

Policy & Procedures Manual



This manual is for use as a guide during the development of various bid solicitation documents and during the award process resulting contracts/master agreements for MiCTA members nationwide.

**A MiCTA Guide
For Processing
Bid Documents**

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Chapter 1: Purpose, Applications & General Information

Purpose

- A. To simplify and clarify the duties and performance of the MiCTA staff and committee members in the development of bid solicitation documents.
- B. To provide increased public confidence in the procedures as followed in public procurement.
- C. To provide increased economy in MiCTA procurement activities, by obtaining the most cost-effective and responsive manner to purchase materials and services for MiCTA members.
- D. To foster effective broad-based competition within the free enterprise system. E. To provide safeguards for the quality and integrity of the purchasing process.

Applications

This manual is the primary source of reference for the MiCTA staff and Bid Solicitation Project Committee Members while in the development and award process of any bid solicitation project. This manual should be used as a guide, resource document, and for clarification purposes during the entire solicitation process.

Good Faith Policy

These policies and procedures require that all parties involved in the negotiation, performance or administration of MiCTA contracts to act in good faith.

General Information

Refer to <http://www.mictatech.org> for background, resources, established contracts, member registration, contact names and other helpful information.

Chapter 2: MiCTA

Board Regulations

The policy and procedures established in this manual have been approved by the MiCTA Board. The MiCTA Board is responsible for the oversight of all project activities and approval is required for all bid solicitation project development.

Partner Responsibilities

Partner organizations co-authoring bid solicitation projects with MiCTA must review MiCTA guidelines and sign-off on the use of these guidelines. Any request for modification of MiCTA policies and procedures must be submitted in writing and approved by the MiCTA Board.

Chief Executive Officer Responsibilities

MiCTA Board will direct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to proceed with the bid solicitation development and give guidance on timelines, budgets, and other directives as deemed necessary to ensure continuity of enforced contracts for products and services to MiCTA members.

The Staff Responsibilities

The MiCTA Staff will provide all reasonable assistance to the chair and committee members including travel and lodging arrangements, providing copies, developing spreadsheets, documentation of outgoing and incoming documents and other general project support.

Chapter 3: Types of Bid Solicitation Methods

Request for Information (RFI)

A Request for Information is a quasi-formal method for soliciting information from vendors who have knowledge or information about an industry, product, or service. The RFI method is not intended to result in a contract award but is designed to allow for the collection of industry information that will then be used to determine if an RFQ or RFP solicitation method is appropriate.

Request for Proposal (RFP)

A Request for Proposal is a formal solicitation method that seeks to leverage the creativity and knowledge of business organizations in order to provide a solution to a unique procurement. The RFP solicits sealed price proposals from prospective vendors and seeks to obtain the “best value” for MiCTA and its members. The RFP method does not use the cost of the project as the single determining factor, but rather uses a combination of lowest cost plus best proposed solution to determine the award.

Request for Quotation/Bid Process (RFQ/BP)

Request for Quotation (RFQ) or Bid Process (BP) is used when it is known as to the quantity and quality expected by MiCTA and its members. A formal bid request is solicited for the best and lowest price meeting the specified qualifications spelled out in the bid document. Sealed Responses are returned by specified date and time. Acceptance of the lowest bidder is based on the lowest cost meeting the stated specifications. Negotiations are not conducted during this purchasing process.

Request for Qualified Contractor (RFQC)

A Request for Qualified Contractor is used in cases where MiCTA is attempting to find vendors with the qualifications to produce the project or service desired. The required qualifications are known and each vendor is judged on its ability to meet or surpass the required qualifications. This form of solicitation may, but not always, culminate in a contract award.

Chapter 4: Project Implementation Rules

Structure and distribution of Documents.

- A. Standard boiler-plate and the general format of MiCTA solicitation documents to be used unless the nature of the product, service or legal consideration requires significant modification. Standard boilerplate and/or general format documents will be provided to chair, author and committee members.
- B. Distribution of solicitation documents and supplemental material is prohibited to anyone outside the MiCTA Board, MiCTA Staff, and Project Committee until contract awarded and allowed by MiCTA Board.
- C. Requests or exceptions to release of solicitation documents before contractual agreements are in place, must be made in writing and handled on a case by case basis, as directed by the MiCTA Board.

