

Evaluating Request for Proposal (RFP) Responses

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Agenda

- What is a Request for Proposal (RFP)?
- Evaluator Roles & Responsibilities
- Understanding the Evaluation Process
- Independent Scoring – How do I?
- Evaluator Scoring Guide
- Evaluator Scoring Guide – How Do I Use It?
- Group Discussions
- Important Reminders
- Glossary
- Knowledge Check
- Survey



What is a Request for Proposal (RFP)?



Definition & Benefits

Definition-

- **Request for Proposal (RFP)** - A competitive procurement process in which the Commonwealth identifies requirements and solicits potential Offerors to provide innovative solutions. The RFP encourages Offerors to provide the best combination of price, quality and service.

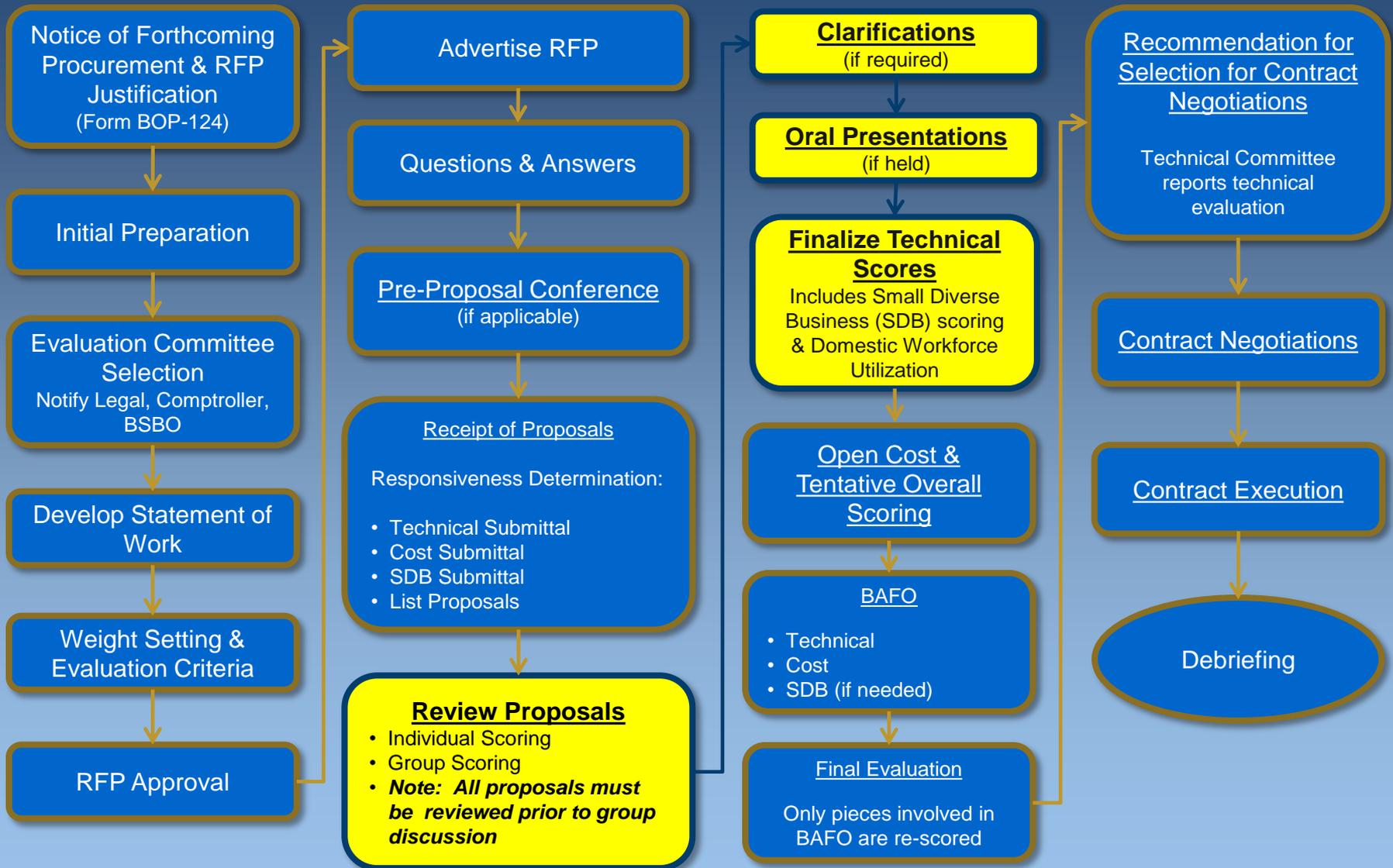
RFP Benefits-

Allows the Commonwealth to:

- Seek an Offeror's solution to an agency requirement
- Provide Offerors with flexibility in the content of their proposals in terms of materials, services, or construction
- Ensure fair and just competition among qualified Offerors
- Conduct negotiations
- Consider subjective criteria other than price in the award process



RFP Process Overview Chart



 Evaluator Role



Evaluator Roles & Responsibilities



Standards of Conduct

- Members of the Evaluation Committee will not be identified by the Commonwealth
- **Members of the Evaluation Committee are:**
 - Required to sign a *Confidentiality Statement and No Conflict Form* and adhere to the provisions specified
