

Final Steps to Take Before Submitting a Government Contract Bid

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Before you submit your bid, go through our checklist to make sure all is in order.

After a long process, congratulations, you have arrived at the last step: submitting your bid for a government contract! You can do this via the U.S. mail, UPS, RIP, or another carrier.

Warning

However, it is important to keep in mind that if your bid is late, the U.S. mail is the only carrier that the government will recognize for consideration of a late bid.

But before you seal up that envelope and send it in, or submit it online, take a few minutes to go through our final checklist to help make sure that you have done everything you need to do.

- Have you placed your name on the bidder's list for supplies and/or services that you are qualified to provide? This means going to the [SAM web page](#) and filling out all the fields.
- Have you read the solicitation carefully? If you wait to read it until after you get an award, you might be in for some severe shocks. For example, you may find out that the packaging costs are greater than the unit cost. How are you going to handle that? ([Review the Bid.](#))
- Have you carefully read the specifications and standards that apply to this contract? Remember: It's your responsibility to find and get the specs before you bid. Where applicable, you must also get the tech package, which contains the drawings. More than a few companies that have bid on contracts without seeing a print have been in for a sad awakening when the inspector refused to sign off because they didn't meet contract requirements. ([Getting Technical Data.](#))
- For those bidding online, it is important to check your bid information before hitting the Submit button. Check your calculations and make sure all fields are filled in. If you have any questions contact the contracting officer.
- Did you bid on the exact parts that the buyer is looking for and do you propose to furnish material in exact accordance with the specifications, drawings, and description as are in the contract solicitation? If not, you better tell the government how you propose to deviate and make sure that you will still be furnishing what they want. If you plan on bidding with an exception, then you need to explain why as well as how the government will benefit. Be careful because you can only do this on a negotiated solicitation. If the solicitation is a sealed bid you must bid the requirement first, then an

alternative. The government can only consider the alternative if your offer is the low one.

- If the product that you bid on requires qualification approval (i.e., a QPL), have you made sure that the approval number that you have entered is correct, and current and was issued to the plant location where the product will be produced?
- Have you checked out all packaging and marking requirements? The government has some special packaging requirements that the commercial market does not have. Sometimes the packaging costs can exceed the unit product cost.
- Have you checked and verified the unit prices for the contract? Check your math carefully: you don't want to lose the bid or lose money because of a simple arithmetic error.
- Is your bid for delivery in exact accordance with the delivery requirements specified in the solicitation? If the buyer is looking for delivery in 45 days or less, do your proposed dates fall within their requirements?
- Does your acceptance time conform to the requirements in the solicitation?
- Have you requested any information or clarification on points that are not clear to you? Have you gotten them in writing? (If you don't have them in writing, then you don't have them.)
- Have you properly completed the "Representations, certifications and acknowledgments" portion of the bid? Remember that if you are a Women-Owned Small Business, you are not a Small Disadvantaged Owned Business. Or if you are owned by a large business, you are not a small business just because you have only 40 workers at your location.
- Have you entered your discounts correctly? (Note: You don't have to offer a discount.)
- Have you signed the contract? We are serious here! Go back and make sure. Is the person who signed the contract authorized to do so? Your assistant cannot sign for you unless he or she is authorized.
- Have you read the whole contract . . . a second and even a third time?
- Have you really addressed the evaluation factors? Does your proposal reflect what the buying agency is looking for? Is the agency more interested in "how" you are going to produce the item than what the "cost" is? The agency may be more interested in your procurement history. Remember, not everything is just about cost. Provide enough detail when the proposal asks to explain how you will be doing what is required. Explain your process, how you will deal with any problems what equipment is necessary, will be used and your timeline if asked for.
- Did you provide enough detail when the proposal asks you to explain how you will be doing what is required? Explain your process, how you will deal with any problems what equipment is necessary, will be used, and your timeline if asked for.
- Have you acknowledged all amendments on the bid? The buyer will automatically kick your bid out if you haven't.
- Did you include any condition that would modify the requirements? In this regard, be careful of any transmittal or cover letters. If your normal company letterhead contains any statement about terms, price, time of delivery, or anything else that goes to the substance of the bid, it will negate your offer as "nonresponsive" because you have

taken exception to the terms and conditions of the solicitation and your bid will be thrown out. All the government wants you to do is provide accurate and complete information on the forms that have been provided to you. But, if you are responding to an RFP, you may have exceptions and need to use a transmittal letter. However, make sure it doesn't have special terms and conditions on it.

- Did you include the correct number of copies? Make sure all of the copies are collated correctly, with no pages missing or out of order. Also make sure you keep a copy for yourself.
- Did you put enough postage on the bid?
- If you are submitting a sealed bid, did you put the "Sealed Bid" label on the envelope and not on the bid itself?
- Have you given yourself enough time to mail or overnight the bid to the purchasing office? UPS and RIP are not the U.S. mail. Bids sent by these methods, if they are received late, do not qualify for consideration under the "late bid procedures" regulation. Isn't it nice to be able to blame it on the mailman?
- O.K., where can you make mistakes or find yourself not giving enough? If you take any exception to the requirements, you're just kidding yourself, unless you have talked to the contracting officer and gotten his or her approval; if you don't, you will be considered "non-responsive." All that work for nothing. In section L, not submitting the required information; in section M you did not address the areas that are weighted heavier in the evaluation factors, this means that you did not read the factors, or that you felt you knew better. Remember, if the buyer is giving more weight to "faster delivery" and all you address is quality and give a delivery that is not even close to "fast," guess who's proposal will not be considered. Always give them what they want, then, if you have a better solution, talk to them later. Too many companies spend time on low-weighted areas and not enough on the heavily weighted ones. Many companies lose a contract for just this reason. Again, read the evaluation factors!

O.K., that's it! Run down to the post office and get your bid in the mail!