

## 5.1 INSTRUCTIONS

### 5.1.1 PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

#### General Instructions

The following sections provide details on how to get more information about an RFP and how to respond to an RFP. All responses must be complete and in the prescribed format.

During the performance of the Work, a State representative (the "Agency Project Representative") will represent the Agency and be the primary contact for matters relating to the Work. The Agency Project Representative will be designated in writing after the Contract award.

INQUIRIES. Offerors may make inquiries regarding an RFP any time during the inquiry period listed in the Calendar of Events. To make an inquiry, Offerors must use the following process:

1. Access the State Procurement Web site at <http://www.ohio.gov/procure>.
2. From the Navigation Bar on the left, select "Find It Fast".
3. Select "Doc/Bid/Schedule #" as the Type.
4. Enter the RFP Number found on Page 1 of the document. (RFP numbers begin with the letters "CSP")
5. Click "Find It Fast" button.
6. On the document information page, click "Submit Inquiry".
7. On the document inquiry page, complete the required "Personal Information" section by providing:
  - a. First and last name of the prospective Offeror's representative who is responsible for the inquiry.
  - b. Name of the prospective Offeror.
  - c. Representative's business phone number.
  - d. Representative's e-mail address.
8. Type the inquiry in the space provided including:
  - a. A reference to the relevant part of the RFP.
  - b. The heading for the provision under question.
  - c. The page number of the RFP where the provision can be found.

9. Click the "Submit" button.

Offerors submitting inquiries will receive an immediate acknowledgement that their inquiry has been received as well as an e-mail acknowledging receipt of the inquiry. Offerors will not receive a personalized e-mail response to their question, nor will they receive notification when the question has been answered.

Offerors may view inquiries and responses using the following process:

1. Access the State Procurement Web site at <http://www.ohio.gov/procure>.
2. From the Navigation Bar on the left, select "Find It Fast".
3. Select "Doc/Bid/Schedule #" as the Type.
4. Enter the RFP Number found on Page 1 of the document. (RFP numbers begin with the letters "CSP")
5. Click "Find It Fast" button.
6. On the document information page, click the "View Q & A" button to display all inquiries with responses submitted to date.

DAS will try to respond to all inquiries within 48 hours of receipt, excluding weekends and State holidays. DAS will not respond to any inquiries received after 8:00 a.m. on the inquiry end date.

Offerors are to base their RFP responses, and the details and costs of their proposed projects, on the requirements and performance expectations established in the RFP for the future contract, not on details of any other potentially related contract or project. If Offerors ask questions about existing or past contracts using the Internet Q&A process, DAS will use its discretion in deciding whether to provide answers as part of the RFP process.

DAS is under no obligation to acknowledge questions submitted through the Q&A process if those questions are not in accordance with these instructions or deadlines.

**PROTESTS.** Any Offeror that objects to the award of a Contract resulting from the issuance of an RFP may file a protest of the award of the Contract, or any other matter relating to the process of soliciting the Proposals. Such protest must comply with the following information:

1. The protest must be filed by a prospective or actual bidder objecting to the award of a Contract resulting from the RFP. The protest must be in writing and contain the following information:
  - a. The name, address, and telephone number of the protester;
  - b. The name and number of the RFP being protested;
  - c. A detailed statement of the legal and factual grounds for the protest, including copies of any relevant documents;
  - d. A request for a ruling by DAS;
  - e. A statement as to the form of relief requested from DAS; and
  - f. Any other information the protester believes to be essential to the determination of the factual and legal questions at issue in the written request.
2. A timely protest will be considered by DAS, on behalf of the agency, if it is received by the DAS Office of Procurement Services (OPS) within the following periods:
  - a. A protest based on alleged improprieties in the issuance of the RFP, or any other event preceding the closing date for receipt of Proposals which are apparent or should be apparent prior to the closing date for receipt of Proposals, must be filed no later than five (5) business days prior to the Proposal due date.
  - b. If the protest relates to the recommendation of the evaluation committee for an award of the Contract, the protest must be filed as soon as practicable after the Offeror is notified of the decision by DAS regarding the Offeror's Proposal.
3. An untimely protest may be considered by DAS at the discretion of DAS. An untimely protest is one received by the DAS OPS after the time periods set in paragraph 2 above. In addition to the information listed in paragraph 1, untimely protests must include an explanation of why the protest was not made within the required time frame.
4. All protests must be filed at the following location:

Department of Administrative Services  
Office of Procurement Services  
4200 Surface Road  
Columbus, OH 43228-1395

SUBJECT: (Insert RFP Number and Index Number)

This protest language only pertains to an RFP offering.

