



Frequently Asked Questions

Sourcewell Procurement Portal Cooperative Purchasing Solicitations

Welcome to the guide addressing frequently asked questions on Sourcewell's solicitations for cooperative purchasing solutions. Below, you will find answers arranged by topic. While your query might not be phrased exactly as the examples, the intent of the responses remains consistent.

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Note: If you cannot find the answer you need in this FAQ, the RFP, the Master Agreement, or all issued addenda, please submit your questions through the Sourcewell Procurement Portal. A member of the Sourcewell Procurement team will respond.

I. General

Question:

Is there a list of documents or criteria that need to accompany our submission?

Answer:

All proposals must be submitted through the [Sourcewell Procurement Portal](#). Guidance on preparing a response in the Portal can be found in the "[Submit Response Guide](#)" located on the "Bids Homepage" in the Resource Materials section. Additional guidance specific to the RFP will be offered during the Pre-Proposal Conference.

Question:

Is there a way to export or download the questions within the specification tables?

Answer:

After selecting "Start Submission," a proposer may navigate to Step 4 – "Preview Bid" and select "Preview My Bid in PDF," if a downloadable PDF of the questionnaire tables is desired. PDF is the only format available during export.

Question:

Does Sourcewell conduct a public electronic opening?

Answer:

Yes. Sourcewell's RFP document identifies a specific date and time for that solicitation's opening. Members of the public may be physically present at Sourcewell's office for the opening and to hear the names of respondents announced if they desire. The opening of proposals is also conducted through the Sourcewell Procurement Portal. The solicitation status will automatically change to "Closed" after the Proposal Due Date and Time, and a list of all proposers is made publicly available in the Sourcewell Procurement Portal after the Proposal Due Date. To attend the opening, navigate to the Sourcewell Procurement Portal on the opening date and time listed in the RFP, verify that the Opportunities list search is set to "Closed" and view the proposer list as it's published.

Question:

Is there a word or character limit to the text field in the specification tables (questionnaire)?

Answer:

There is sufficient room to answer the question(s). The portal allows approximately 32,000 characters or 10-typed pages in each text field. Each answer should be clear and concise.

Question:

How soon will my questions be answered through the Sourcewell Procurement Portal?

Answer:

Responses to questions submitted through the portal and not covered in this FAQ are typically posted within 1-2 business days depending on the volume of questions.

Question:

Can we put together our own proposal, in our own format, and attach it to our response and put "See Attachment" in the specification tables (questionnaire)?

Answer:

The only acceptable proposal format is the Sourcewell Procurement Portal and the specification tables (questionnaire) contained therein. Proposers should submit its relevant information through the portal. Proposer's complete proposal must be submitted through the portal no later than the date and time specified in the Solicitation Schedule and all relevant information should be included in the proposal. Be thorough, clear, and concise in your narrative. Attachments should merely **SUPPLEMENT** your narrative.

Question:

Is there a list of upcoming categories or solicitations?

Answer:

Sourcewell's planned procurements are available for review on the Sourcewell Procurement Portal homepage (<https://proportal.sourcewell-mn.gov>). In the dropdown filter select the "Planned" option to view Sourcewell's current planned procurements. In the dropdown filter select the "Planned" option to view Sourcewell's current planned procurements.

Question:

Can we get a list of all registered suppliers with Sourcewell for this opportunity?

Answer:

A list of all suppliers who submitted for this solicitation will be made publicly available in the Sourcewell Procurement Portal after the Bid Due Date. To view the list, verify that the Sourcewell Procurement Portal opportunities list search is set to "All" or "Closed." The solicitation status will automatically change to "Closed" after the solicitation Due Date and Time.

II. Requested Equipment, Products, or Services

Question:

Where do I find the complete list of products and services required for the RFP?

Answer:

Sourcewell utilizes a competitive, solutions-based solicitation approach that is **NOT** based on detailed specifications or specific opportunities. A proposer can propose its entire offering that falls within the requested equipment, products, or services as described in II. Solicitation Details. B. Requested Equipment, Products, or Services within the RFP.

Question:

Can you tell me if my products and services meet the scope of the RFP?

Answer:

Sourcewell will not pre-qualify any products or services. It is left to the discretion of each Proposer to determine if its products or services meet the scope of RFP II. B. Requested Equipment, Products, or Services. Only those products within the scope of the RFP will be included in any contract awarded by Sourcewell as a result of the solicitation.

