

Food Service Management Contract (FSMC) Bidder Responsibility and Bid Responsiveness Criteria

Introduction

In the Request for Proposals/Invitation for Bids, the School Food Authority (SFA) must specify the criteria and scoring system to determine whether the bidder is responsible, and the bid is responsive and includes all relevant factors. Prior to determining the low bid, SFAs may consider such matters as contractor integrity, past performance, financial and technical resources, and accessibility to other necessary resources.

Bid Criteria

Bid criteria must be included in the initial Request for Proposals/Invitation for Bids (RFP/IFB) submitted for State Agency (SA) review. It is the SFA's responsibility to establish the minimum standards a bidder must meet for each criterion. In addition, the SFA must identify the means by which bidders can demonstrate compliance with those standards. The criteria should be designed by the SFA to meet the SFA's specific needs, but must not restrict competition.

The [Bidder Responsibility and Bid Responsiveness Criteria form](#) is used to outline the criteria and minimum standards established by the SFA and the evidence required for submission by bidders to demonstrate compliance. If proposals meet all criteria listed on the Bidder Responsibility and Bid Responsiveness Criteria form, the proposal meets the basic criteria and is then more thoroughly evaluated on the Bid Criteria Analysis Sheet. The [Bid Criteria Evaluation Rubric Sheet](#) must be used to evaluate each bidder based on the evidence provided to demonstrate compliance in meeting the minimum standards for each criterion established by the SFA. The Bid Criteria Analysis Sheet and Bidder Responsibility and Bid Responsiveness Criteria form must be submitted to AOE along with the [Pre-Contract Award Summary Sheet](#) following the bid opening and prior to the contract award.

Geographic Preference

If the SFA is interested in prioritizing FSMCs that implement Geographic Preference in their procurement practices, the SFA should establish this in the scoring criteria. The SFA should not include such provisions as to limit competition. The SFA should clearly define "local" and indicate a preference for minimally or unprocessed foods produced within the defined area. The SFA may have multiple tiers for this preference, giving graduated benefits to bidders that provide documentation of their ability to provide food within a certain geographic range. **For example**, language can be included such as: "For the purposes of evaluating bids, respondents who can supply at least 20% of minimally or unprocessed items from within the State of Vermont will receive a 5% price reduction. Respondents who can supply at least 50% of minimally or unprocessed items from within the State of Vermont will receive a 10% price reduction." Each SFA should evaluate the district's budget to determine the appropriate preference level for geographic preference compliance.



Further measures can be taken to encourage use of local farms by incorporating specifications into the bid. Some potential specifications have been included in this RFP/IFB bid document template. Each district should evaluate local food programming and identify parallel objectives for its geographic preference. These programmatic priorities can be included in the RFP/IFB as specifications to ensure that the educational opportunities and freshness levels are appropriate for the needs of the district. Providing that the scoring rubric is open and transparent, the SFA can include a price reduction for many elements of Geographic Preference.

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