**ADDENDA TO THE RFP.** If DAS decides to revise an RFP before the Proposal due date, an addendum will be announced on the State Procurement Web site.

Offerors may view addenda using the following process:

1. Access the State Procurement Web site at <http://www.ohio.gov/procure>;
2. From the Navigation Bar on the left, select "Find It Fast";
3. Select "Doc/Bid/Schedule #" as the Type;
4. Enter the RFP Number found on Page 1 of the document (RFP numbers begin with the letters "CSP");
5. Click "Find It Fast" button;
6. On the document information page, click on the addendum number to display the addendum.

When an addendum to an RFP is necessary, DAS may extend the Proposal due date through an announcement on State Procurement Web site. Addenda announcements may be provided any time before 5:00 p.m. on the day before the Proposal is due. It is the responsibility of each prospective Offeror to check for announcements and other current information regarding the RFP.

After the submission of Proposals, addenda will be distributed only to those Offerors whose submissions are under active consideration. When DAS issues an addendum to the RFP after Proposals have been submitted, DAS will permit Offerors to withdraw their Proposals.

This withdrawal option will allow any Offeror to remove its Proposal from active consideration should the Offeror feel that the addendum changes the nature of the transaction to the extent that the Offeror's Proposal is no longer in its interests. Alternatively, DAS may allow Offerors that have Proposals under active consideration to modify their Proposals in response to the addendum, as described below.

Whenever DAS issues an addendum after the Proposal due date, DAS will tell all Offerors whose Proposals are under active consideration whether they have the option to modify their Proposals in response to the addendum. Any time DAS amends the RFP after the Proposal due date, an Offeror will have the option to withdraw its Proposal even if DAS permits modifications to the Proposals. If the Offerors are allowed to modify their Proposals, DAS may limit the nature and scope of the modifications. Unless otherwise stated in the notice by DAS, modifications and withdrawals must be made in writing and must be submitted within ten (10) business days after the addendum is issued. If the RFP provides for a negotiation phase, this procedure will not apply to changes negotiated during that phase. Withdrawals and modifications must be made in writing and submitted to DAS at the address and in the same manner required for the submission of the original Proposals. Any modification that is broader in scope than DAS has authorized may be rejected and treated as a withdrawal of the Offeror's Proposal.

**PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL.** Each Offeror must submit a Technical Proposal and a Cost Proposal as part of its Proposal package. Proposals must be submitted as two (2) separate components (Cost Proposal and Technical Proposal) in separate sealed envelopes/packages. Each Technical Proposal package must be clearly marked "CSPxxxxx – Technical Proposal" on the outside of each Technical Proposal package's envelope. Each Cost Proposal package must be clearly marked "CSPxxxxx – Cost Proposal" on the outside of each Cost Proposal package's envelope. Offeror shall mark the correct CSP number on all envelopes/packages

The Offeror must also submit, in the sealed package, a complete copy of the Proposals on CD-ROM in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, or Project) 2003 or higher, format and/or PDF format as appropriate. In the event there is a discrepancy between the hard copy and the electronic copy, the hard copy will be the official Proposal. Proposals are due no later than the Proposal due date, at 1:00 p.m. Proposals submitted by e-mail or fax are not acceptable and will not be considered. Proposals must be submitted to:

Department of Administrative Services  
Office of Procurement Services - Bid Desk  
4200 Surface Road  
Columbus, OH 43228-1395

DAS will reject any Proposals or unsolicited Proposal addenda that are received after the deadline. An Offeror that mails its Proposal must allow adequate mailing time to ensure its timely receipt. DAS recommends that Offerors submit Proposals as early as possible. Proposals received prior to the deadline are stored, unopened, in a secured area until 1:00 p.m. on the due date. Offerors must also allow for potential delays due to increased security. DAS will reject late Proposals regardless of the cause for the delay.