Question(s):

Am I required to list all products and services my company has to offer or only those related to this RFP?

Answer:

The Sourcewell RFP is an open and competitive solicitation process. Each proposer, in its discretion, will propose the equipment, products, and services that it deems to fall within Sourcewell's requested equipment, products, and services as described in the RFP II.B. Only those products within the scope of the RFP will be included in any contract awarded by Sourcewell as a result of the solicitation, and each Proposal will be evaluated based on the criteria stated in the RFP.

Question:

Am I required to offer all the products/services requested or outlined in the RFP? What if we cannot provide everything listed?

Answer:

The Sourcewell RFP is an open and competitive solicitation process. Each proposer, in its discretion, will propose the equipment, products, and services that it deems to fall within Sourcewell's requested equipment, products, and services as described in the RFP II. B. Only those products within the scope of the RFP will be included in any contract awarded by Sourcewell as a result of the solicitation, and each Proposal will be evaluated based on the criteria stated in the RFP.

A proposer is not required to offer all possible items or services described in the requested equipment, products, or services to be considered for an award. Proposals are evaluated based on the criteria as stated in the RFP.

Question:

What if some of my products and services fall under the list of exclusions found within the RFP?

Answer:

Proposers should review all exclusions listed within the RFP by visiting sourcewell-mn.gov and searching for the RFP six-digit number and review the requested equipment, products, or services of the RFP document. If a proposer includes excluded products or services in their proposal, those products and services will be excluded from the Master Agreement.

Question:

Is there a specific format for pricing? Or a requested sample of products to price? Our company is unable to find any individual product or services against which we are supposed to submit pricing.

Answer:

A specific format is not required for submission, but Excel is preferred. Each supplier will propose pricing in the format that makes sense for their industry. Each proposer, in its discretion, will determine and articulate the pricing approach that aligns with its business methods and satisfies all the requirements of the III. Pricing section of the RFP. Proposals are evaluated based on the criteria stated in the RFP.

III. Dealers, Resellers, or Subcontractors

Question:

Are we required to provide a specific list of our dealer network with our proposal?

Answer:

If a proposer requires the use of dealers, resellers, or subcontractors, the proposal should address how the equipment, products, or services will be provided to participating entities and describe the network of dealers, resellers, and/or subcontractors that will be available. It is the responsibility of the proposer to demonstrate its capability to deliver the requested solutions.

Question:

Does a manufacturer's dealer qualify as a proposer or is there a requirement that the proposer be a manufacturer of the equipment?

Answer:

The RFPs are not limited to manufacturers only; each proposal is evaluated based on the criteria stated in the RFP.

Question:

Is it permissible to add dealers, resellers, or subcontractors in the future or must they be declared during the submission process?

Answer:

It is left to the discretion of each proposer to determine the information or documentation necessary to best demonstrate their ability to serve Sourcewell Participating Entities and satisfy all the requirements included in the questionnaire tables. If a proposer may require the use of subcontractors, reference the section regarding the Requested Equipment, Products, or Services in the RFP II. B. "If Proposer requires the use of dealers, resellers, or subcontractors to provide the products or services, the Proposal should address how the products or services will be provided to Participating Entities and describe the network of dealers, resellers, and/or subcontractors that will be available to serve Participating Entities under a resulting contract."

In addition, refer to the Master Agreement Article 2, for the manner in which an awarded supplier provides sales or service provider updates during the contract term.

Question:

If a manufacturer has given the authority to a dealer, reseller, or subcontractor to bid and is awarded a Sourcewell contract, what is the process, if needed, to revoke this authority?

Answer:

Refer to the Master Agreement, Article 2, relating to an awarded supplier's obligation to make available a means to validate or authenticate those authorized on the supplier's behalf during the term of the resulting contract.

Question:

Can our dealer network pay the administrative fees and provide quarterly sales directly to Sourcewell, or is the payment and reporting required to come from the contract holder?

Answer:

Refer to the Sourcewell Master Agreement, Article 2, 7 section addressing Administrative Fees and Reporting. A downloadable version of the Master Agreement is found on the “Bid Details” page for the solicitation within the Sourcewell Procurement Portal. A single sales report and administrative fee remittance is contemplated for each calendar quarter during the term of an awarded contract. Suppliers must supply a report to Sourcewell regardless of the sales volume during the quarter.

