



Administrative Policy
REQUESTS FOR QUALIFICATIONS/REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS

AP No.

5-10

Effective Date:

Upon Approval

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Houston (City) will ensure a fair, open, and transparent process when issuing a request for proposals or request for qualifications.

2. POLICY PURPOSE

2.1. To set forth the situations in which a request for qualifications may or must be conducted.

2.2. To set forth situations in which a competitive procurement utilizing the request for proposal method is required when making purchases of services and/or supplies over \$50,000.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all City departments and personnel involved in procurement and purchasing.

4. DEFINITIONS

Chief Procurement Officer (CPO): Chief Procurement Officer for the City or designee.

Mayor: The Mayor of the City of Houston, Texas.

Professional Services: Services that require predominantly mental or intellectual skills, rather than physical or manual.

Request for Proposals (RFP): As defined in Section 15-42 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ): As defined in section 15-42 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances.

Scope of Work (SOW): The document used to describe the City's needs in connection with a RFQ or RFP.

5. POLICY DETAILS

5.1. Professional and Consulting Services — Requests for Qualifications

5.1.1. Architectural, Engineering, or Land Surveying Services

5.1.1.1. These professionals shall be selected using the RFQ process as required by Texas Government Code Chapter 2254. They must first be evaluated on the basis of demonstrated competence and qualifications with no consideration of price.

5.1.1.2. Once the highest rated professional is identified, negotiations may be initiated for a fair and reasonable price.

Approved:

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Date Approved:

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- 5.1.1.3. If a satisfactory contract cannot be negotiated with the most highly qualified provider, the City shall:
 - 5.1.1.3.1. Formally end negotiations with that provider;
 - 5.1.1.3.2. Select the next most qualified provider; and
 - 5.1.1.3.3. Attempt to negotiate a contract with that provider at a fair and reasonable price.
- 5.1.1.4. The process outlined above shall continue until:
 - 5.1.1.4.1. A satisfactory contract is entered into; or
 - 5.1.1.4.2. The RFQ is cancelled.
- 5.1.2. Professional service providers other than architectural, engineering, or land surveying may be selected according to criteria identified in the RFQ or may be selected through an RFP.
- 5.1.3. For any RFQ, an evaluation committee shall be appointed. Unless the CPO approves an exception in writing, the committee shall be composed of not less than three or more than five City employees with relevant experience. Whenever practicable, the committee should be appointed before the RFQ is published. If the number of committee members ever drops below three before the process is complete, the CPO may appoint a replacement member to serve as an alternate.
- 5.1.4. The evaluation committee may request oral presentations in order to identify the successful service provider.
- 5.1.5. The committee's recommendation for award shall reflect the consensus of the committee.
- 5.1.6. The team leader shall prepare a final report to explain the recommendation and submit it to the CPO for consideration. The CPO shall present a recommendation to the Mayor. In reviewing the CPO's recommendation, the Mayor may consider all appropriate considerations relevant to the best interest of the City and that are permitted by applicable law. The Mayor will determine whether to place the item on an agenda for City Council approval.

5.2. Requests for Proposals

- 5.2.1. For any RFP, an evaluation committee shall be appointed. Unless the CPO approves an exception in writing, the committee shall be composed of not less than three or more than five city employees with relevant experience. Whenever practicable, the committee should be appointed before the RFP is published. If the number of committee members ever drops below three before the process is complete, the CPO may appoint a replacement member to serve as an alternate.
- 5.2.2. After the CPO has identified responsive proposals, the committee shall evaluate proposals according to the criteria identified in the RFP. Each committee member shall review the proposals independently and submit the comments to the team leader when the evaluations are concluded.
- 5.2.3. The evaluation committee may request oral presentations in order to identify the successful service provider.
- 5.2.4. Best and final offers (BAFOs) may be requested of one or more of the short-listed proposers. Negotiations may be held to identify the best value for the City.

- 5.2.5. The committee's recommendation for award shall reflect the consensus of the committee.
- 5.2.6. The team leader shall prepare a final report to explain the recommendation and submit it to the CPO for consideration. The CPO shall present a recommendation to the Mayor. In reviewing the CPO's recommendation, the Mayor may consider all appropriate considerations relevant to the best interest of the City and that are permitted by applicable law. The Mayor will determine whether to place the item on an agenda for City Council approval.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1. Department Directors or Designees:

- 6.1.1. Consult with the Strategic Procurement Division (SPD) to determine the appropriate procurement method.
- 6.1.2. When conducting a RFQ or RFP, prepare a SOW for SPD's review.
- 6.1.3. Promptly review draft solicitations and other documents prepared by SPD.
- 6.1.4. Cooperate with requests to nominate individuals to serve on evaluation committees, even if the procurement is not for their own department.

6.2. CPO:

- 6.2.1. Consult with the Mayor, as appropriate, to determine the appropriate procurement method.
- 6.2.2. Work with department directors, after consulting with the Mayor, as appropriate, to appoint an evaluation committee with relevant experience to evaluate responses.
- 6.2.3. Consult with the Mayor, as appropriate, before and during the performance of his or her responsibilities.

6.3. Strategic Procurement Division

- 6.3.1. Upon receipt of the SOW from department, prepares solicitation document or assist department with additional development of SOW.
- 6.3.2. Arranges for publication of solicitation and ensures each RFQ/RFP contains the Quiet Period language approved by the CPO.
- 6.3.3. Acts as leader of the evaluation committee; does not vote except to break a tie.
- 6.3.4. Determines whether responses to an RFQ/RFP comply with the terms of the solicitation; disqualifies responses that are noncompliant.
- 6.3.5. May permit non-voting members to observe the process, as well as members of the City Attorney's office, when deemed appropriate or advisable.
- 6.3.6. Prepares the final report.
- 6.3.7. Works with department to draft the Request for Council Action and submit to the agenda office for City Council action.

6.4. Evaluation Committee

- 6.4.1. Reads evaluation guidelines and process for applying the evaluation criteria.
- 6.4.2. Reads all responses and evaluates them based on the criteria identified in the RFQ/RFP.
- 6.4.3. Evaluates responses independently, then discusses as a group to reach consensus. The SPD representative does not vote unless necessary to break a tie.
- 6.4.4. May develop a short list of proposers.
- 6.4.5. If determined appropriate, invites short-listed respondents for oral presentations and/or BAFOs
- 6.4.6. Makes recommendation for award.

7. CONFLICT AND REPEAL

This administrative policy supersedes Administrative Procedure 5-10, effective March 4, 2016, which shall be of no further force or effect.

8. POLICY SPONSOR

Department: Finance Department Strategic Procurement Division