**State of Maine – Division of Procurement Services/DAFS**

**RFP Activity Schedule**

**As a general rule, RFPs should be published (Public Notice posted in Kennebec Journal) 3 to 4 months prior to the anticipated start date of the awarded contracts. However, when determining when a RFP should be released, Department users should assess factors such as the amount of time Bidders will require in drafting quality proposals for submission as well as the amount of time the Department will require to complete the evaluation process.**

*PLEASE NOTE: When drafting a RFP, it is always best practice to allow time to address any appeal so as not to delay the initiation of the awarded contract. As a general rule, the appeal process takes 2 months for resolution after award notification has been made.*

**Current templates and other supporting RFP documents listed below can be found at:**  [**https://www.maine.gov/dafs/procurementservices/forms**](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/procurementservices/forms)

* **Draft RFP and develop scoring material:** You must use the current **Request for Proposals (RFP) Template** but leave Key RFP Event Dates blank. At this stage, it is best practice to select the evaluation team members and develop the RFP scoring materials using the **Team Consensus Evaluation Notes** & the **Master Score Sheet** templates.
* **Send your final draft of the RFP for review:** Send your final electronic draft of the RFP to the Division of Procurement Services for review/approval through [**Purchasing Maine**](https://maine-clg.pegacloud.com/prweb/PRWebLDAP2/N4C72zKj-oEW-eBdnl7GujM6bY2jpi8-*/!STANDARD?pzPostData=1840458927). Initial review could take up to 5 business days to complete\*. Refer to [**Purchasing Maine Reference Guides**](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/procurementservices/purchasing-maine) for instructions on how to enter an RFP document in Purchasing Maine.

**\**A completed* RFP and Evaluation Planning (GOVRFP) Form *is required for all RFPs submitted for review and approval. For RFPs valued under $1,000,000, only sections 1 through 5 are to be completed and signatures are not required. For RFPs valued at or over $1,000,000, all sections are to be completed along with Legal Counsel and Commissioner/Departmental Executive signatures.***

* **Finalize Key RFP Dates:** Key RFP dates are to be set after the RFP document has received conditional approval as to its structure and content. RFPs will be sent back to Department users through [**Purchasing Maine**](https://maine-clg.pegacloud.com/prweb/PRWebLDAP2/N4C72zKj-oEW-eBdnl7GujM6bY2jpi8-*/!STANDARD?pzPostData=1840458927)with the RFP# included on the document. Department users to enter the Key RFP dates and resubmit the RFP back through [**Purchasing Maine**](https://maine-clg.pegacloud.com/prweb/PRWebLDAP2/N4C72zKj-oEW-eBdnl7GujM6bY2jpi8-*/!STANDARD?pzPostData=1840458927) for the final approval. Department users must include a note as to the first day they intend to publish the RFP in the Kennebec Journal (see next step). This is necessary to ensure the RFP is also posted on the Division of Procurement Services’ RFP webpage ([**https://www.maine.gov/dafs/procurementservices/vendors/rfps**](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/procurementservices/vendors/rfps)) on the appropriate start date. A few reminders about setting dates:
* **Bidders Conferences** (if one is held for your RFP) must be scheduled a minimum of seven (7) calendar days from the final day of advertising and minimum of two weeks prior to Proposal Due Date.
* **Submitted Question and Answer Summary (and all other amendments)** must be issued a minimum of seven (7) calendar days prior to the Proposal Due Date. *This is when we must* ***respond*** *to questions, not a due date for questions to be submitted.*
* **Proposal Due Date** must be a minimum of fifteen (15) calendar days after the last day of advertisement in the Kennebec Journal.
* If possible, set the proposal due date on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday as long as State offices are open. Monday or Friday is acceptable but not preferred.
* Contact the Div. of Procurement Services if you require assistance with dates prior to publishing the RFP.
* **Advertise/Publish RFP:** Use the Public Notice in the RFP template. The Public Notice must be advertised for 3 consecutive days (weekends & holidays included) in the Kennebec Journal. You may advertise in other newspapers if you wish but it must be published in the Kennebec Journal. Contact at KJ – Donna Dusty (e-mail: [ddusty@mainetoday.com](mailto:ddusty@mainetoday.com); Tel: (207) 621-5603. Public Notices should be submitted to the KJ by 2:00pm if they are to be posted in the following day’s newspaper.
* *If you need to issue an amendment to the RFP:***\*** If any changes are required to be made to your RFP after it has been released, you must issue an Amendment **Request for Proposals (RFP) Amendment Form** stating the changes. Send all Amendments through [**Purchasing Maine**](https://maine-clg.pegacloud.com/prweb/PRWebLDAP2/N4C72zKj-oEW-eBdnl7GujM6bY2jpi8-*/!STANDARD?pzPostData=1840458927) for posting on the Division of Procurement Services’ RFP webpage. *As a reminder, all Amendments* ***must*** *be posted seven (7) calendar days prior to the Proposal Due Date. If an Amendment is posted less than 7 days, the Proposal Due Date must also be amended to allow the 7 days from the issuance of the Amendment.*

***\*Never make changes to the RFP document itself after it has been approved and released/published! All modifications must be done by issuing an amendment!***

* *If Submitted Questions were allowed:***\*** The Questions & Answers Summary **Request for Proposals (RFP) Questions & Answers Summary Template** must be posted on the Division of Procurement Services’ RFP webpage. All Q&A Summaries must be sent through [**Purchasing Maine**](https://maine-clg.pegacloud.com/prweb/PRWebLDAP2/N4C72zKj-oEW-eBdnl7GujM6bY2jpi8-*/!STANDARD?pzPostData=1840458927) for posting on the Division of Procurement Services’ RFP webpage. *As a reminder, the Q&A Summary* ***must*** *be posted seven (7) calendar days prior to the Proposal Due Date. If a Q&A Summary is posted less than 7 days, the Proposal Due Date must be amended to allow the 7 days from the issuance of the Q&A Summary.*