Non-Disclosure Agreements

All persons working with MiCTA on Bid Solicitation Projects are required to sign a MiCTA non-disclosure agreement. The signed statement is in effect for the duration of the process through to the final award.

Co-Authored Bid Solicitation Projects

When determined by the MiCTA Board that a Bid Solicitation Project will be co-authored by a MiCTA Partner, additional steps and requirements may be necessary. Modifications to MiCTA existing policies and procedures must be approved by the Board.

Intellectual Property

All documents, software, processes and content developed as part of a Bid Solicitation Project becomes the property of MiCTA.

Committee Chair Tenure

The Committee Chair serves at the pleasure of the MiCTA Board. Unless otherwise decided by the Board, the bid project committee chair's duties and responsibilities end when the evaluation report of the completed Bid Solicitation Project.

Disclosure of Participants

MiCTA shall not disclose the names of any Bid Solicitation Project Committee Member, Evaluation Participant, and/or anyone else approved by MiCTA, who participates in the Project.

Chapter 5: Bid Solicitation Project Implementation

Criteria for Establishing a Bid Solicitation Project

- A. Existing Master Service Agreements, actively used by members, which expire within 6 to 9 months of current date.
- B. Significant interest expressed in writing by member organizations.
- C. New products or services identified as available and deemed beneficial to member organizations.
- D. A need identified by one or more of MiCTA Board Members.

Structure of Bid Solicitation Project Committee

- A. Committee should be representative of the project scope and nature.
- B. Multi-state representation is encouraged whenever possible.
- C. Committee size should be determined based on project scope, costs, complexity of technical, and business consideration.
- D. Partner organizations should be included when appropriate.

Selection of Bid Solicitation Project Committee Chair

- A. The CEO will issue invitations to act as a bid project committee chair to the general membership.
- B. The CEO will review qualifications of all bid project committee chair applicants and make recommendations to the MiCTA Board for approval.
- C. The Committee Chair serves at the pleasure of the MiCTA Board.

Selection of Author/Writer of Bid Solicitation Document

- A. Upon MiCTA Board approval of project timeliness and budgets, CEO and Committee Chair will issue invitation to author the appropriate bid document.
- B. CEO and Committee Chair will review qualifications of each applicant and submit recommendations to MiCTA Board for approval.

Selection of Bid Solicitation Project Committee Members

- A. Under the direction of the CEO, the committee chair will collect and review all participation requests and make recommendations to the MiCTA Board for approval.
- B. Committee members should have in-depth knowledge of the products and services represented in the scope and nature of the selected bid solicitation.

Duties of Bid Solicitation Project Committee Chair

Under the direction of the CEO, committee chair responsibilities and duties include:

- A. Receive and read the MiCTA Policy and Procedures for Bid Solicitation Project and agree to serve as Chair for duration of project until completion and final award.
- B. Prepare a Statement of Purpose for Project with CEO and submit to MiCTA Board for approval.
- C. Determine if the needs assessment is current and poll MiCTA members as needed for anticipated usage from established contract.
- D. Determine if RFI is necessary to ensure adequate vendor understanding and participation prior to issue of RFQ or RFP and take steps to initiate this process if valid.
- E. Facilitate with author on the creation of the solicitation document after the determination by the CEO of the appropriate bid solicitation method.
- F. Develop and submit a timeline/work scope of project and budget with CEO for approval by MiCTA Board.
- G. Initiate the selection process of project committee members. Present and brief each member with Policy & Procedures and Project Objective.
- H. Assign sub-committee groups to perform various tasks during solicitation process, i.e., develop technical evaluation rubric, cost evaluation, etc.
- I. Establish and conduct periodic meetings of committee. Record and distribute to members who were unable to attend.
- J. Coordinate all communications and assigned duties provided by committee and provide appropriate information to MiCTA Staff.
- K. Act as liaison between committee members, CEO, and MiCTA Board.
- L. Maintain proper purchasing etiquette with committee, vendors, and staff during the bid solicitation project process.
- M. Assure and maintain proper handling and control of purchasing documents and materials during bid solicitation and award selection process.
- N. Lead and direct committee members during the final RFP evaluation and selection process.
- O. Provide final evaluation and selection documentation to CEO upon completion of project.

