

The Contracting Process

Understanding the Acquisition Process

Acquisition Cycle

Our professional staff is dedicated to delivering quality and responsive service. Teamwork is the keystone to achieve timely contract awards. We encourage early involvement in the acquisition cycle to develop a customized acquisition plan tailored for your individual needs. We provide support for the entire life of your requirement. We are committed to creating a more responsible and "customer-focused" contracting system.

Acquisition Planning

The most important phase of the acquisition process is acquisition planning. It is during this phase that significant decisions are made which create the path for the entire acquisition.

The team is formed between the technical community, the Contracting Officer and Contract Negotiator. This relationship needs to begin early in the planning stages prior to specification development so a mutual understanding of the requirement can be achieved by the team. Many variables such as competition, commercial-item buying, type of contract, source selection techniques, and long-term administrative support are identified through this planning.

Careful acquisition planning makes for a good contracting experience. The team initiative ensures your contracting goals are met within a timely manner to support your mission. The procurement administrative lead time begins with the submission of the fruits of this planning phase to your point of entry into the FISC Acquisition Group.

The acquisition process is structured along various time lines based upon the complexity of your requirement. Our acquisition planning needs to consider these times lines when identifying funding and the timing of contract award to safely ensure the obligation of your funds.

Solicitation

The solicitation phase is where the Contracting Officer begins execution of the acquisition plan. The requirement, which was jointly developed, is solicited either by a Request For Quotation (RFQ) or a Request For Proposal (RFP). The solicitation may be issued through conventional means by use of hard copy documents or in the case of a commercial item through use of a streamlined solicitation advertised in the FEDBIZOPPS, for requirements greater than \$25,000 on the Navy Electronic Commerce Online (NECO) site.

Regardless of solicitation method used, the statement of work or specification must succinctly describe our requirement so a common understanding may be formed by anyone reading the solicitation document. Often, prospective suppliers question our requirements. In these instances, we review our requirements in light of their questions to see if we adequately describe our needs. Where there may be some uncertainty, we amend our requirements to clear possible ambiguities.

Evaluation Phase

During the evaluation phase our team evaluates the proposals or quotes received to satisfy the requirement. The evaluation follows the plan developed during our acquisition planning meetings. The evaluation may be as simplistic as the proposal satisfies the requirement or complex when selecting the proposal that provides the best value. Past performance is an evaluation factor in all requirements (A) For systems and operations support expected to exceed \$5 million; (B) For services, information technology, or science and technology expected to exceed \$1,000,000; and (C) For fuels or health care expected to exceed \$100,000. This factor affords us the ability to review how well our potential contractors have performed on their prior contracts.

In conjunction with any technical evaluations, a cost or price evaluation is conducted by the contracting officer. The purpose of the evaluation is to develop a fair and reasonable price or a realistic cost to perform our requirement. The technical evaluation is a key consideration for the contracting officer to measure the contractor's understanding of our requirement and determine their pricing reflects the proposed technical solution.

The results of this phase dictate whether award may be made upon the receipt of initial proposals or if negotiations should be conducted with all firms submitting proposals or only those with the best chance for award (competitive range).

Negotiation

Our acquisition team negotiates with the contractors identified during the evaluation phase as having the best opportunity to receive contract award. The contracting officer is assisted by the technical members of the team when issues concerning technical deficiencies are discussed. The product of negotiations is either settlement on a fair and reasonable price for sole source acquisitions or the request for best and final offers for competitive requirements.

Post-Negotiation & Award Phase

The results of the negotiation are reviewed and an award selection is made. It may be necessary to have the team review updated technical proposals and assist in determining the proposal with

the best value. After contract award is made, the contracting office will debrief the unsuccessful firms providing feedback as to areas where they could improve their proposal techniques.

Contract Administration

The day to day management of the contract begins after contract award. Our team effort continues to ensure adequate performance is obtained from the contractor selected to satisfy our requirement. Contract administration can only succeed with commitment from the contracting officer's representative and the contracting officer to monitor progress under the contract or delivery order. Under indefinite delivery type contracts each order represents a separate contract vehicle requiring administration. A limited degree of acquisition planning is necessary for each delivery order.