Evaluation Panel Training

Pima County Procurement Design and Construction Division
WELCOME

- Evaluation teams are the backbone of qualifications based selections.

- State law requires that selection committee members be “appropriately qualified” and “competent”.

- In addition to your training as registered architects or engineers, construction professionals, and project managers, we will provide specific training on the evaluation process.
Objectives

 Educate each member of the selection committee on the evaluation process.

 Provide guidelines to ensure:
   Ethical
   Fair
   Consistent
   Well documented
   Defensible evaluations.
General Selection Committee Process and Expectations

- Attend kick off meeting.
- Evaluate the written submittals and assign points adhering to the established solicitation evaluation criteria and point structure.
- Include comments that support score.
- Turn in scores by the agreed upon date to the Contract Officer.
- Attend consensus meeting.
- If interviews are held, develop interview questions, attend interviews, evaluate interviews, and assign points adhering to the established criteria and point structure.
Procedures
Kick Off Meeting

- Review confidentiality/no conflict of interest expectations.
- Sign evaluation panel memo confirming that committee member has no conflict of interests with any of the responding firms, and is qualified to act as a committee member.
- Achieve a clear understanding by all committee members of the scope of the project and services to be provided by the successful firm.
  - What is the goal of the solicitation?
  - What does the department need?
- Clarify and discuss what is the end result that will be achieved for each stage of the solicitation.
Procedures

Kick Off Mtg. Cont.

- Discuss how the responses should be presented.
- Clarify and discuss evaluation criteria and point structure.
- Discuss scoring and comments.
- Solicit and answer team questions.
- Distribute submittals.
- Agree upon scoring deadline and consensus meeting date.
- Lines of communication - Contract Officer as non-voting chair of the selection committee.
Procedure
Consensus Meeting

- Come with the proposals and copies of score sheets prepared to discuss.
- Contract Officer will have tabulation as well as grid of all comments prepared for review by evaluation team.
- Consensus on final ranking is achieved through discussion and agreement of the entire committee.
- If interviews will be held, discuss possible interview questions and weights and brief members on interview expectations.
- Note that most information regarding the procurement remains confidential until all contracts are successfully executed - do not discuss information related to the procurement just because firm(s) have been ranked.
Ethics

Ethical considerations include:

• Confidentiality

• No Conflict of Interest

• Independent Judgment

• Fair Treatment of all Responses.
Ethics
Confidentiality

- **All** information is confidential.
- No contact with the Respondents.
- No communication with other evaluators about the evaluation except in meetings chaired by Procurement.
- Applies from the moment you are selected to be on an evaluation committee.
- Includes other co-workers, supervisors, and other seemingly non-related firms with which you may come in contact.
- Even the number of respondents to a solicitation is confidential.
Ethics

No Conflict of Interest

- No Conflict of Interest rules remove or limit personal interest influence on decisions.
- Persons who have, or whose ‘relatives’ have, a ‘substantial interest’ in any contract, sale, purchase or service decision cannot participate in the selection committee.

Who is a relative?

“Spouse, child, child’s child, parents, grandparents, brother or sister of whole or half blood and their spouses and the parent, brother, sister or child of a spouse.”

What is a ‘substantial interest’?

A pecuniary (monetary) or proprietary (ownership) interest, either direct or indirect sufficient to influence decision-making.
Appearance of Impropriety
- When in doubt, call it out.
- Appearance of conflicts of interest can damage public trust and confidence in Pima County.
- Avoid situations where acts could be interpreted as affecting own interests.
- Do not accept gifts, rebates, money or remuneration of any kind from Respondents related to this solicitation – including Golf!
Evaluation Fine Points

Key to successful evaluations:
- Independent Judgment
- Fair and Consistent
- Clear understanding of evaluation criteria and point structure
- Provide a defensible justification for scoring through comments

Common issues arising from evaluation lie in three main areas:
- Criteria
- Weighting
- Comments
Evaluation
Use Independent Judgment

- **You** have been entrusted with an essential part of an important public decision...not your friend, your colleague, your supervisor, your fellow committee members, not outside influences, nor anyone else but you.

