

TASK ORDER PROCUREMENT SYSTEM (TOPS)

Overview

TOPS has been created to provide all Alaska IT Professional Services vendors the opportunity to compete for State of Alaska work in various IT areas, including web application development, IT project management, security, GIS, and more, using a streamlined, forms-based competitive process.

State agencies will also benefit from this innovative forms-based process. It is the goal of TOPS to be intuitive and efficient, allowing maximum competition while keeping Task Order (TO) turnaround time within the timeframes set out and accepted under the current TO contract.

Process Description

TOPS will create a vendor pool of interested IT firms. Vendors will agree to standard State of Alaska terms, conditions, and requirements upon entry into the vendor pool and will then be eligible to respond to TO requests. This vendor pool will be updated on at least an annual basis, but may be updated more frequently if necessary, to maintain sufficient competition.

TO requests will be solicited to the entire vendor pool, allowing all participants to respond to a request. **At no point will a state agency be allowed to manipulate or otherwise make selections that ensure a response will only be received from one vendor.**

Vendors interested in submitting a response may do so by the deadline set by the Task Order Manager. Upon receipt of responses, the requesting agency makes award based on whether the TO was solicited as “Best Value” or “Low Price”, as described below. **At this point, the TO becomes a standalone contract between the vendor and the requesting agency.** Any unanticipated amendments shall be based on the standalone contract, eliminating the need to stop work for an entire category when the award amount is approached or exceeded. ~~Work will commence and at the completion of the TO, the vendor will complete a brief, objective self-measurement questionnaire provided five (5) days prior to project completion that, once approved by the state, will be used to establish a Past Performance Information (PPI) score.~~

Past Performance Information (PPI)

~~A vendor’s PPI score shall be the rolling average of that vendor’s last **three** PPI scores. All vendors will initially start with a PPI score of 0. The intent of collecting and using a vendor’s PPI in such a way is to encourage and reward high performance.~~

Best Value vs. Low Price TO’s

TO requests may be solicited as either “Best Value” or “Low Price” at the discretion of the requesting agency. In both cases, ~~responses are “anonymized” and~~ evaluation/award will be based solely on the merits of the response:

- **Best Value** TO ‘s will be awarded to the responsive and responsible vendor with the most advantageous response, considering project approach, risk assessment, experience and qualifications, ~~Past Performance Information (PPI)~~, and cost. Each of these four evaluation criteria are weighted equally at 25%.
- **Low Price** TO’s will be awarded to the responsive and responsible vendor with the lowest price. ~~after the price has been reduced by a percentage equal to the vendor’s PPI score for evaluation purposes.~~

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Process Detail

Registration Process

1. Vendor completes TOPS Registration Form (Attachment 1), includes evidence of insurance coverage meeting the state's requirements, signs, and submits to designated state contact via e-mail by posted deadline.
2. Successful submission of the TOPS Registration Form ensures that the vendor enters the TOPS Vendor Pool and is eligible to respond to Task Order (TO) requests.

Request Process

1. Requesting agency completes TOPS Request Form, including agency contact information, TO summary, and detailed background, scope, special expertise and experience, and special considerations or constraints information.
2. Category number is collected strictly for reporting purposes. The TOPS Vendor Pool is not categorized.
3. Requesting agency checks box approving the request and submits to the designated TO Manager.

Solicitation Process

1. The TO Manager solicits to the entire vendor pool for five business days.
2. Once distributed, vendors may:

Vendor Response Process

1. Vendors interested in responding to a TOPS Request Form shall complete the all portions of the TOPS Response Form. The vendor may identify themselves in the TOPS Request Form, to specify their experience under special expertise and experience, and special considerations or constraints information. If any questions arise regarding the work to be done, these must be directed to the TO Manager. At no point during the response period may a vendor contact the request agency directly.
2. The TOPS Response Form has several sections:
 - a. **Project Approach** will be the vendor's opportunity to describe how they will successfully deliver the services required by the TO.
 - b. **Risk Assessment** allows the vendor to identify potential risks associated with the TO project, why it's a risk, and how the vendor plans to mitigate it. The risks can be either controllable, meaning they are within the control of the vendor, or non-controllable, meaning they are within the control of the state.
 - c. **Experience/Qualifications** is the vendor's opportunity to detail the experience of their firm, their proposed resources, and/or their proposed sub-contractors.
 - d. **Cost Proposal.** All TO's will be priced using the same Cost Proposal form to arrive at a single all-inclusive (travel, overhead, etc.) Total Cost. Any additional, unanticipated work will be performed at the quoted hourly rate. The vendor will also identify proposed resources and sub-contractors on this form.
3. Vendor submits completed TOPS Response Form electronically to the TO Manager.

