How To Do A Request for Proposals (RFP)

Trigger event(s) for any solicitation:
-Any single purchase with value = > $100K (exception: Single Source Justifications)
-Pending expiration of any existing Price Contract for ongoing needs
-Repetitive purchase of goods or services with aggregate value > $100K annually
-Any need for Personal Services Contract with value = > $10K
-Commodities requiring a solicitation regardless of the $ amount as required by law (e.g., printing)
-Other cases where the Purchasing Officer ascertains a solicitation would generate value

Identify whether to use Invitation for Bids (IFB) or Request for Proposals (RFP)

Use the Invitation for Bids for:
-Purchase of a single order or development of a Price Contract for well-defined goods or services. Items can easily be described by product or catalog numbers, fixed specifications, order quantities, etc.

Use the Request for Proposals for:
-Generally more complex services or cannot be easily defined or specified. In many cases, the department may not be able to clearly define needs, but wants to survey the market and determine what solutions are available
-Any purchase of Personal Services (consulting, design, engineering, etc.) = > $10K

✓ Steps for Request for Proposals (RFP)

☐ Consult with department on the initial specifications and general need for services. This may be listed as the specifications on a Shopping Cart/Requisition, an expiring Price Contract, or email communication from department.

☐ RFPs typically (although not in every instance) result in a Price Contract, which will be stored by the Bid Clerk in the master file cabinets in Room 322 Peterson Building and the 2-PCT Bids & RFPs folder.
Within the correct area on the fiscal year folder, make a dedicated sub-folder for the RFP project. Store all documents affiliated with the RFP project here.

☐ Prepare a brief email to the Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) explaining the departmental need and request approval to utilize the RFP as the solicitation instrument. Place a copy of the email approval in the RFP project folder.

☐ From the 9-Stationery folder, find the current templates to use for the RFP. Open the RFP and Vendor List Templates. Save As copies to the dedicated RFP project folder.

☐ Email the Bid Clerk requesting a bid number for the RFP if basic information is known. The Bid Clerk will need title, issue date, opening date, and department. If the opening date is unknown, you can request this after the RFP is developed and prior to issue. The conventional duration for RFP responses is 30 calendar days.

Note: Solicitation due dates are not scheduled for Mondays or days following holidays.

☐ Complete fillable sections of the RFP header. Complete other portions of the RFP Special Conditions as needed.

Section 3.1 - Key Event Dates - complete if/when known. Delete line for Pre-Proposal Conference if not applicable. RFPs should be issued preferably for 30 calendar days; consult your Purchasing Manager if a shorter timeframe is requested. The Deadline for Written Questions date should be approximately 20% through the response period.

	Section 3.7 - Determine the preferable method for receipt of Technical and Financial Proposals and delete option not needed.
	Portions of the RFP that are in **blue font** need to be completed (change blue to **black font** as completed). Some sections require the departmental contact person(s) to complete or make contributions. These include: -2.1 Intent and Scope -2.2 Background Information -4.5 Criteria 1 - Offeror Qualifications (you can also copy/paste some of these from previous/other RFPs, as applicable) -4.6 Criteria 2 - Services Defined -4.8 Criteria 4 - Evidence of Successful Performance and Implementation Schedule (you can also copy/paste some of these from previous/other RFPs, as applicable) -6.1 Contract Term - In conjunction with the department, determine and refine term and renewals -7.1 Detailed Services Defined -7.2 Optional Services -8.1 Financial Offer for the Mandatory Services (i.e., financial offer pricing from the Offeror(s) -8.2 Financial Offer for the Optional Services (if applicable)
	Note: Distinction between Sections 2.1, 4.6, and 7.1 -Section 2.1 is the Intent and Scope of the RFP. Use it to describe what services (or goods) are needed. It should preferably be less than a single page of content. -Section 7.1 - Use only if the amount of information for the Intent and Scope is large and too much to fit into Section 2.1 and/or there is a large listing of specifications. In summary, only use Section 7.1 to extend out information on the services needed if all of the information does not fit into Section 2.1. -Use Section 4.6 as questions for Offerors to answer as to how they will provide the services/requirements listed in Sections 2.1 and, if it is needed, Section 7.1. Section 4.6 should always list the points (questions) on which Offerors will provide proposal information. **Note:** If you do not use Section 7.0, 7.1, etc. for Services Defined, rename Section 8.0 to Section 7.0 as the Financial Offer Summary section so all the RFP components maintain numerical order.
☐	Form an email to Risk Management and provide a draft version of the RFP. Request they review and approve Section 6.19 Insurance. Modify the insurance section if advised to do so. Remove the portion of section header "To Be Completed by…" and change blue to black font. Place a copy of the approval email from Risk Management in the RFP project folder.
☐	If your contract will be used within the University hospital or clinical environment, a Business Associate Agreement (BAA) must accompany the RFP as an attachment and the HIPAA BAA Amendment & Confidentiality clause must be added as an additional sub-section of Section 6. Both of these are located in the RFP Templates folder of Stationery. For the BAA template, name the copy as Appendix A when placing it in the RFP project folder.
☐	If any additional sub-sections are added to the end of Section 6, number in sequence and use same title formatting as other sections.
☐	If applicable, prepare any attachments or appendices affiliated with the RFP. Name documents as applicable and place in the RFP project folder.
☐	Complete the header of the Vendor List and list potential vendors that will be notified of the RFP issue. Sources of vendors may include: department suggestions, web searches, vendors/Offerors from previous solicitations for same or similar services. **Note:** There must be at least one (1) diverse supplier on the Vendor List.