IV. Pricing

Question:

I cannot supply my entire list of SKUs as it contains too many items, will this disqualify my proposal?

Answer:

In the competitive process, Sourcewell will not advise a proposer on the content of the proposal. Each proposer, in its discretion, will determine and articulate the pricing approach that aligns with its business methods and satisfies all the requirements of the RFP. All proposed pricing must be clearly understandable, complete, and fully describe the total cost of acquisition. Proposals are evaluated based on the criteria stated in the RFP.

Question:

My company’s pricing is too complex for line-item or catalog discounts. Can we provide a different pricing option?

Answer:

In the competitive process, Sourcewell will not advise a proposer on the content of the proposal. Each proposer, in its discretion, will determine and articulate the pricing approach that aligns with its business methods and satisfies all the requirements of the RFP. All proposed pricing must be clearly understandable, complete, and fully describe the total cost of acquisition. Proposals are evaluated based on the criteria stated in the RFP.

Question:

Is it acceptable to quote items such as onsite training, installation, and other related services, but exclude delivery?

Answer:

Each proposer, in its discretion, will determine and propose the pricing approach that aligns with its business methods and satisfies all the requirements of the RFP. Proposers should clearly identify any costs that are not included in the proposed pricing of the equipment, products, or services. All costs must be clearly identified and described.

Question:

What is the administrative fee supposed to be?

Answer:

Refer to the Administrative Fees section of the RFP III. B. For directions on proposing an administrative fee. It is left to the discretion of each proposer to determine and propose an administrative fee that is consistent with its business practices and industry.

Question:

Do we need to include the administrative fee in our price for this solicitation?

Answer:

Refer to RFP III. B. and Master Agreement Article 2, 7 sections on Administrative Fees. The

administrative fee is paid by the awarded supplier to Sourcewell and is not to be separately assessed to a participating entity.

Question:

What is the process to update products or prices submitted in the response before the contract term has ended?

Answer:

Refer to the Master Agreement, Article 2, 2, for additional details on the process for requesting a product or pricing change during the term of an awarded contract. A downloadable version of the Master Agreement is found on the “Bid Details” page within the Sourcewell Procurement Portal.

Question:

Regarding public data, if we attach pricing, financials, or other proprietary information to our proposal, can other suppliers/competitors see our pricing post-award?

Answer:

Once awards have been made and all contracts have been signed, the solicitation and **ALL** submitted documents become public. Suppliers can refer to the Disposition of Proposals section in RFP VI. E. for guidance on materials submitted in response to an RFP and applicable public data laws. Proposals are evaluated based on the criteria stated in the RFP. The information submitted is at the discretion of the proposer.

Question:

Can you define sourced or open market pricing?

Answer:

Generally, a sourced or open market item is a product or service that a participating entity is seeking to purchase under the contract but is not among the awarded supplier’s offerings. It is typically deemed incidental to the balance of the transaction. If applicable, proposers should define all costs (e.g., fees, markups, handling) associated with sourced or open market pricing.

V. Participating Entities

Question:

How many Sourcewell participating entities are there?

Answer:

The number of participating Sourcewell participating entities is not static. Sourcewell maintains a link to a list on the “Become an awarded Sourcewell supplier” page of the Sourcewell website, with a separate worksheet for both the US and Canada <https://www.sourcewell-mn.gov/sourcewell-for-vendors/agency-locator>. The list is updated weekly.

Question:

Who is using the contract resulting from this RFP?

Answer:

Sourcewell utilizes a competitive, solutions-based solicitation approach that is not based on detailed specifications, finite quantities or locations. **ANY** of Sourcewell’s participating entities could use the contract, if applicable.

Question:

Where are the projects located and what are the challenges faced by the entity(ies)?

Answer:

Sourcewell utilizes a competitive, solutions-based solicitation approach that is not based on detailed specifications, finite quantities or locations. Any of Sourcewell’s participating entities

could use the contract, if applicable.

Sourcewell is requesting proposals to meet the various needs of its 50,000+ Participating Entities as a whole, across the United States and Canada, NOT individual entities' needs. The use of Sourcewell contracts is voluntary for Participating Entities. In this competitive solicitation process, Sourcewell will not advise a proposer on the way it should submit a proposal. It is left to the discretion of each proposer to articulate and propose the approach that aligns with its business methods and satisfies the requirements of the RFP. Participating Entities' unique needs, and Solutions from awarded supplier(s), will be determined if and when Participating Entities choose to utilize a contract resulting from this solicitation.