Each Offeror must carefully review the requirements of the RFP and the contents of its Proposal. Once opened, Proposals cannot be altered, except as allowed by the RFP.

By submitting a Proposal, the Offeror acknowledges that it has read the RFP, understands it, and agrees to be bound by its requirements. DAS is not responsible for the accuracy of any information regarding the RFP that was gathered through a source different from the inquiry process described in the RFP.

ORC Section 9.24 prohibits DAS from awarding a Contract to any Offeror(s) against whom the Auditor of State has issued a finding for recovery if the finding for recovery is "unresolved" at the time of award. By submitting a Proposal, the Offeror warrants that it is not now, and will not become subject to an "unresolved" finding for recovery under Section 9.24, prior to the award of a Contract arising out of the RFP, without notifying DAS of such finding. ORC Section 9.231 applies to this contract.

DAS may reject any Proposal if the Offeror takes exception to the terms and conditions of the RFP, fails to comply with the procedure for participating in the RFP process, or the Offeror's Proposal fails to meet any requirement of the RFP. Any question asked during the inquiry period will not be viewed as an exception to the Terms and Conditions.

**CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.** DAS procures goods and services through a Request for Proposal (RFP), in a transparent manner. As such, the process to procure goods and services by DAS is open to inspection by the public. DAS makes available prices (offered and accepted), terms of payment, Proposal materials, evaluation scores, product information, and other types of information DAS uses in evaluating and/or awarding the Contract. Further, the DAS will open for public inspection all Proposals provided to the DAS in response to the RFP.

Therefore, an Offeror should not provide DAS with any information that the Offeror wishes the DAS not to provide to the public pursuant to a public request for such information. (Note: DAS will attempt to redact ancillary personal information such as social security numbers and Tax Identification Numbers from public inspection). Additionally, the Offeror must understand that all Proposals and other material submitted will become the property of the State and may be returned only at the State's option. Proprietary information should not be included in a Proposal or supporting materials because DAS will have the right to use any materials or ideas submitted in any Proposal without compensation to the Offeror.

However, if the Offeror chooses to include information it deems proprietary or trade secret information, the Offeror may designate such information as confidential and request that such information not be considered as public records and open for inspection. DAS shall review such requests provided the following:

1. The Offeror provides both an electronic copy and paper (hard) copies of the Proposal;
2. The Offeror clearly designates such information as confidential, proprietary, or trade secret, as appropriate at the time of Proposal submission;
3. The Offeror submits the designated material in a sealed container clearly marked "Confidential" and such material is readily separable from the Proposal; and
4. The Offeror redacts such information from the electronic copy of the Proposal.

DAS will review such information to determine whether the material is of such nature that confidentiality is warranted.

The decision as to whether such confidentiality is appropriate rests solely with DAS. If DAS determines that the information marked as confidential, trade secret, or proprietary, is not ancillary to the Proposal and that DAS needs such information in the evaluation of the Proposal or that the information does not meet a statutory exception to disclosure, DAS will make the information available to the public. DAS will inform the Offeror, in writing, of the information DAS does not consider confidential for purposes of public disclosure.

Upon receipt of DAS' determination that all or some portion of the Offeror's designated information is not confidential, the Offeror may exercise the following options:

1. Withdraw the Offeror's entire Proposal;
2. Request that DAS evaluate the Proposal without certain information DAS deemed "public" (DAS will return such information to the Offeror); or
3. Withdraw the designation of confidentiality, trade secret, or proprietary information for such information and request DAS review the Proposal in its entirety.

Finally, if information submitted in the Proposal is not marked as "Confidential", it will be determined that the Offeror waived any right to assert such confidentiality.

DAS will retain all Proposals, or a copy of them, as part of the Contract file for at least ten (10) years. After the retention period, DAS may return, destroy, or otherwise dispose of the Proposals or the copies.

WAIVER OF DEFECTS. DAS may waive any defects in any Proposal or in the submission process followed by an Offeror. DAS will only do so if it believes that it is in the State's interests and will not cause any material unfairness to other Offerors.

MULTIPLE OR ALTERNATE PROPOSALS. DAS accepts multiple Proposals from a single Offeror, but DAS requires each such Proposal be submitted separately from every other Proposal the Offeror makes. Additionally, the Offeror must treat every Proposal submitted as a separate and distinct submission and include in each Proposal all materials, information, documentation, and other items the RFP requires for a Proposal to be complete and acceptable. No alternate Proposal may incorporate materials by reference from another Proposal made by the Offeror or refer to another Proposal. DAS will judge each alternate Proposal on its own merit.

