

HIRE THE RIGHT CONSULTANT

*6 TIPS FOR PUBLIC AGENCIES TO
WRITE A KILLER RFP*

Introduction

As a consultant, I've had the opportunity to respond to hundreds of local, county, and state government Requests for Proposal (RFP). RFPs are the best way to ensure a quality consultant selection. I'm one of the weird guys who actually enjoys participating in the process and we put a lot of time and energy into understanding a client's needs, researching project drivers, preparing a solid proposal response, and attending interviews (the most important part).



The following is a short list of RFP “Tips” designed to help public agencies prepare better RFPs. Because:

**BETTER
REQUESTS
FOR
PROPOSALS**

Result In

**BETTER
CONSULTANT
SELECTION, and...**



**BETTER
CONSULTANT
SELECTION**

Results In

**FEWER HEADACHES, LOWER
COSTS, AND BETTER
PROJECTS**



THE LIST!

1 Limit All RFP Responses To No More Than 20 Pages. No Exceptions

Page limits improve the quality of RFP responses. They require brevity and efficiency; qualities of a good consultant. They'll thank you for the restriction. A page limit forces your respondents to answer your request directly. Trust me, **you'll get better proposals.**

2 Set Clear Evaluation Criteria and Stick To It

Well thought out evaluation criteria and scoring keeps **your process clean** and protects you from appeals. Solid criteria allows interested consultants to self-select opportunities that best fit their expertise.

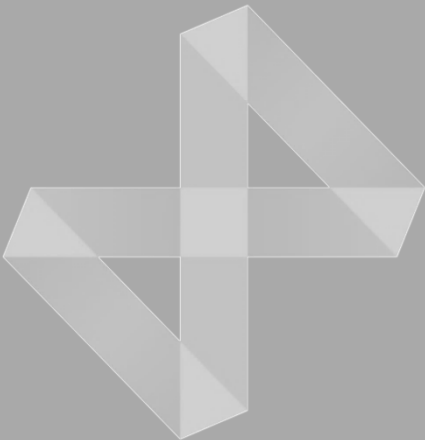
Wouldn't you rather a consultant determine for themselves that they aren't qualified?

3 Standardize Your Requests for Proposals, BUT beware of boilerplate leftovers

Consistency in your RFP format will decrease errors and help regular responders prepare better submittals. That having been said; **BEWARE OF BOILERPLATE LEFTOVERS.**

Often, there is remnant language left over from prior RFPs. Ask someone to thoroughly review your RFP before it is publicized.

“[Boilerplate] leftovers can be confusing. Ask someone to thoroughly review your RFP before it is publicized”



4 Be Available for Questions

When we decide to submit for an RFP, we are **ALL** in. That means we call with questions, we visit the site, and we visit key agency staff to understand their project needs. I would encourage the Project Manager to remain available right after publicizing an RFP. I get it. Running an RFP selection can be a stressful process. But you'll be better served if you plan time to answer questions. **Informed consultants will submit better proposal responses.**

5 Use **SHORT** Lists for Interviews

Interviews are the **MOST** important part of the consultant selection process. General qualifications, communicated in the proposal, are a given. Consultant fit, the rest of the ballgame, is determined in the interview.

Invest the time to thoroughly review proposals and limit interviews to the top 2-3 max. **Narrow the playing field early in the process.**

6 Understand the laws that govern professional services selection in your State

Each State has different laws that govern the public RFP process and that define the rules for consultant selection. Local government officials who move across State lines or lack basic understanding of state laws may make requests that put an agency at risk. **Understand your state laws** to avoid legal problems during your selection process.

**“Narrow the
playing field
early in the
process”**



The List in Conclusion:

- #1 Limit All RFP Responses To No More Than 20 Pages. No Exceptions*
- #2 Set Clear Evaluation Criteria and Stick To It*
- #3 Standardize Your Requests for Proposals, BUT beware of boilerplate leftovers*
- #4 Be Available for Questions*
- #5 Use SHORT Lists for Interviews*
- #6 Understand the laws that govern professional services selection in your State*



Have I missed anything? If so, email me [here](#) and we can discuss. I hope this list is helpful for public agency professionals looking to run a successful Request for Proposals process.

Written by Derrick Smith, P.E.

I'm a passionate owner of a dynamic consulting firm that provides civil engineering, public involvement, construction management, landscape architecture, planning, and land surveying services to the energy, land development, and public infrastructure markets. We've bucked economic trends by building our foundation on honesty, dedication, and relationships.

Have Derrick review your RFP and
give his expert advice!

[CLICK HERE](#)