***\*Allowing Submitted Questions is not required but HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!!!***

* *Bidders Conference and Submitted Questions & Answers Summary:***\*** If a Bidders’ Conference was held, you can combine presented information and questions received at the Bidders’ Conference with the submitted questions on one form: **Request for Proposals (RFP) Bidders Conference and Questions & Answers Summary Template**. This summary must also be posted on the Division of Procurement Services’ RFP webpage. All BC and Q&A Summaries must be sent through [**Purchasing Maine**](https://maine-clg.pegacloud.com/prweb/PRWebLDAP2/N4C72zKj-oEW-eBdnl7GujM6bY2jpi8-*/!STANDARD?pzPostData=1840458927) for posting on the Division of Procurement Services’ RFP webpage. *As a reminder, the BC and Q&A Summary* ***must*** *be posted seven (7) calendar days prior to the Proposal Due Date. If a BC and Q&A Summary is posted less than 7 days, the Proposal Due Date must be amended to allow the 7 days from the issuance of the BC and Q&A Summary.*

***\*While holding a Bidders Conference is left to the discretion of the issuing Department, should one be held, it is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED to also allow Submitted Questions after the Bidders Conference.***

* **Proposals Due:** If proposals are submitted electronically to [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov), all proposals received by the Division of Procurement Services by the proposal deadline will be emailed to the RFP Coordinator the morning after that deadline. Proposals received through traditional mail are to be picked up by the issuing Department the next morning after the proposal due date at the Division of Procurement Services, 4th floor of the Cross Building. Please contact Procurement Services beforehand (Tel. 624-7340) to make certain the proposals have been documented/recorded by Procurement Services and are ready for pick up.
* **Evaluation and Scoring of Proposals:**
* Hold Pre-Evaluation Team Meeting
* Distribute copies of all the proposals to all evaluators (electronic or hard copy).
* Evaluators are to identify all bidders using the Proposal Cover Pages and each evaluator must sign an **Agreement & Disclosure Statement** if they do not have any conflicts of interest. If an evaluator does have a conflict associated with any bidder, they must be removed from the evaluation team and cannot take part in the evaluation process.
* Go over and review **Guidelines for Consensus Scoring** with all evaluation team members prior to any proposal reviews.
* Evaluators conduct individual review of proposals
* In addition to receiving a copy of each submitted proposal, each evaluator must be given a copy of the RFP and all issued amendments. This includes the Bidders Conference and Q&A Summaries.
* Each evaluator must keep notes for each section of each proposal they review. No scoring is to be done at this stage. While not required to use it for note taking, a template: **Individual Evaluation Notes** has been developed for evaluators.
* Conduct Evaluation Team Meeting(s)
* All evaluators must complete their individual reviews before an Evaluation Team Meeting can be held.
* Official findings & scores must be recorded, usually by the Lead Evaluator. Only ONE score sheet is to be completed for each proposal. Official score sheets should have been developed when the RFP was developed: **Team Consensus Evaluation Notes**.
* Complete the **Master Score Sheet** after evaluation and scores for all sections of all proposals are completed.
* **Create Award Notification Letter:** Use **Sample Award Notification Letter** for all selected and non-selected bidders.
* E-mail Award Notification Letters separately to all bidders (awarded and non-awarded bidders) on the same day. Letters should be signed by the Director or someone authorized to make the award on behalf of the Department for those services.
* Negotiations with the awarded bidder(s) can begin immediately after award notifications are made. However, contracts are not to be signed by any party until the 15 day appeal period has passed and only if an appeal hearing was not requested. *Non-awarded bidders are allowed 15 calendar days to request an appeal hearing after official notification of the award decision (Please see note below for more information).*
* **Send the following documents to the Division of Procurement Services electronically through** [**Purchasing Maine**](https://maine-clg.pegacloud.com/prweb/PRWebLDAP2/N4C72zKj-oEW-eBdnl7GujM6bY2jpi8-*/!STANDARD?pzPostData=1840458927) **for** **Selection Package Approval:**
  + Copies of the Master Score Sheet
  + Copies of Award Notification Letters (awarded and non-awarded) sent to all Bidders
  + Copies of Team Consensus Evaluation Score & Notes for each submitted proposal
  + Copies of Individual Evaluation Notes for each reviewer for each submitted proposal
  + Copies of Agreement & Disclosure Statements signed by all reviewers

Preferred format is PDF and documents should be sent as **one attachment** in the order above. Refer to [**Purchasing Maine Reference Guides**](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/procurementservices/purchasing-maine) for instructions on how to enter a Selection Packet in Purchasing Maine.

* **Keep records in your Division/Office. Records are to include:**
* Copy of RFP and all amendments/addendums (this can be kept electronically)
* Original/signed copy of each proposal submitted
* Electronic copy of each proposal submitted
* Original copies of all Individual Evaluation Notes & all Team Consensus Evaluation Score & Notes (hard copies or electronically)
* Copies of all Award Notification Letters (awarded and non-awarded bidders).

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| **Note: Contract negotiations with awarded bidders can begin immediately after Award Notification Letters have been issued. However, negotiations may have to be suspended if a Stay of Award or an Appeal Hearing has been requested.** The Division of Procurement Services will notify you if such a request has been made and if contract negotiations are to cease until the matter is resolved. |