



Is there Competition in the RFP process?

Multnomah County does not compare proposals against each other in its evaluation process, but the evaluators do rate your proposal against the criteria questions.

Be mindful that other companies are also responding to the RFP. You have to provide the best overall value in order to stand out.

Multnomah County is interested in a fair and competitive process to provide goods, professional services, and personal services to the members of our community.

Our responsibility is to do this in a way that gives the best value to the taxpayer.

How can your company help us reach this goal?



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Proposal Writing Tips

—for vendors interested in doing business with Multnomah County

Each year Multnomah County spends between \$300- 400 million dollars for contracted goods and services. Writing proposals for these opportunities takes time, effort, and financial commitment.

Let's face it; writing proposals for government agencies is not simple.

These days a low bid process is not always used. Many times the County is looking for the best value when spending taxpayer dollars.

The reality is, in the present economy, there are many competitors for the County's resources. The minimal response or the basic answer is just not going to win you points in the evaluation process.

Evaluators are looking for proposers that give substantive answers and that give added value.

Most often, the County uses the RFP process to find the best solution for the best value. Your proposal should focus on just that. What is your solution and why is your solution the best one at the best value.



Tips to help you get your proposal noticed:

Never cut and paste from past proposals.

- Chances are the specific criteria have changed since we last went out for proposals.
- Evaluators can spot this template type of proposal right away. Many times it reads like it's out of the corporate handbook.
- Use a matrix or checklist to make sure you are answering all of the questions.

Make sure your proposal is specific and to the point.

- Clearly reference or rewrite the specific question as written in the RFP.
- Make it easy for evaluators to read your response—don't make them guess which question you are responding to.
- Ensure you answer every part of the requested information.
- Give specific DETAILS
- Don't just say you did something without backing it up with specific examples.
- Don't make claims that you can't back up with data

Focus on *How* – don't get distracted by the fact that you *Can* do it.

If you have contracted with the County before, past performance will not be considered. Evaluators may only grade based on what you actually say in your proposal.

- Spell out how you will perform the work – give specific details
- Don't summarize
- Don't be afraid to admit problems or challenges – tell us how you are going to fix them.
- Don't assume the evaluators know you or your company.

Best Value

- What can your company or agency bring to the table that will give the taxpayers the biggest “bang for their buck”?
 - Incorporate any warranties
 - Volume discounts
 - Accelerated schedules
 - Efficiencies
 - Improvements, or innovations
- Explain your critical processes and their associated cost. Don't make us guess at why your price is high or low.
- In reading your proposal, do the raters learn anything? Is it easy to follow?

Do your Homework

- Read the RFP thoroughly. Have more than one person in your firm read it. Read it again.
- Talk to the buyer in charge of the procurement – ask them questions. —*we cannot stress this enough*—If you don't understand or disagree with a specification — ASK. The buyer and their contact information is always listed on the cover of our RFP.
- Ask to see prior proposals from earlier procurements – oftentimes you can find valuable insight by reading the prior winning proposals.
- Read the procurement rules referenced in the solicitation. Government procurement has very different rules than the private sector. Know what these rules are.

Company Resume

- Make sure to list experience related to providing the goods or services
- Talk about your management approach
- Give in-depth information about the key project people that will work on this contract.
 - What is their experience and background?
 - How will they participate?
 - What is their part in the project?
 - Efficiencies
- Don't claim community connections or partners you don't actually have—they may be on the evaluation panel!
- If you are the incumbent, say so.