

Hennepin County Request for Proposal (RFP): Best Practices Guide

A Request for Proposal or RFP is an invitation for vendors to submit a proposal to the county. The RFP asks businesses and/or organizations to detail how they can provide solutions. Hennepin County utilizes RFPs to find the best solutions and services available to address a specific need. A strong proposal identifies how you will meet the county's need and demonstrates how you will deliver the desired outcomes at a reasonable price. In this guide, we'll walk through some best practices and tips for understanding and responding to Hennepin County RFPs effectively.

Before Submitting a Proposal:

- Register with the [supplier portal](#) to view information about opportunities relevant to your business or organization.
- Review the [Contracting with Hennepin County](#) site to familiarize yourself with the county's process and additional resources for contracting.
- Read the RFP requirements and the scope of services thoroughly to ensure that you understand the requirements, evaluation criteria and other important details.
- Carefully consider the project timeline and your capacity to perform the required services before submitting a proposal.

Tips for preparing your proposal:

- Give yourself enough time to prepare and submit your proposal. Plan and allow time for revisions before the RFP deadline.
- Prepare to demonstrate in your proposal how you can perform the required service and what value you can bring to the project. Consider the following questions as you prepare your response:
 - How will I solve the proposed problem?
 - What sets my business or organization apart from other vendors?
 - Is my proposed budget justifiable and aligned with the scope of work?
 - Do I understand the evaluation criteria and how I will address each key area?

- Use plain language and avoid jargon in your proposal. [Watch this video on how to use plain language to prepare your proposal](#)
- Follow the proposal format included in the RFP. For some proposals, that may entail filling out a form with specific questions. Be sure to answer all the questions asked.
- If the RFP includes a pre-proposal meeting, attend to learn more about the scope of work. Links to the pre-proposal meetings are found in the [supplier portal](#) within the RFP document.
- Pay attention to any budget constraints listed in the RFP and ensure that your proposed budget is consistent with the cost of running your operations for the project.
- Adhere to any word or page limits in your proposal. Concise responses with relevant information that showcases your ability to provide the proposed services and meet desired outcomes are key.
- Submit any questions you have about the RFP before the question deadline. The RFP may restrict communications to email only and only with the individuals identified as county contacts. The county will answer questions in an addendum. The identity of who asks the question is not revealed. The addendum is posted in the Supplier Portal and available to all prospective proposers.

Finalizing Your Proposal Checklist

- ✓ Review the evaluation criteria for the RFP carefully to make sure your proposal demonstrates all elements that will be reviewed by the evaluation panel.
- ✓ Read the addenda that are issued by the county.
- ✓ Review the contracting terms included within the RFP to make sure you understand your responsibilities as a contracted partner if awarded.
- ✓ Ask someone other than the person preparing your proposal to proofread it for errors, clarity, and completeness.

After submitting your proposal:

- Be patient, the review process can often take several weeks. The county will contact you if your proposal is selected and we wish to enter a contract.
- If your proposal is not selected, you may follow up with the RFP contact listed on the RFP to receive feedback and gain insights on ways to improve the next time.