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**Comptroller General
of the United States**

**United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548**

Decision

Matter of: LOGMET

File: B-400535

Date: October 30, 2008

Wayne C. Rankin for the protester.

Maj. Jonathan P. Widmann, Department of the Air Force, for the agency.

Philip J. Davis, Esq., William A. Roberts, III, Esq., and Jon W. Burd, Esq., Wiley Rein LLP, for M1 Support Services LP, an intervenor.

Jennifer D. Westfall-McGrail, Esq., and Christine S. Melody, Esq., Office of the General Counsel, GAO, participated in the preparation of the decision.

DIGEST

Where solicitation required offerors to document work experience and provide certifications for a number of skill sets in order for proposals to be determined technically acceptable, and protester failed to document that it had personnel with the required work experience and/or certifications for one of the skill sets, agency reasonably rejected protester's proposal as technically unacceptable.

DECISION

LOGMET of Round Rock, Texas protests the rejection of its proposal and the award of a contract to M1 Support Services of Denton, Texas under request for proposals (RFP) No. FA3030-08-R-0009, issued by the Department of the Air Force for the maintenance of training devices, aerospace ground equipment, and historical/static displays used by the 17th Training Wing and the Louis F. Garland Fire Training Academy located at Goodfellow Air Force Base, San Angelo, Texas. The protester contends that the agency unreasonably determined its proposal to be technically unacceptable.

We deny the protest.

BACKGROUND

The RFP, which contemplated the award of a fixed-price contract for a 30-day transition, 1-year base, and three 1-year option periods, instructed offerors to submit technical proposals that showed work experience and included "certifications" for a

number of “skill sets,” one of which was “Self Contained Breathing Apparatus [SCBA] technician.”¹ RFP at 45. The solicitation advised offerors that the agency would begin the evaluation process by evaluating the technical proposals on a pass/fail basis, and that to be determined technically acceptable, a proposal had to document work experience and provide certifications for each skill set listed.² RFP at 49. The solicitation stated that the agency would then rank all technically acceptable proposals by price and evaluate offerors’ past performance, culminating in “an integrated assessment best value award determination.” RFP at 50.

The agency received proposals from several offerors, including LOGMET. After reviewing LOGMET’s proposal, which identified (and furnished information regarding the experience of) only one prospective staff member, the agency sent the protester an evaluation notice that identified as a deficiency in LOGMET’s proposal its failure to submit “certifications/resumes for personnel filling specified skill sets.” Agency Report (AR), Tab 12. LOGMET responded by furnishing documentation pertaining to 14 prospective staff members and a reference table matching the proposed personnel with the required skill sets.³ The table identified two individuals for the SCBA skill set. After considering the documentation submitted by the protester, the evaluators concluded that LOGMET had demonstrated adequate work experience and/or certifications for all skill sets except that of SCBA technician.⁴ Because the documentation submitted by LOGMET did not show that either of its proposed SCBA technicians had the appropriate SCBA maintenance experience or certifications, the evaluators determined LOGMET’s proposal to be technically unacceptable and did not evaluate it further. The agency subsequently selected the

¹ Other “skill sets” were aircraft mechanic, aerospace ground equipment mechanic, maintenance pipe fitter, aircraft quality control inspector, maintenance carpenter, aircraft painter, welder, life support specialist, survival equipment specialist, production control clerk, and fabric worker. RFP at 45.

² The solicitation did not provide further guidance as to the certifications required for the SCBA technician position other than to indicate in the statement of work (SOW) that the contractor was required to ensure that employees performing maintenance on survival equipment were certified to perform maintenance “on all types of airpack portable breathing apparatus that the academy uses.” SOW at 3.

³ While in most cases, the documentation consisted of a resume, that was not the case in all instances, as discussed in greater detail infra.

⁴ The agency explained in its report on the protest that while some of the resumes made explicit reference to certifications, in others “the certification [could] be presumed because of the significant length of time the individual worked in a technical trade that typically requires certification or licensing.” Air Force Memorandum of Law at 13.

proposal of M1 Support Services, which was higher in price than the protester's, for award.

DISCUSSION

LOGMET protests the rejection of its proposal as technically unacceptable, contending that the documentation that it submitted for the SCBA technician position demonstrated that the proposed individuals had the appropriate certification and/or experience from which the appropriate certification could be presumed.