ADDENDA TO PROPOSALS. Addenda or withdrawals of Proposals will be allowed only if the addendum or withdrawal is received before the Proposal due date. No addenda or withdrawals will be permitted after the due date, except as authorized by the RFP.

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS. Each Proposal must be organized in an indexed binder ordered in the same manner as the response items are ordered as listed in 5.1.3, Documentation Required.

DAS wants clear and concise Proposals. Offerors should, however, take care to completely answer questions and meet the RFP's requirements thoroughly. All Offerors, including current contract holders, if applicable, must provide detailed and complete responses as Proposal evaluations, and subsequent scores, are based solely on the content of the Proposal.

No assumptions will be made or values assigned for the competency of the Offeror whether or not the Offeror is a current or previous contract holder.

DAS will not be liable for any costs incurred by an Offeror in responding to the RFP, regardless of whether DAS awards the Contract through this process, decides not to go forward with the Project, cancels the RFP for any reason, or contracts for the Project through some other process or by issuing another RFP.

### 5.1.2 PROPOSAL FORMAT AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED

Each Proposal must include sufficient data to allow the State to verify the total cost for the Project and all of the Offeror's claims of meeting the RFP's requirements. Each Proposal must respond to every request for information in these instructions whether the request requires a simple "yes" or "no" or requires a detailed explanation. Simply repeating the RFP's requirements and agreeing to comply will be an unacceptable response and may cause the Proposal to be rejected.

These instructions describe the required format for a responsive Proposal. The Offeror may include any additional information it believes is relevant. An identifiable tab sheet must precede each section of a Proposal, and each Proposal must follow the format outlined below. All pages, except pre-printed technical inserts, must be sequentially numbered. Any material deviation from the format outlined below may result in a rejection of the non-conforming Proposal.

Each Proposal must contain the following information, chronologically in order, with tabbed sections as listed below:

1. Signed Cover Page from the RFP
2. Offeror Required Information (Form 5.2.1)
3. Signed Contracts (Form 5.2.2)
4. Offeror Profile and Prior Projects (Forms 5.2.3 and 5.2.4)
5. Staffing Plan and Personnel Profile Summary (Forms 5.2.5 and 5.2.6)
6. Work Plan (Refer to Pg. 6 – Work Plan instructions)
7. Support Requirements
8. Conflict of Interest Statement
9. Assumptions
10. Proof of Insurance
11. Contract Performance (Form 5.2.7)
12. W-9 Form and Additional Vendor Information Form (if not current State of Ohio vendor)
13. Banning the Expenditure of Public Funds on Offshore Services (Form 5.2.8)
14. Cost Summary from the RFP
15. Additional Attachments from the RFP that require input from Offeror (if any).

In addition, the following must be completed online:

16. Affirmative Action Plan

#### REQUIREMENTS:

1. Signed Cover Page. Offeror must sign the Cover sheet of the RFP and submit with its Proposal. By submitting a response to the RFP, Offeror acknowledges, understands and will comply with the RFP requirements and confirms all the instructions and links have been read and understood.
2. Offeror Required Information. See Form 5.2.1. This form must be completed in its entirety and signed by an individual authorized to legally bind the Offeror.
3. Signed Contracts. See Form 5.2.2. The Offeror must provide two (2) originally signed, blue ink copies of the Contract. Offeror must complete, sign and date both copies of the Contract and include it with its Proposal.
4. Offeror Profile and Prior Projects. See Form 5.2.3. Each Proposal must include a profile of the Offeror's capability, capacity, and relevant experience working on projects similar to this Work. This form must be completed in its entirety.

The Offeror shall also provide information on the firm's background as well as evidence that it has in place the personnel, internal procedures, and any other resources required under the terms of the Contract to ensure successful performance and contract compliance. Offerors must describe current operational capacity of the organization and the Offeror's ability to absorb the additional workload resulting from this Project.

