Introduction

On October 15, 2019, State of Maine’s Vendor Self Service (VSS) system will be upgraded with several new features.

Two of these changes may have an impact on how vendors respond to bids, and should be reviewed. This guide covers both of these enhancements in detail:

1. Clarification Questions – the buyer on a solicitation may request a clarification on the response submitted by the vendor. When this occurs, the vendor will have a chance to review the clarification question and submit a response.

2. Solicitations Re-opening for Bid – if the buyer does not receive any qualifying bids on a solicitation, or have changed the specifications, they may choose to re-open the solicitation after it has closed.

Clarification Questions

When the Buyer receives a bid for a solicitation, they may determine they need additional information from the vendor. If this occurs, you may receive an email requesting that you provide a clarification.

1. An email is received with the subject: ADVANTAGE SELF SERVICE CLARIFICATION REQUESTED ON YOUR RESPONSE

   The Response Status of your response under the Solicitation Response tab in your VSS account will also show as “Clarification Requested”
2. Log into your VSS account and go to Solicitation Responses tab.
3. All responses will show by default. If necessary, use the Keyword Search box to narrow the results and find the response you are looking for.
4. Open the response by clicking on the SR number.
5. If a clarification has been requested, you will see:
   a. Clarification Due Date
   b. Clarification Details
6. Respond to the clarification request using the Response field.
7. Submit your response.

Your clarification response will be sent back to the buyer.

You will receive an email confirming that the response was submitted.

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**Re-opened Solicitation**

A Buyer may choose to re-open a solicitation after it has closed if no bids were received, or if none of the submitted bids were selected. If this occurs, you will be able to submit a bid on the re-opened solicitation as you would with any other.

If you previously responded to the original solicitation, you will have to submit another response to the Re-Opened bid in order for your bid to be considered.

1. A solicitation is posted to VSS, and the status is set to CLOSED once it expires.
2. The buyer chooses to re-open the solicitation. It is now available on the Business Opportunities tab with a status of REOPENED.

3. The solicitation can be viewed and responded to like all other solicitations. To view or respond, click Details.