DoIT RFP Template 3.01 Rollout

IT Procurement Office (ITPO)
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October 3, 2017

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Introduction & Overview

A. RFPs not previously submitted for review must use version 3.01 effective immediately

1) ITPO will consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis

2) The template is posted on DoIT's procurement website

3) Documents previously submitted for review may receive updated boilerplate from ITPO reviewer.

B. Changes in this version

1) Align document structure to the Statewide RFP template

   Expecting an updated Statewide RFP template end of year

2) Update language for consistency with COMAR changes, audit findings

3) Move standard forms to the procurement website

4) Standardize text formatting to reduce document instability

5) Update instructions, updatable items for more consistency, easier tailoring

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Introduction & Overview

- **As an oversight agency, for every IT solicitation DoIT is responsible to:**

  1) Ensure that State policies, regulations, laws are followed

  2) Ensure the State's rights are protected and enforceable

  3) Help agencies perform fair procurements

  4) Help agencies establish contracts that can be managed

  5) Help establish consistency among State IT contracts

- **As a result, DoIT has an:**

  1) Advisory role – making recommendations

  2) Training role – explaining, providing examples

  3) Directive role – requiring compliance

- **DoIT does not furnish legal sufficiency approval**

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Introduction & Overview

Procurement	Requirements	Consistency
• Statute • COMAR • Policies, guidelines • Best practices	• Enforceable • Logically Presented • Complete	• Boilerplate • Template tailoring • Word use (and fixes)

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Detailed Template Walkthrough

A. **RFP Template updated to 3.x mid-August 2017**

- Resequenced sections, some consolidation
- Standard forms used after award moved to website (work order, NTP sample, self-reporting form)

B. **Primary Organization**

- Section 1 Minimum Qualifications
- Section 2 Contractor Requirements: Scope of Work
- Section 3 Contractor Requirements: General
- Section 4 RFP Instructions
- Section 5 Proposal Format
- Section 6 Evaluation and Selection Process
- Section 7 Attachments and Appendices

C. **Formatting in Template**

- Leverage Word Styles

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Detailed Template Walkthrough

- **Basic Notations, Formats**

  1) Instructions **instructions format**

  2) Tailoring <<tailoring format>>

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Detailed Template Walkthrough - Minimum Qualifications, Downselects

- **DoIT strongly recommends eliminating minimum qualifications for most RFPs**

  a) Minimum Qualifications have been reducing competition to levels that contribute to failed procurements

  b) Limit Minimum Qualifications to few, objective criteria such as certifications

  c) Desired characteristics should be described in a general way and evaluated (See Offeror Experience section in RFP template)

- **For staffing RFPs only, a downselect may be used**

  a) Interviews and oral presentations do not have to be completed prior to the downselect (this is a change in policy)

  b) The minimum number for the downselect list is 10

  c) You should not go back and retrieve an offer that was not part of the downselect

  d) In-person and online (e.g., WebEx, Skype) are considered equivalent (Preference is in-person. Never perform solely phone interviews)

  e) Downselects for other solicitation types by exception only

Detailed Template Walkthrough -
Service Level Agreements (SLAs)
and Work Orders

- **SLAs**

  a) Obtain commitment from the program to monitor contractor performance and assess liquidated damages / service credits (a source of audit findings)

  b) Define only a handful of meaningful metrics to simplify monitoring

- **Work Orders**

  a) Work Orders may be for either Fixed Price or T&M (if labor categories are proposed)

  b) Fixed Price Work Orders provide flexibility if a labor category is omitted

  c) Work Orders avoid change orders, but only if:

     i. There are additional unallocated funds under the Contract

     ii. The scope of the Work Order is in alignment with the RFP scope

  d) Where Work Orders are defined for multi-vendor award RFPs, the RFP must describe the basis for Work Order issuance

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Detailed Template Walkthrough - Staffing in a TORFP

- **For a *staffing RFP,* you must list the maximum number of resources to be fulfilled under the RFP before a change order is required**

- **Maximum of four proposed resources for making an award determination**

  – This is NOT the same as total number of resources

  – Fewer proposed resources = faster evaluation process

  – Proposed resources that are not full-time Offeror personnel (e.g., subcontractor or 1099) may NOT be replaced during evaluation

