

Job Aid

Winning Contracts



Winning Contracts: Plan of Action

Use this plan of action as a living document to keep track of your efforts to win contracts. The more honest you are in this document, the better you can prioritize your efforts.

Take some time to review your prepared documents and evaluate how you provide the best responses to RFPs.

Your Objective

Fill in your one-sentence objective on how you will move forward to win a contract.

The First Steps

Business RFP Connections:

- Reach out to major players in your industry and ask to be added to their RFP distribution lists

Record your experience

- Identify third-party RFP management companies in your industry and ask to be added to their contact lists

Record your experience

Government RFP Connections:

- Visit <http://sam.gov>
- Search through your local state procurement sites

Record your experience

Be Prepared

Take time to prepare the most common documents for government and corporations. These help establish qualifications and compliance.

What You Need To Apply:	Status	Notes
Financial Statements		
Supplier Diversity Certifications (optional)		
Legal Records		
References		
Details on your capabilities		
Price Schedules		
Conflict of Interest Forms		

Reminder Resources:

- You can get help from Small Business Development Centers and Small Business Administration (SBA).
- There are three common Supplier Diversity Certifications you can apply to receive:
 - Women-owned Small Business (WOSB)
 - Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB)
 - Service-disabled Veteran-owned Small Business Concern (SDVOSBC)

Take a few minutes to research the resources listed above. Are any of these resources applicable?

What did you find while researching on your own?

Evaluation of RFP

Be strategic and focus on initiatives that align with your business objectives when deciding what RFPs to pursue. Answer the following questions:

Date:

Potential RFP:

Question	Evaluation Response
Do you have the resources to support RFP fulfillment?	
What is the probability that your business can win the bid?	
Has the funding organization awarded opportunities to similar companies?	

After a Win

After securing a contract, follow these 4 steps and record your experience:

1. Negotiate and Finalize

- Identify any potential challenges.
- Develop a checklist of negotiation ranges and non-negotiables.
- Communicate to secure specific, written agreements about the project scope, reporting requirements, and deliverables.

2. Nurture the Relationship

- Develop face-to-face connections with the buyer.
- Plan to complete a needs assessment.
- Decide on operational plans.

3. Prepare for the Second Contract

- Identify any additional opportunities.
- Work collaboratively to create key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Decide on operational plans.

Seize the Moment

- Capitalize on this success. Take a moment to reflect on how you may gain potential customers from this experience.

Glossary

Use this glossary as a guide to review key terms and how they show up in the real world.



Definition



Practical Use

Request for Proposal (RFP)

A business document that announces a project, describes it, and solicits bids from qualified contractors to complete it. Most organizations prefer to launch their projects using RFPs and governments use them.

Source: Investopedia

A business or organization may be seeking qualified contractors to carry out a new project of constructing a children's park. The project and its goals are defined in some detail but there is room for creativity in the responses. For example, an RFP for a children's park might allow the contractor to propose the precise layout, equipment, and amenities the park might contain.

Request for Quotation (RFQ)

A solicitation sent to a number of suppliers seeking bids for a contract to supply specific products or services. The request must specify the quality and quantity needed and the timing desired by the company or organization.

Source: Investopedia

A hardware store may be expanding its gardening supplies department and needs to find the suppliers necessary to fill its shelves. RFQs may be sent to a number of potential suppliers of gardening products. The responses will help the business establish a relationship with one or more suppliers of the quantity and quality of goods it needs, at a price that is established. With an RFQ, a business knows exactly what it wants.



Definition



Practical Use

Request for Information (RFI)

A solicitation to suppliers for written information on the products and services that they can provide. It might be used to gather information for a database of suppliers for future reference.

Source: Investopedia

A restaurant may use RFIs to gather information about breweries within a certain mile radius and what type of selections they offer. This is most useful to gather information, research, and create a database of suppliers for future reference.

Invitation to Bid (ITB)

A call to contractors to submit a proposal on a project for a specific product or service.

Source: FindRFP, The Bid Lab

A school or university might choose to release an ITB when it wants to provide some kind of supply to students (say, a 100-pack of disposable masks per university student for example). The institution already knows its needs, requirements, and timeline. Price, then, becomes the most important factor in the decision-making process.

Procurement Cycle

The series of actions required to obtain goods or services from an outside source.

Source: Zip Ordering

The events of a procurement cycle may include researching vendors, order requests, budget negotiation, purchases, and audits.



Definition



Practical Use

General Services Administration (GSA)

Provider of centralized procurement for the Federal Government, offering billions of dollars worth of products, services, and facilities that federal agencies need to serve the public.

Source: General Services Administration

GSA makes conducting business with the government easier by offering free access to and information about government programs with websites like <https://usa.gov> and <https://www.usa.gov/consumer>.

Business Proposal

A document that's designed to persuade an organization to buy a product or service.

Source: Shopify

You may have a formal request to create a business proposal that persuades a business to purchase your service or product while introducing your company and outlining what you can do. These will be evaluated by the business.

Commodity Codes

Standard classification codes for products and services used to detail where money is spent within a company.

Source: University of Washington

A campus may use commodity codes to identify where the bulk of its budget is allocated. Commodity codes allow you to review rates for each supplier – as well as suppliers offering the same exact product – and make contractual changes to provide the best possible price.



Definition



Practical Use

Award

The winning supplier who best meets the qualifications and criteria specified in the RFP. This is often provided in the form of an email communication.

Source: University of Illinois System:
Office of Business and Financial Services

A buyer awards a respondent to the RFP, informing them they are the winning proposal.

Procurement

The act of obtaining goods or services, typically for business purposes. It is most commonly associated with businesses because companies need to solicit services or purchase goods, usually on a relatively large scale.

Source: Investopedia

Business procurement requires preparation, solicitation, and payment processing, which usually involves several areas of a company.

Procurement Portal

A procurement portal is one of the tools that allows you to bring your purchasing process online. Its concept derives from the combination of a vendor portal and an internal procurement software.

Source: Science Soft

A procurement portal brings all processes in one place, thus aggregating the benefits you get from a vendor portal and an internal procurement software while also introducing some new ones (closer cooperation with suppliers, better demand prediction, 'guided buying', etc.).