Duties of Bid Solicitation Project Committee Members

Under the direction of the Chair, committee members' responsibilities and duties include:

- A. Sign a non-disclosure statement required by MiCTA Board before commitment to serve on the committee.
- B. Receive and read the MiCTA Policy and Procedures for Bid Solicitation Projects and commit to serve for duration of project until completion and final award.
- C. Maintain proper purchasing etiquette with other committee members and vendors, during the bid solicitation project process.
- D. Serve on sub-committee as assigned by Chair and attend all committee meetings whenever possible.

Duties of Author/Writer of Bid Solicitation Documentation

Under the direction of the CEO and using the policy and procedures outlined, author/writer's responsibilities and duties include:

- A. Sign a non-disclosure statement required by MiCTA Board before commitment to serve on the committee.
- B. Receive and read the MiCTA Policy and Procedures for Bid Solicitation Projects and serve on the committee as active member for duration of project until completion and final award.
- C. Maintain proper purchasing etiquette with other committee members and vendors, during the bid solicitation project process.
- D. Serve on sub-committee as assigned by Chair and attend all committee meetings whenever possible.

Chapter 6: Request for Proposal (RFP) Process

Preparation of RFP Document

The author will compile data from previous contracts, using the MiCTA RFP boilerplate, a list of technical requirements, specifications, mandatory and enhancements necessary and prepare draft for review by committee chair.

Committee Review of RFP

The committee will review draft and make recommendations to author as needed. Subcommittee assignments to be discussed and reviewed to assure that members understand the technical specifications and requirements and assignments are clearly defined.

Release of RFP

When the Committee determines the RFP document is ready for distribution, timeline dates to be inserted and the chair to submit to CEO and MiCTA Board for approval of release of RFP.

Vendor Distribution

The MiCTA Staff to use the appropriate compiled list to prepare for mail out to Vendors and distribute according to date specified in RFP:

- A. Vendors who have completed the Potential Vendor Information Form
- B. Vendors who are currently MiCTA Endorse or Approved Vendors
- C. Vendors submitted by a committee member or by one of the MiCTA Board Members

Publication of Notice

The MiCTA Staff to submit notice of RFP to at least one national publication, Identified websites, regional publications and other public sources as directed by the CEO and Committee Chair.

MiCTA Website Posting

RFP to be generally posted on <http://www.mictatech.org/> for a total of at least 28 days or longer as needed, when directed by CEO and Committee Chair.

Intent to Respond (ITR)

As specified in the body of the RFP, in order to continue to receive information and to respond to the RFP, the vendor must return the ITR form by the specified date and time to the MiCTA Office or be eliminated from the bidder's list.

Pre-Proposal Conference

- A. As specified in the body of the RFP, a pre-proposal conference will be held, either as a required or encouraged meeting, on the set date and time. The Committee Chair, Committee Members, Author/Writer, CEO and vendors who intend to bid on the RFP to be present.
- B. The conference to be held at MiCTA Office, a pre- designated location or by conducting a pre-determined teleconference meeting.
- C. The conference to be recorded and retained on file for record. A copy of conference to be provided to ITR responded bidders not in attendance, if not mandatory.
- D. The Committee Chair to provide a brief overview of MiCTA and any co-sponsors (if applicable) and all present introduced.
- E. Overview of the core requirements and specifications of RFP to be presented by CEO and Chair.

- F. General questions from Vendors to be addressed. Unanswered questions to be provided in writing to vendors within time period established in the RFP or at a date established during the conference.

Email Questions/Answers During Solicitation Process

As specified in the body of the RFP document, questions will be allowed from vendors up to established date by using the MiCTA website. Answers to questions received to be in generic format and posted on the MiCTA website so all vendors will be provided with same information. Questions received after the specified date stated in RFP will not be addressed or answered.