The Offeror must document previous experience and expertise in providing the minimum number of previous projects required in the RFP, similar in size and complexity, in the allotted time frame. These projects must be of similar size, scope and nature. Details of the similarities must be included. Form 5.2.4 must be filled out completely for each of the projects provided.

5. Staffing Plan. The Offeror must provide a staffing plan that identifies all key personnel required to do the Project and their responsibilities on the Project. The State is seeking a staffing plan that matches the proposed Project personnel and qualifications to the activities and tasks that will be completed on the Project. In addition, the plan must have the following information:
  - a. A matrix matching each key team member to the staffing requirements in the RFP.

- b. A contingency plan that shows the ability to add more staff if needed to ensure meeting the Project's due date(s).
- c. A discussion of the Offeror's ability to provide qualified replacement personnel.
- d. The Offeror must submit a statement and chart that clearly indicate the time commitment of the proposed work team, including the Project Manager, to the Project and any other, non-related work during the term of the Contract. The Offeror must also include a statement indicating to what extent, if any, the Project Manager may be used on other projects during the term of the Contract. The Evaluation Committee may reject any Proposal that commits the proposed Project Manager to other work during the term of the Contract if the committee believes that doing so will be detrimental to the Offeror's performance.

Personnel Profile Summary. See Forms 5.2.5 and 5.2.6. The Offeror must use these forms and fill them out completely for each key candidate referenced.

Form 5.2.5 Candidate References. If fewer than three (3) projects are provided, the Offeror must include information as to why fewer than three (3) projects were provided. The State may disqualify the Proposal if fewer than three (3) projects are given. This form must be filled out in its entirety.

Form 5.2.6 Education and Training. This form must be completed to list the education and training of the proposed candidates and will demonstrate, in detail, the proposed candidate's ability to properly execute the Contract based on the relevance of the education and training to the requirements of the RFP. Offeror must include copies of any pertinent licenses and or certificates.

One of the criteria on which the State may base the award of the Contract is the quality of the Offeror's Work Team. Switching personnel after the award will not be accepted without due consideration. The Offeror must propose a Work Team that collectively meets all the requirements in the RFP. Additionally, each team member may have mandatory requirements listed in the RFP that the team member must individually meet. All candidates proposed must meet the technical experience for the candidate's position and be named.

6. Work Plan. Offeror must fully describe its current capacity, approach, methods, and specific work steps for doing the Work on this Project. The State encourages responses that demonstrate a thorough understanding of the nature of the Project and what the Contractor must do to complete the Project satisfactorily. To this end, the Offeror must submit for this section of the Proposal the Project plan that will be used to create a consistent, coherent management plan of action that will be used to guide the Project. The Project plan should include detail sufficient to give the State an understanding of the Offeror's knowledge and approach, including Gantt charts documenting the successful completion of all of the deliverables to complete the Project.

The Work Plan must demonstrate an understanding of the requirements of the project as described in the RFP Scope of Work. Describe the methodologies, processes and procedures it will utilize in the implementation and production of the Scope of Work. Provide a comprehensive Work Plan that gives ample description and detail as to how it proposes to accomplish this project and what resources are necessary to meet the deliverables.

The State seeks insightful responses that describe proven state-of-the-art methods. Recommended solutions should demonstrate that the Offeror would be prepared to immediately undertake and successfully complete the required tasks. The Offeror's Work Plan should clearly and specifically identify key personnel assignments. (NOTE: The staffing plan should be consistent with the Work plans).

Additionally, the Offeror should address potential problem areas, recommended solutions to the problem areas, and any assumptions used in developing those solutions.

7. Support Requirements. The Offeror must describe the support it wants from the State other than what the State has offered in the RFP. Specifically, the Offeror should address the following:
  - a. Nature and extent of State support required in terms of staff roles, percentage of time available, etc.;
  - b. Assistance from State staff and the experience/qualification level required; and
  - c. Other support requirements.

The State may not be able or willing to provide the additional support the Offeror lists in this part of its Proposal. The Offeror must therefore indicate whether its request for additional support is a requirement for its performance. If any part of the list is a requirement, the State may reject the Offeror's Proposal if the State is unwilling or unable to meet the requirements.

