**Introduction to the RFP Evaluation Process (for the District Finance Officer and Procurement staff)**

Under KRS 45A.370, the typical best practice approach towards conducting an RFP evaluation is to break the initial review/evaluation of the written proposals into two (2) distinct parts:

1. The Technical Evaluation
2. Under this process, a team of subject matter experts from the district (typically 3-5 people) will sign a “Conflict/Confidentiality Statement” and then receive a copy of the RFP and any vendor proposals received.
3. The evaluation team will independently review the proposals and score them, separately from other team members. The individual scores will be provided back by each team member to the Procurement Officer.
4. The Procurement Officer will average the individual team member scores, to get an “averaged” technical score per vendor.
5. The Cost Evaluation
6. This is typically conducted after the technical evaluation, so that there is no inherent bias formed during the review of technical information, based on the pricing.
7. The cost evaluation team can either be the same team as the technical evaluation team, a completely separate team, or even just one person – the Procurement Officer. It is most often just the Procurement Officer.

Remember that a “Conflict/Confidentiality” statement has to be signed by any new evaluation team members.

1. Cost is scored mathematically – so the highest vendor gets the most points for cost, and every other vendor gets a proportionate fraction thereof.
2. Combined Score from Technical/Cost
3. The “combined score” for each vendor is calculated by adding together the “averaged” technical score plus the cost score.
4. Interviews/Discussions (“Discussions”)
5. At this point, the evaluation team may want to have a second phase of evaluation, which allows for interviews/discussions (“discussions”) with a short-list of the highest scoring vendors (based on the total score for technical and cost). The evaluation team may want to do this for a number of reasons, including that all evaluation team members don’t agree that the highest ranking vendor (based on the combined score) is the best vendor, or because there is very small gap in scoring between several vendors, or because there needs to be some clarification from the vendors, before a final decision can be made.
6. The discussion team is typically composed of ~~the~~ essentially the same team from the technical evaluation ~~as before~~, but the composition can be adjusted if needed. For example, the Superintendent may decide ~~they~~ he/she wants to be part of the discussion team at this stage. Remember that a “Conflict/Confidentiality” statement has to be signed by any new evaluation team members.
7. A subset of vendors may be invited for discussions (a short-list), but it has to be based upon some type of logical decision-making considering the current rankings in score.
   * For example, if the rankings show that top three (3) vendors scored over a certain threshold – let’s say 90% - the evaluation team can decide to interview all vendors over that threshold – but the decision cannot be arbitrary and skip a vendor in the rankings – for example – invite vendor 1, skip vendor 2, and invite vendor 3. The team would have to invite all vendors who met the logical threshold for a short-list (whatever that is).
8. All vendors who are interviewed need to be treated fairly and consistently. In other words, they should all be given the same amount of time to present and the same topics of interest to discuss. They may be asked different questions – for example, if the topic is cost, they can be asked questions about their own specific pricing information – but the general broad topics must be the same.
9. Discussions shall not disclose any information derived from competing proposals.
10. Discussions are scored based upon an additional “bonus score” – for example, let’s say the evaluation team decides they want discussions to be worth 15%. This is the bonus score and at the end of discussions, the original combined score (of technical and cost) is added to the bonus score to get a Final Score.
11. As a best practice, it is recommended that the discussion team score each vendor based on a consensus of the discussion team (i.e., the discussion team gets together after the discussions and scores each vendor by ~~discussing and~~ agreeing collectively on one score per vendor as a group).
12. The vendors are ranked based upon Final Scores (technical + cost + discussions), and the highest-scoring vendor can be invited to contract negotiations.
13. Contract Negotiations
    1. Contract negotiations are typically handled by a different team, which may be a smaller sub-set of the evaluation team, or even include different individuals such as the Finance Officer and District Leadership as needed.
    2. After successful contract negotiations, the Procurement Officer shall prepare an award determination memo for the procurement file. This document shall summarize the procurement process to date and contain a copy of all pertinent documentation from the procurement process, including any evaluation scoresheets. This Memo shall be submitted to the District Finance Office for final review and approval.
    3. After successful contract negotiations, a contract shall be prepared by the District Finance Office in coordination with the selected vendor (and Board Counsel if needed), and the contract shall be submitted for Superintendent review and then Board approval.