 - Prohibited to inform anyone that they are a voting member or divulge any of the other voting members' names
 - Prohibited to meet with Offerors or other committee members to discuss the RFP, the proposals, or any related matters except in formal, scheduled committee meetings
 - Required to keep proposals, notes, and evaluation forms secure and confidential



Standards of Conduct (cont'd)

- **Members of the Evaluation Committee are:**
 - Prohibited from comparing one Offeror's proposal to another
 - Prohibited from disclosing scores to Offerors
 - Prohibited from disclosing proposals of non-selected Offerors



Objectives of Technical Evaluation

- Use the evaluation criteria established in the RFP to fairly and objectively evaluate the technical proposals
- Applies the greatest *weight* and places the utmost importance on the Offerors technical approach
- Ensures all Offerors' proposals are evaluated in a fair and systematic manner



Understanding the Evaluation Process

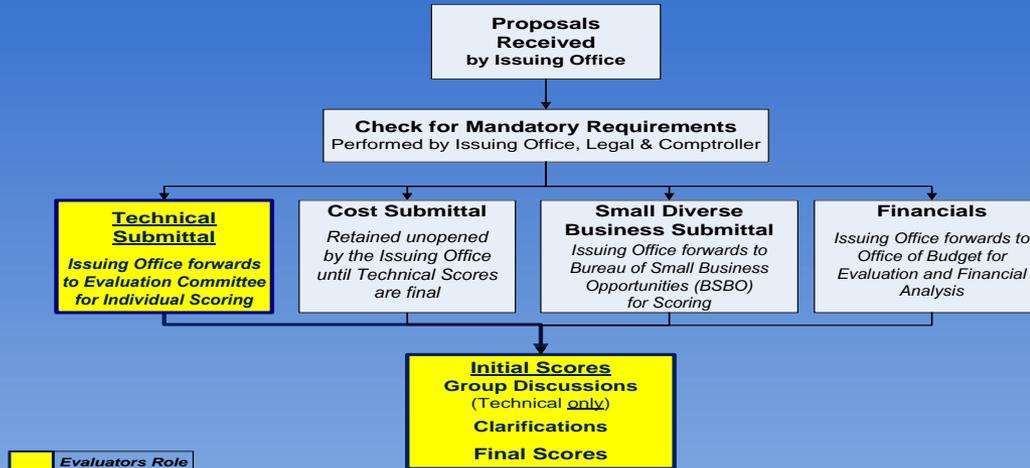


Overview of Evaluation Process

There are three main parts to evaluating an RFP which are:

- **Technical Submittal**
- **Cost Submittal**
- **Small Diverse Business (SDB) Submittal**

These components are scored separately as illustrated on the subsequent slide



70% Rule

- A 1,000 point scale is used to evaluate the three (3) main parts of the proposal response. Typically, the percentage allotment is:

Technical	50%	500 points
Cost	30%	300 points
SDB	20%	200 points
Total Points:		1,000 points

- Technical Proposal Evaluation threshold **must** be at least **70%** of the total available **Technical** points (**70% of 500 points = 350 points**)
 - Any Offeror that does not achieve **70% of the total available technical points**, is determined to be non-responsible and will not receive further consideration in the process
- **Evaluators must keep the “70% Rule” in mind during the evaluation process**



Evaluation/Scoring Process

Two steps of the Evaluation Scoring process are:

- 1. Independent Scoring**
- 2. Group Discussion**



Independent Scoring - How Do I?



Independent Scoring Ground Rules

- Understand the RFP's Statement of Work (SOW)
- Read every proposal in detail in the random order assigned by the Issuing Office
- Be objective; free from bias (previous knowledge/experience), dishonesty, and injustice
- Refrain from performing research of any nature, including Internet searches or obtaining information regarding an Offeror
- Evaluators may not discuss proposals or independent scores with anyone, except with committee members during formal scheduled meetings



Independent Scoring

What to Consider in Scoring a Proposal

- Completeness of the Offeror's response to the requirements or questions asked
- Consistency in scoring the Offeror's responses
- Offeror's experience and demonstrated understanding of the contract requirements outlined in the SOW
- Did the Offeror simply repeat the SOW? Reiterating the SOW should not be considered an indication that an Offeror understands the contract requirements
- Proposals should provide specifics in the Offeror's approach; not merely repeat or paraphrase the RFP
- After an objective assessment, identify the proposal's viability, feasibility and acceptability



Independent Scoring

Do's & Don'ts

- **DO** give each proposal the same consideration up front
 - The name of the Offeror should not influence (positively or negatively) the evaluator's comments or ratings, except when evaluating past performance
- **DO** be fair and consistent in the proposal evaluation
- **DO** provide detailed comments and accurate references
 - If an item is a strength/weakness for one proposal it must also be noted as a strength/weakness when it appears in other proposals
- **DO NOT** rate an idea as a positive in one proposal and the same idea as a negative in another
- **DO NOT** evaluate or compare proposals against one another
- **DO NOT** score based on criteria that is not included in the RFP
- **DO NOT** "take it easy" or "be overly harsh". Fairly evaluate all proposals against the requirements of the RFP



Independent Scoring Documentation

- It is extremely important that evaluators document and justify their scores
 - This information is used during debriefing conferences with unsuccessful Offerors

Always ask yourself:

If I was present at the debriefing conference would I be able to defend this assessment?

- Ensure that your comments are clear, concise and professionally stated
 - The evaluation documents may be used during litigation and should not contain informal or unrelated remarks
- Antagonistic or inflammatory comments can lead to a protest and must be avoided
- All 0% and 100% scores must be fully justified



Evaluator Scoring Guide



Evaluator Scoring Guide

The Evaluator Scoring Guide was developed as a reference tool for Evaluators to use when scoring proposals

- **Benefits:**
 - Provides a consistent approach to evaluating proposals
 - Easy to use and understand
- **Failure to follow the Scoring Guide may result in an undesirable Offeror**

When finished scoring a proposal always ask yourself:

Did this Offeror demonstrate sufficient competence to be awarded the contract?

- If your scores do not reflect how you responded to this question then you should revisit your scores

NOTE: *The Evaluator Scoring Guide is provided on the subsequent slide to assist Evaluators when scoring an RFP*



Evaluator Scoring Guide

Percent Score	Quality of Response	Description	Strengths Relative to Requirements	Weaknesses	Confidence in Proposed Approach
90-100	Excellent	The proposal addresses the requirements completely, exhibits outstanding knowledge, creativity, innovation or other factors to justify this rating.	Meets requirements - numerous strengths in key areas.	None	Very High
80-89	Good	The proposal addresses the requirements completely and addresses some elements of the requirements in an outstanding manner.	Meets requirements - some strengths in key areas.	Minor - not in key areas	High
70-79	Moderate	The proposal addresses most elements of the requirements.	Meets most requirements - minimal strengths provided in their response.	Moderate - does not outweigh strengths	Moderate
60-69	Marginal	The proposal meets some of the RFP requirements.	Meets some of the requirements with some clear strengths.	Exist in key areas - outweighs strengths	Low
0-59	Unacceptable	The proposal meets a few to none of the RFP requirements.	Meets a few to none of the requirements with few or no clear strengths.	Significant and numerous	No Confidence



Evaluator Scoring Guide – How Do I Use It?



