How to Avoid the Pitfalls of Being Disqualified in a Bid

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Be an Informed Bidder or Offeror

• Know the statutes, regulations, and policies of the jurisdiction
• Learn what is important to the jurisdiction (budget, savings, preference programs)
• Understand the differences between public sector and private sector procurement
Read and Understand

- The complete solicitation
- Any attachments
- Instructions for submitting bid or proposal (paper or electronic submission)
- Any certifications that are required
IFB vs. RFP

Invitation for Bids
- Award based on lowest price or lowest evaluated price
- Lowest responsive and responsible bidder receives award

Request for Proposals
- Award based on evaluation of proposals in accordance with stated technical, experience, or price evaluation criteria
- Generally award to highest ranked, responsible offeror
Comply with Instructions

- Complete all certifications
- Sign all documents on which signature required
- Complete all checklists
- Submit all required documents or information, such as bid bond, correct number of copies, descriptive literature, bid samples
Meet Submission Deadlines

- Failure to submit bid or proposal on time may be fatal (unless government at fault)
- Burden on bidder or offeror to allow sufficient time to find parking, get through building security, take elevator, locate room
- Submit any additional information, such as responsibility information, within designated timeframe
General Tips

Neatness Counts
- In IFB, bid may be nonresponsive if there are so many corrections or scratch-outs that cannot determine actual bid price
- In RFP, organization is important so proposal is clear as to what is being offered and how evaluation criteria are met

Quantity Is Not Everything
- In IFB, any document submitted with bid will count towards responsiveness
- For RFPs, multiple glossy brochures and boilerplate submissions are not desired and detract from overall content of proposal
More General Tips

**Check Your Work**
- Eliminate typos, grammatical errors, incorrect section numbers
- Make sure your math is correct (total amounts, extension of unit prices)
- Include all elements of pricing in your bid as corrections may not be allowed

**Understand Electronic Bidding Requirements**
- Allow sufficient time to register as a vendor in the electronic system
- Keep your registration up-to-date with current email addresses and contact persons
- Pay attention to required formats and size limitations
Avoid Assumptions and Complacency

• Don’t assume that the government knows everything about your product or solution, especially if you are the incumbent

• Avoid thinking that you “know” what the government wants even though the solicitation says something different

• If you have questions, or solicitation is ambiguous or inconsistent, don’t ignore the issues and think that it will all be worked out after award
Last Thought

Above all, respect the integrity of the procurement process so that there can be a robust competition that results in the government obtaining the goods or services it needs at a fair and reasonable price.