

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

An RFI is a formal request to prospective contractors to provide information about a commodity or service prior to a possible solicitation.

This is not a procurement method. It is a tool for getting information about the market prior to issuing a solicitation. It does not directly result in a contract award. There are no dollar thresholds for this process.

Use an RFI when an agency is considering issuing a solicitation but needs further information about commodities or services available on the market.

A scope of work with general minimum requirements is provided to prospective contractors in the RFI template from the buyer.

Requests can be made for pricing information and for recommendations regarding pricing structure, but any prices provided are not binding in the same way that bids are.

The buyer must post the RFI and/or deliver the RFI to prospective contractors, and the prospective contractors provide a written response in the same manner as a competitive sealed bid.

Templates for each of the procurement methods listed in this section are available on the “Procurement Forms and Reporting” page of the OSP website.

For Exempt by Law, Sole Source, or Special Procurements, see Chapter 5: Other Procurement Methods.

1. Contact TSS OSP for the current RFI template.
2. Update the RFI Template to reflect your agency’s addresses, contact information, and other references, as well as entering the necessary information in the designated places regarding dates, times, etc.
3. Enter the specifications in the designated section of the document. Although RFI specifications are typically more general than those for an actual solicitation, they need to be specific enough so that prospective contractors can easily respond with relevant information.
4. Create the questions or an information outline for the information you wish to receive from prospective contractors. This section is extremely important as it will be the guiding factor in the type and amount of information you get back from the prospective contractors.

5. Work with your end user to ensure that the specifications and the requested information criteria are designed to meet the agency's informational needs and are approved to be sent to prospective contractors. Publicly post the RFI as you would a competitive sealed bid.

There are certain instances in which none of the procurement methods described in prior sections of this manual apply. These are cases in which the commodities or services being procured meet special criteria as defined by procurement law, or in which the competitive bid process cannot be used. These are:

1. Exempt by Law (EL)
2. Sole Source (SS)
3. Special Procurement (SPECIAL)