Evaluator Scoring Guide – How Do I Use It?

- Read each proposal and evaluate based on the requirements in the RFP

EXAMPLE: The RFP asked the Offeror to answer:

What is your process for dealing with an employee performance issue?

<u>Offeror Response # 1</u>	What is <i>Wrong</i> with Offeror Response #1?	<u>Offeror Response #2</u>	What is <i>Right</i> with Offeror Response #2?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We are committed to perform responsibly in the review and revision of professional and administrative policies and procedures. Such policies and procedures would be to ensure that customer complaints are addressed in a timely and courteous manner, always with the ultimate consideration for customer satisfaction. Matters that would most often require close attention include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Late arrivals for service – Failure to appear at scheduled service site – Unprofessional behavior – Unprofessional attire – Suspicion of substance abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you see a process for identifying, responding to, and resolving performance issues? • Did the response discuss <i>how</i> will they address the performance issues? • Whose responsibility is it to address the performance issue? • What is the timeframe for addressing and resolving the performance issue? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Offeror provided mechanisms for early identification and response</i> • <i>Offeror discussed its employment expectations and provided documentation of such</i> • <i>Offeror discussed its 24-hour Corporate Compliance Program</i> • <i>Offeror discussed the process it would use to deal with an employee issue:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Investigation – Verbal Warning – Written Warning – Termination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Offeror discussed its process and the various stages at which the process is initiated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Investigation – Verbal Warning – Written Warning – Termination • It also provided an <i>“added bonus”</i> of utilizing <i>“Mechanisms for Early Identification and Response”</i>



Evaluator Scoring Guide – How Do I Use It?

- Consider the earlier examples of the employee performance question. How would one score the responses below using the Evaluator Scoring Guide?
 - If the first response was **marginal**
 - Evaluator reviews the guide and notes that a marginal response should receive between 60%-69% of the points allotted for the question
 - Evaluator determines it deserves 65% of the points allotted for the question
 - If the second response was **excellent**
 - Evaluator reviews the guide and notes that an excellent response should receive between 90%-100% of the points allotted for the question
 - Evaluator determines it deserves 100% of the points allotted for the question



Group Discussions



- Group discussions are used to ensure evaluators have a common understanding of the proposal and to allow evaluators to change their scores based on the committee's understanding of the proposal and discussion

Note: Evaluators must provide written justification for any adjusted scores

Items to be discussed:

- **Strengths and Weaknesses**

- Beneficial for debriefing sessions
- Independent Scoring overview of each proposal

- **Variance in Scores**

- The group should discuss any criteria which has a significant variance in score. An evaluator may take the opportunity to re-adjust their scores

Example:

- **3 out of 5** evaluators scored in a range between 90%-100%
- **2** evaluators scored in a range between 0%-59%



Group Discussions (cont'd)

During group discussions, evaluators may determine a need for oral or written clarification on an Offeror's proposal

1. Clarifications may:
 - Be different for each Offeror's proposal
 - Address one (1) or more Offerors' technical proposals
2. Offerors shall only provide additional information to clarify their original response
 - This is not an opportunity for the Offeror to change their response to the original question
3. Evaluators review each Offeror's clarification response
 - Technical scores may be adjusted when related to a clarification question
 - Adjusting technical scores requires written justification



Group Discussions (cont'd)

- During group discussions, evaluators may determine whether a Best and Final Offer (BAFO) is needed

BAFOs may:

- Differ for each Offeror's proposal
 - Include any combination of the proposal (Technical, Cost, DB)
 - Address one (1) or more Offerors' technical proposals
- During group discussions, the Evaluation Committee will also discuss items to be included in negotiations on the technical portion of the proposal
 - At the end of the scoring process evaluators must sign and date their individual scoring sheets, verifying that their scores are accurate and final



Important Reminders



Important Reminders

- Contact the Issuing Office if you have any questions regarding the RFP and/or the Offeror's proposal
- Proposals shall not be discussed outside of the Evaluation Committee meetings
- Independent scoring is just that...**independent scoring**
- Your role as an evaluator requires you to commit a significant amount of time and concentrated effort to the project



Glossary



Glossary

- **Best and Final Offer (BAFO)** - *A Best and Final Offer is initiated when evaluators determine that proposals can be improved upon in the best interest of the Commonwealth, BAFO's are not necessary when the Commonwealth is satisfied with the proposals.*
- **Bureau of Small Business Opportunities (BSBO)** - *An office within the Department of General Services with the responsibility to assist small businesses and small diverse businesses, including minority business enterprises, women business enterprises, veteran business enterprises and service-disabled veteran business enterprises, in competing for Commonwealth contracting opportunities.*
- **Evaluation Committee** - *A committee composed of evaluators (often 3, 5, 7 or more members) that are responsible for awarding points to the proposals so they may be scored and ranked.*



Glossary

- **Evaluator** - *A person that applies independent judgment in awarding points to RFPs for the purpose of scoring and ranking them, and participates in group discussions.*
- **Issuing Office** - *The sole point of contact for the Offerors and Evaluation Committee members with any questions regarding a RFP.*
- **Offeror** - *A person or organization that submits a proposal in response to a RFP. The term is synonymous with contractor, supplier or vendor.*
- **Proposal** - *An offer made in response to an RFP which may be subject to negotiation and award criteria.*
- **Request for Proposal (RFP)** - *A competitive procurement process in which the Commonwealth identifies requirements and solicits potential Offerors to provide innovative solutions. The RFP encourages Offerors to provide the best combination of price, quality and service.*



Glossary

- **Small Business** - *A small business is a business in the United States which is independently owned, not dominant in its field of operation, employs no more than 100 full-time or full-time equivalent employees, and earns less than \$20 million in gross annual revenues (\$25 million in gross annual revenues for those businesses in the information technology sales or service business).*
- **Small Diverse Business (SDB)** – *A Small Diverse Business is a DGS-certified minority-owned business, woman-owned business, service-disabled veteran-owned business or veteran-owned business, or United States Small Business Administration-certified 8(a) small disadvantaged business concern, that qualifies as a small business.*
- **Statement of Work (SOW)** - *A detailed description of the work to be accomplished.*



Knowledge Check



Knowledge Check

1. Members of the Evaluation Committee may not discuss the proposals with other Committee Members except in formal scheduled meetings.
 - a. True
 - b. False



Knowledge Check

2. Evaluator inquiries or questions relating to the RFP must be directed to:
 - a. Issuing Office
 - b. Comptroller
 - c. Offeror



Knowledge Check

3. During the independent scoring, evaluators should **NOT** consider the following in reviewing each proposal.
 - a. Previous knowledge/experience with the Offeror who submitted the proposal
 - b. Internet searches
 - c. The other technical proposals that were submitted
 - d. All of the above



Knowledge Check

4. During the independent scoring, evaluators should consider the following in reviewing each proposal.
- a. The RFP Requirements
 - b. Evaluator Scoring Guide
 - c. Evaluation Criteria
 - d. All of the above



Knowledge Check

5. Evaluators must sign and date their independent scoring sheets verifying that their scores are accurate and final.
 - a. True
 - b. False



Survey

- Select the link below to complete an online Zoomerang survey

<https://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22FBFAGGMUE>



You will receive credit for completing this course within 24 hours. Please select the “Log Off” button in the lower right corner to close this course.

As a reminder, you will not receive an E-mail notification for WBT completions.

Thank you!