RFP Due Date

Vendor responses must be received by 4:30 PM, EST (daylight saving time if applies) on the specified due date and time stated in the RFP. Responses received will be verified against the received ITR forms when received. All responses will be logged and stamped in and held in secured location at MiCTA Office. Responses received after specified date and time will not be considered for an award.

Chapter 7: RFP Evaluation Initiation & Process

The RFP to be evaluated against a set of pre-determined criteria as defined in the RFP. Depending of the type of product/service specified in the RFP, evaluations can include any or all processes listed. Individual vendor scores and comments recorded by committee members into separate sheets /workbook.

Scoring Guidelines

The degree of compliance with RFP requirements by vendor using the pre-defined criteria to be determined by points on a scale from "0" to "5" and NA:

- 0 = Failure, no response
- 1 = Poor, inadequate, fails to meet requirements
- 2 = Fair, only partially responsive
- 3 = Average, meets minimum requirements
- 4 = Above average, exceeds minimum requirements
- 5 = Superior NA

Scoring Point Values

The evaluation criteria pre-determined in the RFP is normally given a point value to divisions of RFP. Divisions include but not limited to; Administrative, Technical, Demonstrations/Product Review, and Cost (benchmark cost), i.e., Administrative = 15%, Technical = 30%, Demos = 20%, Cost = 35%.

Vendor Reviews/Evaluations

A. Administration Review

The CEO, Committee Chair or designee and the Staff, to open all secured proposals received by vendors. Using a prepared review sheet, the administrative review to include clearly defined requirements specified in the RFP. Responders' proposals not submitted in accordance with specified administrative requirements to no longer be considered for award. Administrative Review includes:

1. Financial Records

The MiCTA Financial Officer and/or qualified members of the Evaluation Committee to conduct a review of the audited financial reports. Review includes; Annual Reports, Dun & Bradstreet/Credit Bureau Reports, Accounting Practices Letter, and banking and auditing references. Pertinent information concerning each vendor's management, scalability, research and development as well as

overall corporate/company stability will be researched via the internet and/or other resources if needed.

2. Client References

Vendors to provide prior notice to each client reference authorizing them to provide reference verification to the Evaluation Committee. Past and current clients to be asked a series of questions and scores based on the response and comments noted. If the client refuses to respond, the vendor will lose the points associated with this process.

3. Subcontractors Records and References

Vendor subcontractors delivering products/services direct to Members to be reviewed in the same manner as the vendor submitting proposal. This includes the same process with the subcontractor's clients. If product/services are not provided direct, the vendor assumes all responsibility for the actions of their subcontractors.

4. Clarification Report

Upon completion of administrative review, a list of administrative documents not included by responding vendors is compiled and Clarification Reports sent to vendors to allow response before further evaluations are conducted. Individual vendor scores and comments recorded by committee members into a separate sheets /workbook.

B. Technical Review

In accordance with the defined specifications of RFP, committee members will use a prepared evaluation spread sheet to mark scores of each vendor. Individual vendor scores and comments recorded by committee members into a separate sheets /workbook.

C. Presentation/Demonstration/Review

Determination made in advance by CEO and Chair, if and when on-site demonstrations will be required by vendors. In accordance with the clearly defined specifications of RFP, committee members will use a prepared evaluation spread sheet for scoring or review of each vendor during demo specified period. If on-site demonstrations are not considered as part of the RFP, vendors may be asked to participate in a conference call and address any additional issues or concerns of the committee. The presentation or conference call will focus specifically on the product/service offered in the proposal. Individual vendor scores and comments recorded by committee members into a separate sheets /workbook.

D. Product Testing and Site Visits

Product testing and site visits must be pre-determined in RFP after identified in the budget presented to the MiCTA Board for approval. If approved and defined in RFP, Individual vendor scores and comments recorded by committee members into a separate sheets /workbook.

