

RFP Procurement Process Essentials

The following guide will help you better understand the County of Santa Clara's Request for Proposal (RFP) procurement process.

What is a RFP?

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is a competitive solicitation method that invites vendors to propose their solution to help meet the County's needs. The RFP differs from the Invitation to Bid (ITB) procurement process in the following ways:

Request for Proposal (RFP)	Invitation to Bid (ITB)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor owns expertise, methodologies & technologies • Factors other than price are evaluated & negotiation may be desired • Value-based award 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driven by County specifications • Price may be negotiated but negotiations over terms are generally not permitted • Price-based award

Where to Find RFP Opportunities

- Upcoming RFPs & Revised RFPs are presented at the 2nd Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting each month and are accessible via the [Board of Supervisors Meeting Portal](#). To access the report:
 1. Visit the [Board of Supervisors Meeting Portal](#).
 2. Select the appropriate BOS meeting date.
 3. Under the County Executive section, click on 'Upcoming RFPs' to view a detailed listing of each RFP.
 4. If you'd like to view a summary report relating to the anticipated upcoming RFPs, click on 'Report Printout'.
- Notifications of active RFPs are issued by Periscope based on commodity codes selected in vendor profile. [Register](#) to be notified and update your commodity codes.
- A Countywide Feed of Active RFPs is published at www.sccprc.org in '[Current Solicitations](#)'

How to Prepare for a RFP

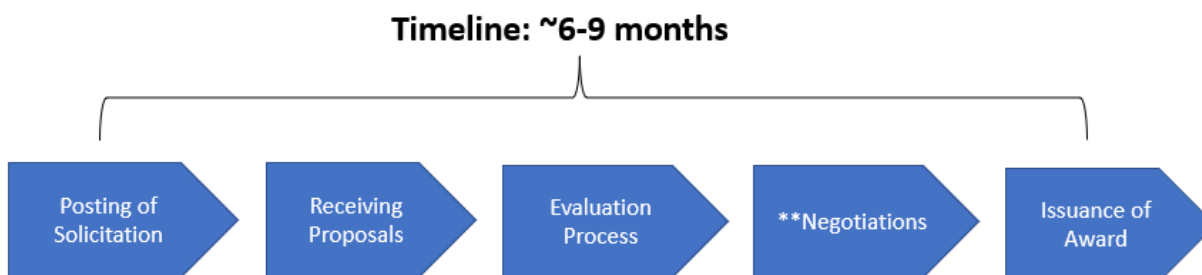
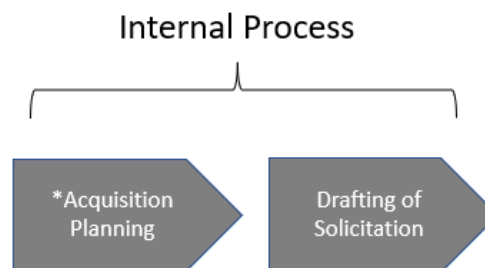
- Read the RFP thoroughly and determine if your company has the capacity to meet all requirements.
- Assign a proposal project team with clear roles & responsibilities.
- Discuss a strategy within your organization ahead of time and collect varied perspectives within your team.
- Assign a single point of contact for communications.
- Maintain your Periscope profile current and ensure an appropriate contact is listed to receive bid updates and addenda.
- Prepare submittal documents ahead of deadlines, avoid technical issues.

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What is the RFP Process?

Every RFP is unique and timelines within each stage of the process can differentiate depending on what is being procured.

*The RFP procurement process initiates with a variety of internal discussions and procedures. Of special note is *Acquisition Planning* that involves a needs assessment, thorough market research, and identification of a competitive pool of vendors in the marketplace. *Drafting of the Solicitation* follows these internal activities



****Negotiations** may be conducted with multiple proposers, and/or may request best and final offers. The RFP will identify if a single award or multiple awards are possible, and all proposers will be notified in writing of intent to award. Additional documentation may be required (e.g.: Insurance & bonding documentation, Tax & electronic payment forms, etc.)

RFP Process Tips

- Actively participate in all information gathering opportunities, such as:
 - Pre-Proposal Conferences
 - Question and Answer Period (*pay special attention to the Q&A start and end dates*)
 - Addenda updates
- All communication during the RFP must be directed to the Procurement Officer specified in the RFP and submitted through Periscope (unless otherwise noted).
- “Quiet Period”: To uphold the integrity of the public procurement process during an active RFP, all communication is subject to a formal process and must be done prior to posting the solicitation for public view.