8. Conflict of Interest Statement. Each Proposal must include a statement indicating whether the Offeror or any people that may work on the Project through the Offeror have a possible conflict of interest (e.g., employed by the State of Ohio, etc.) and, if so, the nature of that conflict. The State has the right to reject a Proposal in which a conflict is disclosed or cancel the Contract if any interest is later discovered that could give the appearance of a conflict.

9. Assumptions. The Offeror must provide a comprehensive listing of any and all of the assumptions that were made in preparing the Proposal. If any assumption is unacceptable to the State, it may be cause for rejection of the Proposal. No assumptions shall be included regarding negotiation, terms and conditions, and requirements.
10. Proof of Insurance. In this section, the Offeror must provide the certificate of insurance required by the General Terms & Conditions, Section 5.3.2. The policy may be written on an occurrence or claims made basis.
11. Contract Performance. The Offeror must complete Form 5.2.7, Offeror Performance Form.
12. W-9 Form and Vendor Information Form. If not a current vendor with the State, the Offeror must complete Federal Form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification form and the Vendor Information Form (OBM-5657) in their entirety. At least one (1) original of each form (signed in blue ink) must be submitted in the "original" copy of the Proposal. All other copies of the Proposal may contain duplicates of these completed forms. If a subsidiary company is involved, Offerors must have an original W-9 and OBM-5657 for both the parent and subsidiary companies. These documents and directions can be found on the OBM Web site under the heading "Vendor Forms" at <http://www.ohiosharedservices.ohio.gov/Vendors.aspx>

If the Offeror is a current vendor with the State, the Offeror shall state this and provide full business name.

13. Banning the Expenditure of Public Funds on Offshore Services. The Offeror must complete the Contractor/Subcontractor Affirmation and Disclosure form (Form 5.2.8) to abide with Executive Order 2011-12K issued by the Governor of Ohio, affirming no services of the Contractor or its subcontractors under this Contract will be performed outside the United States.

During the performance of this Contract, the Offeror must not change the location(s) of the country where the services are performed, change the location(s) of the country where the data are maintained, or made available without express written authorization of the Department of Administrative Services.

14. Cost Summary. The Cost Summary must be submitted with the Offeror's Proposal as the Cost Proposal. The Offeror's total cost for the entire Project must be represented as stated in the RFP. All costs for furnishing the services must be included in the Cost Proposals. No mention of, or reference to, the Cost Proposals may be made in responses to the general, technical, performance, or support requirements of the RFP.

All prices, costs, and conditions outlined in the Proposal shall remain fixed and valid for acceptance for 120 days, starting on the due date for Proposals. The awarded contractor must hold the accepted prices and/or costs for the entire contract period. No price change shall be effective without prior written consent from DAS, OPS.

NOTE: Offeror's should ensure Cost Proposals are submitted separately from the Technical Proposals, as indicated the Proposal Submittal paragraph of this RFP (see Instructions 5.1.1). This information should not be included in the Technical Proposal.

The State shall not be liable for any costs the Offeror does not identify in its Proposal.

15. Attachments. If the RFP includes any attachments requiring information from the Offeror, these must be completed and submitted with the Technical Proposal.
16. Affirmative Action. Before a contract can be awarded or renewed, an Affirmative Action Plan must be filed using the Ohio business Gateway Electronic Filing Web site at:

<http://business.ohio.gov/efiling/> .

Approved Affirmative Action Plans can be found by going to the Equal Opportunity Department's Web site:

<http://eodreporting.oit.ohio.gov/searchAffirmativeAction.aspx> .

A copy of the approval letter from EOD office shall be supplied by the Offeror as part of its Proposal or inclusion of an attestation to the fact that the Offeror has completed the process and is pending approval by the EOD office.

### 5.1.3 EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

The evaluation process consists of, but is not limited to, the following steps:

1. Certification. DAS shall open only those proposals certified as timely by the Auditor of State.
2. Initial Review. DAS will review all certified Proposals for format and completeness. DAS normally rejects any incomplete or incorrectly formatted Proposal, though it may waive any defects or allow an Offeror to submit a correction. If the Offeror meets the formatting and mandatory requirements listed herein, the State will continue to evaluate the proposal.
3. Proposal Evaluation. The procurement representative responsible for the RFP will forward all timely, complete, and properly formatted Proposals to an evaluation committee, which the procurement representative will chair. The evaluation committee will rate the Proposals submitted in response to the RFP based on criteria and weight assigned to each criterion.