- [ ] Share RFP draft, Vendor List, and attachments (if applicable) for review with department and ask them to confirm the content, specifications, and requirements are correct or whether changes are needed.

Establish Committee and Confidentiality Statements

- [ ] Request listing of Evaluation Committee members and designation of Chairperson (typically the departmental contact person will serve as the Committee Chairperson).
- [ ] Prepare email to Deputy Chief Procurement Officer and Chief Procurement Officer for approval of committee members; file approval email in RFP project folder.
- [ ] Pull RFP Confidentiality Statement from Stationery folder, place in RFP project folder, and complete heading. Convert to .pdf. Send to Committee Chairperson requesting they have each committee member sign and Chairperson should return to you.
  File all signed confidentiality statements within RFP folder.
  Need statements signed and returned prior to RFP issue date preferably to secure confidentiality

Final Review and Issue

- [ ] Complete final review:
  -Completion of all applicable entries/blanks, spell check, proofreading, needed page breaks, etc.
  -Is the formatting correct and does the document have a formal appearance?
  -Ensure to use page breaks for separation of major sections; correct "hanging" section portions at page tops or bottoms
  -Does the solicitation make sense to potential Offeror(s) and do they have enough information to provide a sound response?
  -Be aware of "should/must/will/shall" language usage. If absolute language is used, the Offeror is required to comply.
- [ ] Update the Table of Contents. A help guide is available in the RFP Templates sub-folder of Stationery.
- [ ] Email the completed RFP, Vendor List, and any attachments (if applicable) to Associate Director/Purchasing Manager for review/approval. Include the approval emails from the CPO and Risk Management.
- [ ] If approved by the Associate Director/Purchasing Manager, email the completed RFP, Vendor List, and any attachments (if applicable) to the Bid Clerk for final review. Include the approval emails from the CPO and Risk Management. If approved, the Bid Clerk will request posting to the Purchasing website.
- [ ] Notify vendors of the solicitation with access to Purchasing bid page

  Important: If you use email notifying multiple vendors, be sure to place your own email address on the To: line and the vendor emails on Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) line. It is important that vendors are not advised of who is competing and the BCC tool will prevent this visibility.

Questions and Answers While Solicitation Is Publicly Posted

- [ ] Interested parties can submit questions until Written Questions and Answers due date/time

- [ ] Pull a copy of the Questions and Answers (Q & A) template from the Stationery folder and Save As/copy to the RFP project folder
  -Compile all questions as gathered
  -After the Q and A due date, form answers for each question in conjunction with the Committee Chairperson
  -Add header information, spell check, proofread, and formalize the final document.
  -Ensure formatting consistent and line items are numbered.
- [ ] Email the final Q and A document to Associate Director/Purchasing Manager for review/approval.
- [ ] If approved by the Associate Director/Purchasing Manager, email the final Q and A document to the Bid Clerk for final review. If approved, the Bid Clerk will request posting to the Purchasing website.
- [ ] Notify vendors (and anybody who submitted a question) of the Q and A document being available on the website. Remember to use the BCC feature if sending out on a single email to multiple parties.

Addenda

- [ ] Addenda may be needed during the public posting period for various reasons:
  -It is learned that specifications are not clear or well defined
  -Due date may need extended
  -Other reasons as ascertained by the Purchasing Officer
- [ ] If Addenda are needed, use the following steps:
  -Pull an RFP Addendum template from the Stationery folder, name, and Save As to the RFP project folder
  -Complete addendum header and body information and the changes
  -Request Purchasing Manager to review the addendum
  -If approved, forward to Bid Clerk for final review and posting to the bid page
  -Be sure to notify all vendors on the Vendor List of the addendum issue

  Note: If the addendum includes a date extension, consult the Bid Clerk to ensure the new proposed date is available on the bid calendar. If multiple addenda are issued, number them in sequence.