E. Cost Proposal and Benchmark Cost Proposals Review

1. Cost proposals to be reviewed by sub-committee or entire committee as a separate review without knowledge of scoring on other point values. The cost proposals present the highest percentage of points to be issued on the evaluation sheet. Using the guidelines for scoring, the best cost proposed to receive the highest points. Individual vendor scores and comments recorded by committee members into a separate sheets /workbook.
2. Vendors may be requested to submit a "Benchmark Cost Proposal" response when responses to the cost proposals submitted cannot be completed for a comparative analysis between vendors. Benchmark cost proposals may be included in RFP or when required the committee will prepare a benchmark and sent to all responding vendors. Vendors to be scored in three areas:

- a. Known Out-of-Box Cost including price competitiveness /stability, incentive offerings, maintenance/support/training/SLA costs and professional services costs and customizations
- b. Demonstration of Known/Understood 3-year costs
- c. Costs as Proposed

Committee Scoring Responsibilities

Under the direction of the CEO, the committee chair will CEOrdinate and conduct the committee proposal response review and scoring sessions.

- A. Proposal reviews will be conducted in face-to-face meetings in a sequestered environment.
- B. All proposal documents shall remain on premises or with the committee chair at the end of each session.
- C. Proposal documents are not to be shared beyond the committee, MiCTA Staff, or MiCTA Board until the contract negotiations are final and awards made.
- D. Sub-committees will be assigned work groups for vendors review each day. At the end of each day, each sub-committee will provide an update and comments on reviews conducted.

Evaluation Concerns/Questions

- A. After the evaluation is finished by sub-committees, the committee to gather questions or concerns and determine if contact with vendor is necessary for clarification or deficiency purposes.
- B. If a vendor is found deficient in specific areas, the committee will determine if a Clarification Report (CR) or a Deficiency Report (DR) is valid and necessary in order to complete the evaluation.
- C. When deemed appropriate, an e-mail message to be sent to vendor outlining the area to be addressed. The vendor will be given a specified number of days to respond and failure to respond in time frame will result in loss of accrued points in that area of review.
- D. Vendor requiring clarification to receive notification via telephone of the e-mail message requiring attention. Any conversation to be limited with only information provided as to the specified due time to respond. Failure to respond within time frame may result in loss of points accrued.

Final Scoring

Recorded individual vendor scores will be posted to final score sheet and committee will apply the weighted average points to each proposal in order to compare vendors' proposals. Significant differences in scores should be discussed among committee members and resolved. Every effort to be made to resolve any misunderstanding of recorded data before final scoring is completed.

Best and Final Offers (BAFO)

Prior to having an award status, a best and final offer (BAFO) for pricing to be required from all valid responding vendors. Committee may opt to invoke the BAFO opportunity whenever vendor offers are not considered truly competitive or sufficient information was not provided to make a definitive decision for an Approved award recommendation.

Chapter 8: RFP Awards and Notification

Award Designations

The committee to make recommendations based on final evaluation and select contract award designations based on the following:

- A. Approved National
- B. Approved Local/Regional

Committee Findings and Recommendations

The final evaluation report and recommendations to be presented by the CEO and Committee Chair to the MiCTA Board, for review. The Board will make final determination for awards.

Notification of Vendors

After the MiCTA Board approves the committee recommendations, the approved vendors will be notified in writing and given their award status.

Chapter 9: Contract Awards and Distribution

Contract Negotiations

All Contract negotiations are conducted by MiCTA Officers and Staff. Committee Members may participate if invited to do so by the CEO or MiCTA Board.

Announcement of Master Agreements/Contract Awards

Contract awards to be announced by the MiCTA Board in the press, websites, via e-mail messages, and trade show publications. The MiCTA Office Staff will make distribution of contract awards.

Challenges or Disputes

In the event that a committee decision or MiCTA Board action is challenged, the issue will be referred to the MiCTA Board Officers, the Board, and legal counsel. Communications with third parties are prohibited without the consent of legal counsel.

Project Evaluation and Summary

The Committee Chair will conduct an evaluation of the work completed by the committee and prepare a project summary to be submitted to and approved by the MiCTA Board as the final act of the this project. The evaluation report will be archived at the MiCTA office and made available to MiCTA members in good standing upon request.