The evaluation committee will evaluate and numerically score each Proposal that the procurement representative has determined to be responsive to the requirements of the RFP. The evaluation will be according to the criteria contained in section 2.5 of the RFP. An attachment to the RFP may further refine these criteria, and DAS has a right to break these criteria into components and weight any components of a criterion according to their perceived importance.

The committee may also have the Proposals or portions of them reviewed and evaluated by independent third parties or various State personnel with technical or professional experience that relates to the Work or to a criterion in the evaluation process. The committee may also seek reviews of end users of the Work or the advice or evaluations of various State committees that have subject matter expertise or an interest in the Work. In seeking such reviews, evaluations, and advice, the committee will first decide how to incorporate the results in the scoring of the Proposals. The committee may adopt or reject any recommendations it receives from such reviews and evaluations.

The evaluation will result in a point total being calculated for each Proposal. At the sole discretion of DAS, any Proposal, in which the Offeror received a significant number of zeros for sections in the technical portions of the evaluation, may be rejected.

DAS will document all major decisions in writing and make these a part of the Contract file along with the evaluation results for each Proposal considered.

4. Clarifications & Corrections. During the evaluation process, DAS may request clarifications from any Offeror under active consideration and may give any Offeror the opportunity to correct defects in its Proposal if DAS believes doing so does not result in an unfair advantage for the Offeror and it is in the State's best interests. Any clarification response that is broader in scope than what DAS has requested may result in the Offeror's proposal being disqualified.
5. Interviews, Demonstrations, and Presentations. DAS may require top Offerors to be interviewed. Such presentations, demonstrations, and interviews will provide an Offeror with an opportunity to clarify its Proposal and to ensure a mutual understanding of the Proposal's content. This will also allow DAS an opportunity to test or probe the professionalism, qualifications, skills, and work knowledge of the proposed candidates. The presentations, demonstrations, and interviews will be scheduled at the convenience and discretion of DAS. DAS may record any presentations, demonstrations, and interviews.
6. Contract Negotiations. Negotiations will be scheduled at the convenience of DAS. The selected Offeror(s) are expected to negotiate in good faith.
  - a. General. Negotiations may be conducted with any Offeror who submits a competitive Proposal, but DAS may limit discussions to specific aspects of the RFP. Any clarifications, corrections, or negotiated revisions that may occur during the negotiations phase will be reduced to writing and incorporated in the RFP, or the Offeror's Proposal, as appropriate. Negotiated changes that are reduced to writing will become a part of the Contract file open to inspection to the public upon award of the Contract. Any Offeror whose response continues to be competitive will be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any clarification, correction, or revision of the RFP and will be given the opportunity to negotiate revisions to its Proposal based on the amended RFP.
  - b. Top-ranked Offeror. Should the evaluation process have resulted in a top-ranked Proposal, DAS may limit negotiations to only that Offeror and not hold negotiations with any lower-ranking Offeror. If negotiations are unsuccessful with the top-ranked Offeror, DAS may then go down the line of remaining Offerors, according to rank, and negotiate with the next highest-ranking Offeror. Lower-ranking Offerors do not have a right to participate in negotiations conducted in such a manner.

- c. Negotiation with Other Offerors. If DAS decides to negotiate with all the remaining Offerors, or decides that negotiations with the top-ranked Offeror are not satisfactory and negotiates with one or more of the lower-ranking Offerors, DAS will then determine if an adjustment in the ranking of the remaining Offerors is appropriate based on the negotiations. The Contract award, if any, will then be based on the final ranking of Offerors, as adjusted.

Negotiation techniques that reveal one Offeror's price to another or disclose any other material information derived from competing Proposals are prohibited. Any oral modification of a Proposal will be reduced to writing by the Offeror as described below.

- d. Post Negotiation. Following negotiations, DAS may set a date and time for the submission of best and final Proposals by the remaining Offeror(s) with which DAS conducted negotiations. If negotiations were limited and all changes were reduced to signed writings during negotiations, DAS need not require the submissions of best and final Proposals.

It is entirely within the discretion of DAS whether to permit negotiations. An Offeror must not submit a Proposal assuming that there will be an opportunity to negotiate any aspect of the Proposal. DAS is free to limit negotiations to particular aspects of any Proposal, to limit the Offerors with whom DAS wants to negotiate, and to dispense with negotiations entirely.

