

Synopsis or Solicitation?

RFQ, RFP, IFB:

What's the difference and why do I care?



What are the rules and where do they come from

- Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) is the body of laws that govern the U.S. Federal Government's procurement process. These laws are prepared, issued and maintained under the joint auspices of the Secretary of Defense, the Administrator of General Services Administration (GAO) and the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration ([Defense Acquisition Regulatory Council](#)) (DARC) and the Civilian Agency Acquisition Council. (CAAC).
- My favorite: <http://farsite.hill.af.mil> or just Google it!

Agencies not subject to FAR

- United States Post Office
- Central Intelligence Agency
- Bonneville Power Administration
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Tennessee Valley Authority

Agency Rules

- Department of Defense – DFARS
 - Subordinate are Army, Navy, Air Force, DLA, etc; each has it's own supplement – probably more than one
 - Example: Navy/marine Corps Acquisition Supplement; NAVFAC Acquisition Supplement; further policies

Acquisition Thresholds

- The government has different rules for different size acquisitions. The size is based on the \$\$\$\$\$. These rules result in different types of actions – micro purchase; simplified or small purchase, and large purchase
- Micro purchase. \$3000 or less; usually accomplished with a government purchase card
- Small Purchase. Less than \$150,000. Usually a Request for Quote “RFQ”
- Large Purchase. Greater than \$150,000. Usually a Request for proposal “RFP” or Invitation for Bid “IFB”.
- Of course, there are exceptions for some situations; commercial items, overseas buys/performance; contingency operation support

More about this later, but these are the major divisions.

How the Regs are organized

- Far has 52 parts. Today, we are focusing on these:
 - Part 2; Definitions
 - Part 5; Publicizing Contract Actions
 - Part 12; Commercial Items
 - Part 13; Simplified Acquisition Procedures
 - Part 19; Small business programs

Part 2, Definitions

“Commercial item” means --

(1) Any item, other than real property, that is of a type customarily used by the general public or by non-governmental entities for purposes other than governmental purposes, and--

Has been sold, leased, or licensed to the general public; or,

Has been offered for sale, lease, or license to the general public;

(2) Services of a type offered and sold competitively in substantial quantities in the commercial marketplace based on established catalog or market prices for specific tasks performed or specific outcomes to be achieved and under standard commercial terms and conditions.

“Government wide point of entry (GPE)” means the single point where Government business opportunities greater than \$25,000, including synopses of proposed contract actions, solicitations, and associated information, can be accessed electronically by the public. The GPE is located at <http://www.fedbizopps.gov> .

and a bunch more that might be interesting to you.....

Unofficial Definitions

- Synopsis: The government's "ad in the paper" saying it needs to buy something.
- Solicitation: The RFQ, RFP or IFB. This document BECOMES the contract so treat it with respect! The solicitation will have detailed instructions on how to submit your quote/offer/bid, and this is the document that really contains the specs and tech documents.
- When buying commercial items below the Simplified Acquisition threshold, and allowing only electronic responses, these documents can be combined into one. See FAR 5.202(a)(3)

Part 5, Publicizing Contract Actions

- Contracting Officer (KO) must publicize contract actions to increase competition, broaden industry participation, and assist small business concerns in obtaining contract and sub-contracts.
- KO must synopsis in “GPE” (FedBizOpps) for everything over \$25K
- If synopsis is posted in GPE, then solicitation must also be posted on GPE including specs, tech data and other pertinent information like instructions to offerors, due dates, required documentation, evaluation factors, and set aside status
- KO must synopsis and “afford a reasonable opportunity to respond” (that means give you enough time and information)
- Usually KO must allow at least 15 days between publication of synopsis and release of solicitation
- But there are exceptions...

(some of) The Exceptions to the Synopsis Rules

- National Security
- Not in the government's best interest (usually means it's urgent and they don't have the time for the whole procurement cycle) This requires a BUNCH of documentation by the KO to get approved.
- Size/format of documentation makes it impracticable to post electronically
- There are other exceptions listed at FAR 5.202

Other announcements on FEDBIZOPPS

- Fed Biz Ops is also used to publish other announcements that the government has for the business community, especially for small businesses.
- Announcements of business or trade fairs
- Draft solicitations for review and industry input
- Notices of subcontracting opportunities
- ***Sources Sought Announcements***; these are important to you!

Sources Sought Announcements

- The Contracting Officer must, to the extent practicable, encourage maximum participation by small business concerns by making every effort to find additional small business concerns. (FAR 19.202-2)
- For every contract action over \$10,000, the agency and SBA must agree on limitations of types of businesses who can apply.
- Contracting Officers issue a sources sought to determine whether there are enough small firms who can qualify to create competition.
- Responding to a sources sought can assist in limiting your competition on the project.
- Every contact with a Contracting Officer or Agency is an opportunity to network and market.

What a synopsis will tell you

- Subject of the procurement – what they are buying
- Contracting office information – who is buying it
- NAICS Code
- Advertisement date; anticipated solicitation release date; response due date if combined
- Set Aside Status
 - Small Business; HUBZone, WOSB, HBCU, VOSB etc...
- Solicitation number – for example, N00406-12-Q-1234
 - N00406 = contracting office uniform identification code
 - 12 – last two digits of fiscal year
 - Q – type of solicitation; in this case, request for quote. See DFARS 204.7003 for a complete list of letter designations
 - 1234 – serial number assigned to this action
- Point of contact – Contract Specialist or KO
- Description of product – may or may not include complete specs/dwgs
- Unusual or specific aspects of the procurement (restricted specs, commercial item, evaluation factors)

Far Part 12, Commercial Items

- Allows for shorter advertisement/solicitation times
- Definition of commercial items in Part 2
- Usually involves use of purchase card
- Synopsis may be combined with solicitation, but if so must contain the following statement

This is a combined synopsis/solicitation for commercial items prepared in accordance with the format in [Subpart 12.6](#), as supplemented with additional information included in this notice. This announcement constitutes the only solicitation; proposals are being requested and a written solicitation will not be issued.

Part 13, Simplified Acquisition Procedures

- This part requires that any action less than \$150,000 MUST be set aside for small business. There are two main exceptions to this rule; if the contract will be performed outside of the US or if there are not at least 2 small business capable of competing for the work.
- The KO shall use the government purchase card to the maximum extent possible. This means they will usually at least pay with a purchase card so get yourself set up to accept this method of payment
- The process will be electronic whenever possible, meaning you will submit your bid to a website rather than by mail or delivery and they will most likely provide drawings and specs electronically
- The KO must promote competition – remember the sources sought!
- The KO must use the CCR as the primary source of vendor info. Keep yours updated and as accurate as you can. NAICS and keyword matching gets you opportunities.

A quote is not an offer

- **REMEMBER:** A quote that you submit is not the same thing as an offer. If the government finds your quote to be the most beneficial, they will issue a purchase order for you to accept. Acceptance happens one of two ways; 1 – you sign the document and send it back or 2 – you proceed with the work until “substantial performance” has occurred.
- Obviously, everybody prefers the signed document path!

Loose Ends

- Part 19 gives detailed information relative to small business programs. Go to part 19 of the Agency supplement to find out it's specific small business rules.
- Don't let the FAR or other agency supplements scare you off. There is lots of help available to you through your PTAC, AMN, and other sources.
- Questions?????

Thanks for your time. We hope we have helped.



Class Material will be archived at www.amn-usa.org

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