

597—5.3(225B) Competitive process. The council shall award contracts, to the extent possible, through an open and competitive process. The competitive process includes:

5.3(1) Public notification. The council shall develop a request for proposals and announce the opening of a period for application through public notice. Applicants shall be required to submit first a letter of intent and then a proposal by the deadlines specified in the announcement.

5.3(2) Letters of intent. Letters of intent must clearly identify the applicant and specify the project or service contract sought. Only letters of intent received by the deadline specified in the public notice may be considered by the council. Applicants shall receive a written acknowledgment of their letter of intent and an application packet.

5.3(3) Proposals. Applicants shall submit the proposal to the council chairperson on Form 470-2943. A proposal that does not contain the information specified in the application package or does not arrive by the due date specified in the announcement shall not be considered. At a minimum, proposals must contain the following:

- a. A summary or abstract of the project or service to be provided.
- b. A statement outlining the need or problem to be addressed.
- c. A statement of the purpose and approach to be used.
- d. Goals, objectives, action steps, and timelines for implementation (work plan).
- e. A plan for evaluation.
- f. Applicant's qualifications and resources to be provided.
- g. A line item budget and budget summary.
- h. Other information identified in the request for proposal or the application packet.

5.3(4) Review and selection. All proposals that meet the minimum criteria stated above shall be evaluated by a selection committee appointed by the council chair. In addition to council members, the selection committee may include representatives from the technical assistance committee and other persons with expertise in a specific area. The selection committee shall review and rank the proposals on the basis of established evaluation criteria. Proposals receiving higher rankings shall be referred to the full council for final review and selection.

- a. *Evaluation criteria.* The following factors are considered in evaluating proposals:
 - (1) Demonstrated knowledge of the problem or need for the project/service.
 - (2) Demonstrated understanding of the purpose of the project/service and adequacy of the overall approach.
 - (3) Feasibility of the project/service plan and conformity with the request for proposals.
 - (4) Appropriateness of the budget in relation to the objectives and methodology.
 - (5) Applicant's demonstrated expertise and adequacy of resources to be provided.
- b. *Rejection of proposals.* The council may reject any or all proposals on the basis of funds availability or quality of application.
- c. *Selection records.* The council shall maintain a file documenting the review and selection process.