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Evaluation Process

1. The TO Manager receives all responses, ensures that all forms are completed correctly and no identifying information is included outside of the allowable sections, and distributes the responses to the requesting agency for evaluation.
2. ~~If any response has a cost proposal that exceeds 50% Experience above or below the average cost of ALL responses, the state reserves the right to not consider that response.~~
3. If **Best Value**, the response(s) shall be evaluated by a designated agency representative, such as an IT Manager, or an evaluation committee.
 - a. The evaluator will score Project Approach, Risk Assessment, and Experience/Qualifications using a 10/5/1 scale. Evaluators shall always start with a neutral score of 5 unless a response contains dominant information when compared to other responses that either demonstrates high levels of expertise (10) or a misunderstanding of the project requirements (1). If a 10 or a 1 is awarded, the evaluator must note why the score was assigned.
 - b. Project Approach, Risk Assessment, experience and qualifications and cost, shall each be weighted at 25%.
 - c. ~~The vendor's PPI score shall be objectively compared to the PPI score of other responding vendors and assigned a weighted point value such that the vendor with the highest PPI will receive the maximum number of points (25%) and each lower PPI score receives a proportionate percentage of the maximum number of points.~~
 - d. ~~The vendor's Cost Proposal shall be evaluated similarly to the PPI score such that the vendor with the lowest cost receiving the maximum number of points (25%) and each higher cost proposal receiving a proportionate percentage of these points.~~
 - e. The total points shall be the sum of all weighted evaluator-assigned and objectively-assigned points. Responses shall be ranked from most to least points. The highest-ranked vendor shall be awarded the TO unless that vendor's cost proposal is 10% or greater than the second highest-ranked response. In this case, the state reserves the right to make award to the second highest-ranked vendor.
4. If **Low Price**, the response(s) shall be evaluated by the TO Manager and will be awarded to the lowest cost proposal. ~~only the Cost Proposal and PPI score shall be considered. The TO will be awarded to the vendor with the lowest Cost Proposal after the Total Cost is reduced by a percentage equal to the vendor's PPI score for evaluation purposes only. For instance, a vendor with a PPI score of 5 shall have their Total Cost reduced by 5% and a vendor with a PPI score of 10 shall have their Total Cost reduced by 10%—these reductions shall only be applied during evaluation.~~
5. Any disputes regarding the award of a TO shall be resolved using ~~small~~ procurement protest procedures. ~~laid out in 2 AAC 12.695.~~

Award Process

1. After the most advantageous or lowest-priced response has been identified, the requesting agency will be notified who the vendor is. The requesting agency will receive a packet containing the Standard Agreement Form, Appendix A, Appendix B1, TOPS Vendor Response Form and TOPS Vendor Cost Proposal. At this point, the requesting agency and the vendor may enter into pre-award discussions to finalize any details pertaining to the work to be done. In no case may the cost proposal be modified or work outside the established scope added.
2. If the requesting agency and the vendor cannot come to agreement on the work to be done, the TO may be awarded to the next-highest ranked vendor or canceled.

3. Once discussions are finalized, signatures are obtained and a period of performance is determined, a scanned pdf packet containing the following will be sent to the TO Manager: signed Standard Agreement Form, Appendix A, Appendix B1, Appendix C (any language developed during pre-award discussions), scope of work, payment schedule, the selected vendor's TOPS Response Form, the selected vendor's TOPS Cost Proposal Form. This is the responsibility of the Program Manager.
4. This distributes the fully executed TO contract between the vendor and the requesting agency and work may now commence at this point.

Post TO Completion Process

- ~~1. Within five (5) days upon completion of a TO, the vendor will provide a TOPS Completion Report to the Project Manager at the requesting agency and cc the TO Manager. This report includes a PPI self-measurement questionnaire that will form the basis for the vendor's future PPI score. Both the vendor and the Project Manager must provide a brief summary of the project, and provide dates of the score received (both by the vendor in the Vendor Comments section, and by the Project Manager in the Project Manager Comments section). The Project Manager must approve the Completion Report before the PPI score will be recorded. Any disputes over the questionnaire that cannot be resolved between the vendor and the Project Manager will be decided by the TO Manager. Comments must be provided in both the Vendor section and the Program Manager section of every Completion Form submitted.~~