Question:

Is it mandatory for Sourcewell participating entities to use the awarded contract for future purchases?

Answer:

Use of Sourcewell contracts is voluntary, and participating entities retain the right to obtain similar equipment, products, or services from other sources.

VI. Canada

Question:

How should the proposal address Canadian vs. U.S. Customers – is it preferable to submit separate responses for each country?

Answer:

A proposer may submit only one proposal. Each proposer is expected to complete the specifications table (questionnaire) describing its ability to serve Sourcewell participating agencies in the United States and Canada. Proposals are evaluated based on the criteria stated in the RFP. Suppliers are not required to service both the U.S. and Canada but should demonstrate their capacity to sell and deliver solutions to participating entities.

Question:

Can we bid for Canada only but not the USA?

Answer:

A proposer is not required to cover every geographic region to be considered for an award. Each proposal is evaluated based on the criteria stated in the RFP.

Question:

Is this solicitation for all of Canada or just for specific regions?

Answer:

Sourcewell is seeking solutions to serve the largest possible cross-section of current and potential Sourcewell participating entities. Refer to the Use of Resulting Contracts section in the RFP I. B.

Question:

How is pricing handled for Canada?

Answer:

Sourcewell prefers responses in U.S. dollars and Canadian Dollars (as applicable).

VII. Miscellaneous

Question:

Is a CAGE code required?

Answer:

A CAGE or Unique Entity Identifier (SAM) code is not required to be considered for, or awarded, a Sourcewell contract. Proposals are evaluated based on the criteria as stated in the RFP. Refer to the General Instructions above the specifications, Table 1 (questionnaire). Respond “N/A” if a question does not apply (preferably with an explanation).

Question:

If awarded a Sourcewell contract, will we then need to secure a separate agreement to use the contract in each State?

Answer:

Sourcewell does not require a separate agreement with each State or Province. For additional detail, refer to the Master Agreement sections on Participation, Contract Access, and Participating Entity Requirements and Participating Entity Use, and Purchasing (Article 1). A Participating Entity and Supplier may negotiate additional terms and conditions, as necessary, on a case-by-case basis as described in the Sourcewell Master Agreement.

Question:

If I am awarded a contract, will I need to purchase the insurance stated in the Sourcewell Master Agreement?

Answer:

An awarded supplier will be expected to carry the insurance coverage as stated in the Master Agreement, Article 2, 22. upon execution. To identify any exception, or to request any modification, to Sourcewell’s standard terms, conditions, or specifications, a proposer must submit the proposed exception(s) or requested modification(s) via redline in the Master Agreement provided in the “Documents” section of the “Bid Details” page on the Sourcewell Procurement Portal and uploaded as part of its response. Only those exceptions noted at the time of the proposal submission will be considered.

Question:

Can you provide information on how the evaluation will be conducted, how a proposer’s responses will be evaluated against others, and what the cut-score is for an award.

Answer:

Proposal evaluations will be based on scoring criteria identified in the RFP, VI.B., the expectations and requirements of the individual scoring attribute (e.g., Pricing) as described in the RFP, and the Sourcewell Evaluator Scoring Guide available on the homepage under the “Resource Materials” section of the Sourcewell Procurement Portal. A proposal is not scored in direct comparison to the other proposals. Sourcewell does not use a standardized cut-score when making an award(s).

Question:

How many awards does Sourcewell expect to execute with each RFP?

Answer:

Refer to the Evaluation and Award section of the RFP VI. It is the intent of Sourcewell to award one or more suppliers offering the best overall quality, selection of equipment, products, and services, and prices that meet the commonly requested specifications of Sourcewell and its Participating Entities. The award(s) will be limited to the number of proposers that Sourcewell determines is necessary to meet the needs of its Participating Entities.

Question:

When will we know if we are awarded an Agreement?

Answer:

The duration of the evaluation period is dependent on the number of responses. ALL proposers will be provided an email update as to the status of the evaluation process at 60-days post-closing.

Question:

Does the post-award process include the ability to file a protest?

Answer:

Refer to the Evaluation and Award section of the RFP, VI. C. for the process applicable to any protest.

Question:

We are a privately held company and cannot share financials. Can you give examples of acceptable ways to demonstrate financial stability?