Closing/Due Date

There is no public opening for Request for Proposals. Physical RFP responses are received into Central Purchasing until the due date/time. Each submission is time-stamped and held with the Bid Clerk.
Bid Clerk records the respondents on the Vendor List
Bid Clerk transfers the RFP paper folder and responses to the Purchasing Officer

Breakdown and Start of Evaluation

- [ ] Breakdown/prepare the RFP responses for distribution to the Committee Chairperson.
  If needed, there is a Checklist for the initial breakdown in the RFP Stationery folder
- [ ] **Important:** Examine all RFP submissions to determine whether an Offeror indicates or claims material to be Confidential or Proprietary in any manner. If any are marked as such, prepare an Offeror Confidentiality Claim Form from the Stationery folder. Send to the Offeror requiring their review and signature. Store the signed copy in the RFP project folder. This must be completed before their submissions can be distributed to the committee.
- [ ] Request the Committee Chairperson to arrange and schedule the initial committee meeting.
  In consultation with the Chairperson, consider distributing the proposals electronically using OneDrive that can be shared with the committee members.
  Consult with the Chairperson to determine at what point they want to distribute/share the electronic responses. In some cases, the Chairperson may opt to provide only the technical proposals first to members with financial proposals distributed at a later date.

A committee Evaluation Guide is available in the RFP Stationery folder that can be used to guide committee review and decision-making. Consider adding this to the OneDrive materials for distribution to the members and/or making copies to review with the committee at the initial meeting.

The Committee Chairperson is responsible for coordinating the decision-making dynamics of the committee. The Purchasing Officer provides advisory consultation and acts as liaison communicating with Offerors, ensuring best practices are followed, arranging presentations, etc. as needed.

Short List and/or Presentation Phase

☐ The committee review may occur over a number of weeks with multiple meetings.
Under direction of the Chairperson, the committee may opt to reduce the pool of Offerors under consideration using a Short List.
The Short List letter is formed by the Committee Chairperson and must be approved by the Deputy Chief Procurement Officer. If used, place a copy of the approved Short List letter in the RFP project folder.

☐ The committee may opt to request presentations by Short List Offerors. The Purchasing Officer is responsible for coordinating logistics of the presentations with Offerors based on needs expressed by the committee and Chairperson.
A resource is available in the RFP Templates folder for inviting Offerors to presentations.
For best results, it is usually a good idea to provide presenting Offerors a specific listing of questions or points that the committee is interested in learning.

Award Recommendation

☐ When the committee recommends the awardee(s), the Chairperson completes and signs the RFP Award Justification Letter (available in the RFP Templates folder).
The Purchasing Officer should review and ensure all content in the RFP Award Justification Letter is valid before initiating the signatures process.
The Purchasing Officer, Purchasing Manager, and Chief Procurement Officer e-sign the Award Recommendation. Store final signed copy in the RFP project folder.

Preparation and Award of Contract

☐ Typically the RFP results in award of a Price Contract. Once the Award Justification Form is signed, proceed to create and award:
-Create a sub-folder inside the RFP project folder to hold contract documents
-Using a PCT template from the PCT Templates folder, complete and create the UK Price Contract
-Complete the PCT cover sheet and use pages from the RFP and the awarded vendor(s) response to form the UK Price Contract document
-The cover page must include an Order of Precedence structure outlining relevant documents and which documents govern in the hierarchy. Consult similar/past RFPs for suggested Order of Precedence outlines.
-Setup in Adobe e-sign in the following order: 1) Awardee 2)Purchasing Officer 3) Purchasing Manager 4) Chief Procurement Officer
-Ensure to obtain a Certificate of Insurance that meets all requirements
-Paper copies must be given to the Bid Clerk which will be filed in the master file cabinets located in 322 Peterson Service Building.
-Permanently house the e-signed copy of the UK Price Contract within the Price Contract folder

Close Request for Proposals

☐	Use the Closing Instructions for RFPs (within the 9-Stationery folder) for steps to close the RFP. Be sure to follow the steps accurately to finish the RFP and create the official file. Remember the documents are subject to Open Records Requests. Also ensure to indicate any items that respondents marked as Confidential or Proprietary.
	If needed, use the Memo-To-File to document any irregularities or other notes pertinent to the evaluation or overall conduct of the RFP process. Any Memo-to-File must be signed by the Purchasing Officer/Purchasing Manager and housed in the RFP project folder.
☐	Notify respondents that the RFP evaluation has been completed, awarded, and closed and list the awardee(s). Use the Award Courtesy Letter template from the RFP Stationery folder. If using email to notify multiple respondents, remember to use the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) option when listing the email addresses.
	If the awarded Price Contract is for any commodity which requires the Personal Service Contract process, ensure to communicate this to the department. Provide information and resources they may need to complete and execute the PSC documents and approval process.
	Post Award - Consult a Purchasing Manager, as needed, for any post-award inquiries from Offerors or other parties. In some cases, inquiring parties should be directed to the UK Open Records Office.