days following the deadline for its submission.
2. A nondiscrimination clause will be included in any contract that ensues from this solicitation document.
3. In addition to explaining the State's requirements, the solicitation document includes instructions that prescribe the format and content of proposals.

B. Errors in the solicitation document

1. If a vendor submitting a proposal discovers any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other error in this solicitation document, the vendor shall immediately provide the State with written notice of the problem and request that the solicitation document be clarified or modified. Without disclosing the source of the request, the State may modify the solicitation document prior to the date fixed for submission of proposals by issuing an addendum to all vendors to whom the solicitation document was sent.
2. If prior to the date fixed for submission of proposals a vendor submitting a proposal knows of or should have known of an error in the solicitation document but fails to notify the State of the error, the vendor shall bid at its own risk, and if the vendor is awarded the contract, it shall not be entitled to additional compensation or time by reason of the error or its later correction.

C. Questions regarding the solicitation document

1. If a vendor's question relates to a proprietary aspect of its proposal and the question would expose proprietary information if disclosed to competitors, the vendor may submit the question in writing, conspicuously marking it as "CONFIDENTIAL." With the question, the vendor must submit a statement explaining why the question is sensitive. If the State concurs that the disclosure of the question or answer would expose proprietary information, the question will be answered, and both the question and answer will be kept in confidence. If the State does not concur regarding the proprietary nature of the question, the question will not be answered in this manner and the vendor will be notified.
2. If a vendor submitting a proposal believes that one or more of the solicitation document's requirements is onerous or unfair, or that it unnecessarily precludes

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less costly or alternative solutions, the vendor may submit a written request that the solicitation document be changed. The request must set forth the recommended change and vendor's reasons for proposing the change. Any such request must be submitted to Don Will at the Administrative Office of the Courts by 3 p.m. on May 6, 2003.

D. Addenda

1. The State may modify the solicitation document prior to the date fixed for submission of proposals by faxing an addendum to the vendors to whom the solicitation document was sent. If any vendor determines that an addendum unnecessarily restricts its ability to bid, it must notify Don Will at the Administrative Office of the Courts no later than one day following the receipt of the addendum.

E. Withdrawal and resubmission/modification of proposals

1. A vendor may withdraw its proposal at any time prior to the deadline for submitting proposals by notifying the State in writing of its withdrawal. The notice must be signed by the vendor. The vendor may thereafter submit a new or modified proposal, provided that it is received at the Administrative Office of the Courts no later than 3 p.m. on May 6, 2003. Modification offered in any other manner, oral or written, will not be considered. Proposals cannot be changed or withdrawn after 3 p.m. on May 6, 2003.

F. Evaluation process

1. An evaluation team will review in detail all proposals that are received to determine the extent to which they comply with solicitation document requirements.
2. If a proposal fails to meet a material solicitation document requirement, the proposal may be rejected. A deviation is material to the extent that a response is not in substantial accord with solicitation document requirements. Material deviations cannot be waived. Immaterial deviations may cause a bid to be rejected.
3. Proposals that contain false or misleading statements may be rejected if in the State's opinion the information was intended to mislead the state regarding a requirement of the solicitation document.
4. Cost sheets will be checked only if a proposal is determined to be otherwise qualified. All figures entered on the cost sheets must be clearly legible.
5. During the evaluation process, the State may require a vendor's representative to answer questions with regard to the vendor's proposal. Failure of a vendor to demonstrate that the claims made in its proposal are in fact true may be sufficient cause for deeming a proposal non-responsive.

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G. Rejection of bids

1. The State may reject any or all proposals and may or may not waive an immaterial deviation or defect in a bid. The State's waiver of an immaterial deviation or defect shall in no way modify the solicitation document or excuse a vendor from full compliance with solicitation document specifications. The AOC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the items in the proposal, to award the contract in whole or in part and/or negotiate any or all items with individual vendors if it is deemed in the AOC's best interest. Moreover, the AOC reserves the right to make no selection if proposals are deemed to be outside the fiscal constraint or against the best interest of the government.

H. Award of contract

1. Award of contract, if made, will be in accordance with the solicitation document to a responsible vendor submitting a proposal compliant with all the requirements of the solicitation document and any addenda thereto, except for such immaterial defects as may be waived by the State.
2. The State reserves the right to determine the suitability of proposals for contracts on the basis of a proposal's meeting administrative requirements, technical requirements, its assessment of the quality of service and performance of items proposed, and cost.

I. Decision

1. Questions regarding the State's award of any business on the basis of proposals submitted in response to this solicitation document, or on any related matter, should be addressed to:

Don Will
Supervising Research Analyst
Administrative Office of the Courts
Center for Families, Children & the Courts
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3660

J. Execution of contracts

1. The State will make a reasonable effort to execute any contract based on this solicitation document within 30 days of selecting a proposal that best meets its requirements.
2. A vendor submitting a proposal must be prepared to use a standard state contract form rather than its own contract form.

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K. Protest procedure

1. The Administrative Office of the Courts intends to be completely open and fair to all vendors in selecting the best possible system within budgetary and other constraints described in the solicitation document. In applying evaluation criteria and making the selection, members of the evaluation team will exercise their best judgment.
2. A vendor submitting a proposal may protest the award if it meets all the following conditions:
 - a. the vendor has submitted a proposal which it believes to be responsive to the solicitation document;
 - b. the vendor believes that its proposal meets the state's administrative requirements and technical requirements, proposes items of proven quality and performance, and offers a competitive cost to the State; and
 - c. the vendor believes that the State has incorrectly selected another vendor submitting a proposal for an award.
3. A vendor submitting a proposal who is qualified to protest should contact the Contract Officer at the Administrative Office of the Courts at the address given below or call him at 415-865-7989.

Stephen Saddler
Contracts Officer
Administrative Office of the Courts
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3660

4. If the Contract Officer is unable to resolve the protest to the vendor's satisfaction, the vendor should file a written protest within five working days of the contract award notification. The written protest must state the facts surrounding the issue and the reasons the vendor believes the award to be invalid. The protest must be sent by certified or registered mail or delivered personally to:

Grant Walker
Business Services Manager
Administrative Office of the Courts
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3660

A receipt should be requested for hand-delivered material.

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L. News releases

1. News releases pertaining to the award of a contract may not be made without prior written approval of the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

M. Disposition of materials

1. All materials submitted in response to this solicitation document will become the property of the State of California and will be returned only at the State's option and at the expense of the vendor submitting the proposal. One copy of a submitted proposal will be retained for official files and become a public record. However, any confidential material submitted by a vendor that was clearly marked as such will be returned upon request.

N. Payment

1. Payment terms will be specified in any agreement that may ensue as a result of this solicitation document.
2. **THE STATE DOES NOT MAKE ANY ADVANCE PAYMENT FOR SERVICES.** Payment is normally made based upon completion of tasks as provide in the agreement between the State and the selected vendor. The State may withhold ten percent of each invoice until receipt of the final product. The amount of the withhold may depend upon the length of the project and the payment schedule provide in the agreement between the State and the selected vendor.