DAS generally will not rank negotiations. The negotiations will normally be held to correct deficiencies in the preferred Offeror's Proposal. If negotiations fail with the preferred Offeror, DAS may negotiate with the next Offeror in ranking. Alternatively, DAS may decide that it is in the interests of the State to negotiate with all the remaining Offerors to determine if negotiations lead to an adjustment in the ranking of the remaining Offerors.

From the opening of the Proposals to the award of the Contract, everyone working on behalf of the State to evaluate the Proposals will seek to limit access to information contained in the Proposals solely to those people with a need to know the information. They will also seek to keep this information away from other Offerors, and the evaluation committee will not be allowed to tell one Offeror about the contents of another Offeror's Proposal in order to gain a negotiating advantage.

Before the award of the Contract or cancellation of the RFP, any Offeror that seeks to gain access to the contents of another Offeror's Proposal may be disqualified from further consideration.

The written changes will be drafted and signed by the Offeror and submitted to DAS within a reasonable period of time. If DAS accepts the change, DAS will give the Offeror written notice of DAS' acceptance. The negotiated changes to the successful offer will become a part of the Contract.

- e. Failure to Negotiate. If an Offeror fails to provide the necessary information for negotiations in a timely manner, or fails to negotiate in good faith, DAS may terminate negotiations with that Offeror and collect on the Offeror's proposal bond, if a proposal bond was required in order to respond to the RFP.
7. Best and Final Offer. If best and final proposals, or best and final offers (BAFOs), are required, they may be submitted only once; unless DAS makes a determination that it is in the State's interest to conduct additional negotiations. In such cases, DAS may require another submission of best and final proposals. Otherwise, discussion of or changes in the best and final proposals will not be allowed. If an Offeror does not submit a best and final proposal, the Offeror's previous Proposal will be considered the Offeror's best and final proposal.
8. Determination of Responsibility. DAS may review the highest-ranking Offerors or its key team members to ensure that the Offeror is responsible. The Contract may not be awarded to an Offeror that is determined not to be responsible. DAS' determination of an Offeror's responsibility may include the following factors: the experience of the Offeror and its key team members; past conduct and past performance on previous contracts; ability to execute this contract properly; and management skill. DAS will make such determination of responsibility based on the Offeror's Proposal, reference evaluations, and any other information DAS requests or determines to be relevant.
9. Reference Checks. DAS may conduct reference checks to verify and validate the Offeror's or proposed candidate's past performance. Reference checks indicating poor or failed performance by the Offeror or proposed candidate may be cause for rejection of the proposal. In addition, failure to provide requested reference contact information may result in DAS not including the referenced experience in the evaluation process.

The reference evaluation will measure the criteria contained in this part of the RFP as it relates to the Offeror's previous contract performance including, but not limited to, its performance with other local, state, and federal entities. DAS reserves the right to check references other than those provided in the Offeror's Proposal. DAS may obtain information relevant to criteria in this part of the RFP, which is deemed critical to

not only the successful operation and management of the Project, but also the working relationship between the State and the Offeror.

10. Financial Ability. Part of the Proposal evaluation criteria is the qualifications of the Offeror which include, as a component, the Offeror's financial ability to perform the Contract. The RFP may expressly require the submission of financial statements from all Offerors in the Proposal contents. If the Proposal contents do not make this an expressed requirement, DAS may still insist that an Offeror submit audited financial statements for up to the past three (3) years if DAS is concerned that an Offeror may not have the financial ability to carry out the Contract.

In evaluating an Offeror's financial ability, the weight DAS assigns, if any, to that financial ability will depend on whether the Offeror's financial position is adequate or inadequate. That is, if the Offeror's financial ability is adequate, the value assigned to the Offeror's relative financial ability in relation to other Offerors may or may not be significant, depending on the nature of the Work. If DAS believes the Offeror's financial ability is not adequate, DAS may reject the Proposal despite its other merits.

DAS will decide which phases are necessary. DAS has the right to eliminate or add phases at any time in the evaluation process.

To maintain fairness in the evaluation process, all information sought by DAS will be obtained in a manner such that no Offeror is provided an unfair competitive advantage.