- **You** exercise your judgment in a manner that is not dependent on anyone else’s judgment or wishes.

- Attempts by anyone, including colleagues, subordinates, and superiors, to influence you to improperly favor or disfavor a particular proposer, such as awarding or withholding points in a manner that might affect the outcome of the committee results, must be reported to the Contracts Officer immediately.
Evaluation
Use Independent Judgment

- Employee Supervisor/Subordinate relationships discouraged as this may place undue pressure on the subordinate to ‘go along’ with the supervisor’s recommendations.

- Permissible to use direct personal knowledge or experience with a respondent in scoring, however member must:
  a. clearly identify comment(s) as based on personal knowledge; must be **direct** personal knowledge, not secondhand or hearsay.
  b. include description and comment(s).
  c. explain how direct personal knowledge or experience has affected your scoring.
Evaluation
Fair Treatment

- NO disparaging or derogatory remarks, comments, sounds or non verbal gestures regarding any response.
- Stick to the content of the responses.
- Fully read all responses.
- Be consistent in your scoring:
  - Use same allocation of points for all responses.
  - If aspect of a response is a weakness for one, it is a weakness for all.
  - If aspect of a response is a strength for one, it is a strength for all.
Evaluation

Understand Criteria

- Stick to the published criteria ONLY!
- Do not apply criteria that are outside of the solicitation requirements, i.e. do not read into the criteria or evaluate above and beyond the criteria.
- Do not read “costs” into responses or comments in qualifications stage.
- Do not evaluate based on local office. If locality is a consideration, it will be evaluated separately by the Procurement Department.
- Professionalism points- only allowed if included in the solicitation as criteria. Do not deduct more than allowed.
- Score in WHOLE NUMBERS.
- CONSISTENCY!
Evaluation

Use Established Weights

- Stick to relative weights in scoring.
- Sub criteria stated without relative weights are presumed to be equal in value and must be applied in that manner.
  - If each question has a point value, score according to that point value.
  - If a section has an overall point value, you MUST assign equal possible points to EACH question in that section.
- Avoid deep deductions on aesthetic issues (spelling, choice of graphics/colors, pictures), unless the items are pervasive and appear to be evidence of a lack of professional review of the submitted work.
Evaluation

Comments Required

- Review evaluation guidelines as presented at the panel meeting – Comments must match scores!

- Comments are an essential part of evaluation and debriefs.

- Comments are separated into strengths, weaknesses and deficiencies.
SOQ EVALUATION SCORING GUIDELINES

Strength: A response or part of a response that goes beyond merely acceptable or adequate in relation to the stated requirement. More than meets requirements.

Weakness: A response or part of a response that suggests a minor flaw or misunderstanding in relation to the stated requirement; or a response that either should have contained additional detail or demonstrated more extensive experience or knowledge in relation to the stated requirement.

Deficiency: A response or part of a response that represents material failures, omissions or significant weaknesses which, if uncorrected, threaten successful performance.
Evaluation

Comments Required

 Avoid Inadequate or inconsistent comments.

 Avoid mentioning “local office” i.e. “well established local firm”.

 Avoid comparison comments - evaluating relative to other proposals rather than to the criteria, i.e. “Best bonding capacity of any respondent”.

 Direct personal knowledge comments: Document, Describe, Explain. (highlight personal knowledge comments).
Comments are REQUIRED on each section of the evaluation form. You MUST provide written comments for each section in one or more of the following areas: strength, weakness or deficiency. Evaluations returned without comments will be returned to you for completion.

Evaluation scores are considered “Public records” and will be available for public inspection.

If interviews will be conducted, think of interview questions you would like to ask as you evaluate proposals. Bring these to consensus meeting.
Tips for Evaluations

- Plan where and when you will evaluate responses.
- Ensure submittals and evaluation documents are secure.
- Review scope, evaluation criteria and matrix.
- Familiarize yourself with the general layout of the response and how sections may be tabbed etc.
- Develop plan of attack.
Questions???

Thank you for attending!