Answer:

The Sourcewell RFP is an open and competitive solicitation process. Each proposer, in its discretion, will determine the information necessary to best demonstrate its financial viability/success to Sourcewell. Examples of potential supporting material are identified in the text of the question on financial strength and stability in the specification tables (questionnaire). Financial information is considered public information according to Minnesota state statute. Proposers are advised **NOT** to include any tax-specific information or personally identifiable information.

Proposers are explicitly cautioned not to submit any data that they consider to be confidential, proprietary, or trade secret, as such data will not be treated as confidential and will be subject to public disclosure in accordance with Minnesota law.

Question:

When extenuating circumstances arise, how do I request an extension to the RFP deadline?

Answer:

With the availability of the Sourcewell Procurement Portal allowing for 24/7 remote access, extensions are not typically approved or deemed necessary.

Question:

Does my company need to submit a No Bid if we decide not to compete?

Answer:

A No Bid is **NOT** required. If you decide not to compete, simply do not complete your response. No further action is required. Even if a No Bid is selected, notifications **will** continue as a registered plan taker.

Question:

We require a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) before answering some of Sourcewell's questions. How do we get that signed?

Answer:

In the competitive process, Sourcewell will not advise a proposer on the content of the proposal. So, it is left to the discretion of each proposer to determine the information necessary to best demonstrate their ability to serve Sourcewell clients and that they are willing to include. The solicitation is a competitive process, and proposals are evaluated on the content submitted. Sourcewell is subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and will not execute a non-disclosure agreement for a proposer. Reference Section VI. Evaluation and Award, E. Disposition of Proposals, of the Sourcewell RFP. Sourcewell **will not** sign an NDA to evaluate a proposal.

Question:

How do we attend the Pre-proposal conference?

Answer:

All registered plan takers will receive log-in instructions approximately two (2) business days prior to the online conference. Login information will be posted to the “Documents” section of the “Bid Details” page on the Sourcewell Procurement Portal.

The pre-proposal will be recorded, and all registered plan takers will receive a copy of the presentation slides and a link to the recording within four (4) business days. A link and a document of the recording will be posted to the “Documents” section of the “Bid Details” page on the Sourcewell Procurement Portal.

Question:

Our company does not agree with some of the terms and conditions of the RFP and/or Master Agreement. How do we request modifications?

Answer:

To request a modification to the Master Agreement, terms, conditions, or specifications, a Proposer may complete and submit the Exceptions to Terms, Conditions, or Specifications Form, which is found as the final Table of Step 1 – Specifications in the proposal submission process. If selecting “Yes”, the Proposer **MUST** download the Master Agreement from the “Documents” section of the “Bid Details” page. The Master Agreement is pre-set to track changes (e.g. requests). The Master Agreement **MUST** be uploaded in Word format. This is the **ONLY** time to request modifications. Requested modifications are reviewed and are **NOT** automatically approved.

Question:

How many uploads or attachments can I include with my proposal? Are there any file size limitations?

Answer:

There is no maximum number of “**SUPPLEMENTAL**” attachments, however the total maximum file size is 500 MB. Larger files (e.g., Marketing plan) should be placed in a zipped folder, labeled appropriately, and then uploaded.

Question:

How do we edit/add/remove contacts or update passwords for the Sourcewell Procurement Portal?

Answer:

Prospective suppliers are solely responsible for ensuring their account information is kept current, technical support for the Sourcewell Procurement Portal is provided by bids&tenders. If you encounter technical issues, please contact support@bidsandtenders.ca.

Question:

How can we get access to the past solicitation documents?

Answer:

Awarded categories and their respective bid documents can be located on Sourcewell website (<https://www.sourcewell-mn.gov/>). Use the search function to look for past documents using key words or the previous six-digit solicitation number. Once the category is located (e.g., a supplier page), view the RFP posted under the Documents section. For new categories, documentation and historical data is not available.

Question:

Are we able to receive a debrief on our proposal?

Answer:

If requested, Sourcewell offers a debrief call (up to 30 minutes) to all proposers, both awarded and non-awarded, for a period of 60 days after notification.

Other Resources available on the [Sourcewell Procurement Portal](#):

Create Account Guide

Submit Response Guide

Sourcewell Evaluator Scoring Guide

Sourcewell Cooperative Purchasing: How it works

Process to become a Sourcewell Vendor

Sourcewell Vendor Resources

Political Subdivision List (OR, UT & VA)