The evaluation of proposals is a matter within the discretion of the procuring agency, since the agency is responsible for defining its needs and deciding on the best methods of accommodating them. We will question the agency's technical evaluation only where the record shows that the evaluation does not have a reasonable basis or is inconsistent with the RFP. Pacifica Servs., Inc., B-280921, Dec. 7, 1998, 98-2 CPD ¶ 137 at 3. Since an agency's evaluation is dependent upon the information furnished in a proposal, it is the offeror's responsibility to submit an adequately written proposal for the agency to evaluate. Id. Here, based upon our review of the record, we find that the agency's evaluation of LOGMET's proposal as unacceptable was reasonable and consistent with terms of the RFP.

As noted above, LOGMET submitted documentation pertaining to two individuals for the SCBA technician position. The resume of one of the proposed individuals (Technician A) listed as one of his qualifications that he was "SCBA (self contained breathing apparatus) Trained." AR, Tab 13. Technician A's resume also furnished a summary of his work experience (positions held, job duties, and supervisors' names) and the names of three references. Technician B's resume consisted of a job description for an SCBA technician position at a local fire department, with his name inserted at the top. In other words, rather than a typical resume summarizing the candidate's qualifications, training, and experience, this "resume" furnished only a description of the essential functions to be performed and the skills/knowledge required for performance of a particular SCBA technician position.

The Air Force explains that it could not determine from the proffered documentation that the proposed individuals had the requisite work experience or certifications to perform the SCBA technician position. With regard to Technician A, the agency explained that the evaluators could not assume that "SCBA trained" meant that the individual had received training in the maintenance of SCBA equipment since "SCBA trained" could reasonably be interpreted as signifying simply that the individual had received training in the use of SCBA gear. The agency further noted that none of Technician A's work experience was in positions that required the performance of duties similar to those of an SCBA technician. With regard to Technician B, the agency explained that while the position description was a reasonably accurate summary of the skills and training required of an SCBA technician, there was no evidence that the proposed individual actually possessed those skills and training. In

this connection, the “resume” furnished no information regarding the employee’s experience and/or training that would qualify him for the position.

In response to the agency’s argument that the evaluators could not reasonably assume that the phrase “SCBA trained” in Technician A’s resume indicated that he was trained in maintenance of SCBA equipment, the protester contends that the solicitation did not furnish any explanation as to the services to be provided—or the equipment to be maintained—by an SCBA technician. To the extent that the protester is arguing that the RFP did not make clear that the SCBA technician would be performing maintenance on SCBA equipment—and thus that experience in performing and/or certification to perform maintenance on SCBA equipment was required—we think that, given that this was a solicitation for maintenance services, offerors reasonably should have understood that one of the functions to be performed by an SCBA technician was maintenance of SCBA equipment.⁵

The protester also argues that if the evaluators had questions regarding the nature of Technician A’s SCBA training, they should have contacted one of the references listed on his resume, who was identified as a “Firefighter/EMT–Paramedic.” We disagree. First, as noted above, it is the offeror’s responsibility to submit an adequately written proposal, and contracting agencies are not obligated to go in search of needed information that the offeror has omitted or failed to present. Delphinus Eng’g, Inc., B-296902, B-296902.2, Sept. 20, 2005, 2006 CPD ¶ 7 at 8. Second, there was nothing in Technician A’s resume to suggest that the firefighter/EMT whom he listed as a reference had any involvement in furnishing him with SCBA training. In fact, there was no indication in the resume that the firefighter/EMT had been associated with the proposed technician in any professional capacity.

With regard to Technician B, the protester argues that the documentation that it submitted demonstrates that the candidate secured employment with a local fire department as an SCBA technician, and thus he may be presumed to possess the qualifications, training, and experience necessary for such a position. We do not think that it is apparent from the documentation furnished by the protester that Technician B in fact secured or performed the job described. Further, even assuming that he did fill the position described, there is no information confirming

⁵ To the extent that the protester is arguing that the solicitation furnished insufficient information regarding the services to be provided by an SCBA technician and/or the equipment to be serviced, this is an objection to the terms of the solicitation, which to be timely would have had to be raised prior to the closing date for receipt of proposals. See Bid Protest Regulations, 4 C.F.R. § 21.2(a)(1) (2008).

that he had the experience or qualifications for it, nor is there any information regarding the tenure of his employment at the job.

In sum, we think that the agency had a reasonable basis for finding that the protester failed to demonstrate that it had a qualified individual to fill the position of SCBA technician, and, as a consequence, for determining the protester's proposal technically unacceptable.

The protest is denied.

Gary L. Kepplinger
General Counsel