- **Consider whether it should be a staffing RFP or a generic services RFP**

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Top Tips – Requirements

Persnickety

per·snick·e·ty \pər-ˈsni-kə-tē\

fussy about small details

For speedy reviews, be persnickety with requirements and RFP construction

a) Use "shall" statements for Offeror, Contractor, or system requirements

b) Use "will" statements for State activities

c) Don't use the word "ensure" in a requirements statement

d) Functional Requirements Documents (FRDs) are for internal project stakeholders, not great for TORFPs/RFPs

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Top Tips – Requirements

1. Uniquely number all requirements

    a) Don't use paragraphs with multiple statements when they are different requirements

    b) Use outline bullets (A.1.b), not simple bullets (●)

    c) Don't manually number anything (use MS Word auto-number)

2. Put all requirements in the "Requirements" (SOW) section

    Make sure you don't put requirements in the background or existing system descriptions

3. Organize requirements by topic

4. Do not repeat requirements; use instead "as defined in Section x.x"

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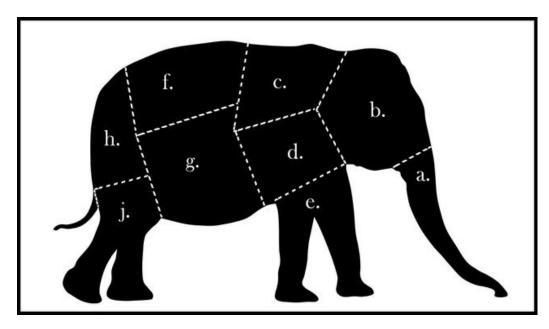
Expectations During Authoring & Reviews

Expect…..

1) Two DoIT reviews. Well-constructed solicitations usually take one long review and one shorter, targeted review. **Poorly constructed solicitations take more review cycles**

   a. Expect a DoIT review cycle to take ~10 business days once received in ITPO mailbox

2) Solicitations with poor requirements or inadequate updates **may be returned without review**

3) Notices from ServiceNow after submission to ITPO

   a. Submitter (the procurement officer) will receive an Incident update each time the Incident is reassigned

   b. Do not cc on the submission to ITPO (replies to that email generate duplicate incidents)

   c. SAVE a ServiceNow email for the relevant incident and REPLY to avoid new duplicate incidents

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CATS+ TORFP Template Approach

A. Leave plenty of time for the first one
B. Read the document through before starting to tailor
   - Look for sections clearly not applicable to your solicitation
   - Use Word's comments feature to ask questions of ITPO reviewer
   - <u>Read</u> the boilerplate. Requirements in the boilerplate may not apply (and may even be contradictory to each other)
C. Keep a the untailored template around in case decisions change

Tools and Assistance

A. **Read the guidance in the template**

B. **Use the old-to-new mapping tables**

C. **Use the Procurement Planning Form (PPF)**

    1) Confirm the procurement approach prior to authoring

    2) Confirm the authoring/review timeline with ITPO

D. **Coordinate with your Procurement Officer to:**

    1) Ask questions from ITPO as they come up

    2) Attend authoring office hours Tuesdays 11-12 online (and in-person if desired). Procurement Officer should send topics to Cindi Duehmig in advance.

    3) Automation pilot planned for November

    4) Schedule a review session ~15 business days after confirmation the document was submitted to DoIT (Don't wait for review response)

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References

- **RFP Template**

  http://doit.maryland.gov/contracts/Pages/writingITsolicitations.aspx

  a. Please report errors, inconsistencies

  b. CATS+ template will continue to evolve based on automation

  c. Always use the very latest version of the document

  d. Standard Template Forms
     http://doit.maryland.gov/contracts/Pages/writingITsolicitations.aspx

- **RFP old-to-new mapping tables**

  http://doit.maryland.gov/contracts/Pages/writingITsolicitations.aspx

- **Minimum Qualifications Guidance**

  http://doit.maryland.gov/contracts/Documents/_procurementForms/Guidance-Writing-Minimum-Qualifications-09262017.pdf

Questions?

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Please provide feedback on this session.

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