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Policies and Procedures

Title: Unsolicited Proposals

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Division, AFM/ARS

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This P&P sets forth policies and procedures concerning the submission, receipt, handling, evaluation, and acceptance or rejection of procurement-related unsolicited proposals within REE.

This P&P has been updated to reflect the change in Division name from Procurement and Property Division (PPD) to Acquisition and Property Division (APD). All other information remains the same.

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1. Background

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 15.604 and Agricultural Acquisition Regulation (AGAR) 14.5 require that procedures and points of contact be established for the control of unsolicited procurement proposals.

Each agency Head of the Contracting Activity Designee (HCAD) is responsible for assuring that these procedures and contact points be established. This P&P provides the required guidance on unsolicited proposals for REE.

2. Policy

Unsolicited proposals allow innovative ideas or approaches that have been developed outside the Government to be made available to Government agencies for use in the accomplishment of their missions. Unsolicited proposals are offered with the intent that the Government enter into a contract with the offeror for research and development or other efforts supporting the Government mission.

Advertising material, commercial item offers or contributions (as defined in the Glossary), or routine correspondence on technical issues are not unsolicited proposals.

A valid unsolicited proposal must:

- Be innovative and unique.
- Be independently originated and developed by the offeror.
- Be prepared without Government supervision, endorsement, direction, or direct Government involvement.
- Include sufficient detail to permit a determination that Government support could be worthwhile and the proposed work could benefit the agency's research and development, or other mission responsibilities.
- Not be an advanced proposal for a known agency requirement that can be acquired through competitive methods.

3. REE Point of Contact

The Chief, Policy Branch (PB), Acquisition and Property Division (APD), has been designated by the HCAD to serve as the REE point of contact for the receipt and handling of unsolicited proposals.

4. Procedures

Preliminary contact with agency technical or other appropriate personnel before an offeror prepares a detailed unsolicited proposal or submits proprietary information to the Government may save considerable time and effort for both parties.

Once an unsolicited proposal is formally submitted to the agency, it must be sent to the REE contact point (Chief, PB, APD) if it was not initially sent to this individual. The REE point of contact will control the receipt, evaluation, and timely disposition of unsolicited proposals. The unsolicited proposal should not be duplicated or distributed within the agency unless directed by the point of contact. The proposals should always be safeguarded, particularly data identified by the offeror as being subject to duplication, use, or disclosure restrictions.

Upon receipt of an unsolicited proposal, the point of contact will do a preliminary review of the proposal to determine if it meets the requirements of the FAR and can be considered a valid unsolicited proposal.

If the proposal meets these requirements, the point of contact will promptly acknowledge receipt and process the proposal for evaluation. If a proposal is rejected because it does not meet the necessary requirements, the point of contact will promptly inform the offeror, in writing, of the reasons for rejection and of the proposed disposition of the unsolicited proposal.

Comprehensive evaluations will be coordinated by the point of contact who will attach or imprint the required legend to safeguard the proposal, on each unsolicited proposal circulated for evaluation, unless the offeror clearly states in writing that no restrictions are imposed on the disclosure or use of the data contained in the proposal.

When performing a comprehensive evaluation of an unsolicited proposal, evaluators will consider the required factors in addition to any others appropriate for the particular proposal. The evaluators will notify the agency point of contact of their recommendations when the evaluation is completed.

A favorable comprehensive evaluation of an unsolicited proposal does not in itself justify awarding a contract without providing for full and open competition. The cognizant agency contracting officer may commence negotiations on a sole source basis only when:

- An unsolicited proposal has received a favorable comprehensive evaluation;
- A justification and approval for other than full and open competition has been approved;
- Necessary funds are furnished; and,
- Synopsis requirements of the FAR have been met.

Government personnel are prohibited from using any data, concept, idea, or other part of an unsolicited proposal as the basis for a solicitation or in negotiations with any other firm unless the offeror is notified of and agrees to the intended use. However, this prohibition does not preclude using any data, concept, or idea in the proposal that also is available from another source without restriction.

5. Summary of Responsibilities

REE Personnel

- When an unsolicited proposal is received by an individual, safeguard the proposal and send it to the REE point of contact for unsolicited proposals within 1 day of receipt.
- When preliminary contact is made by a potential offeror of an unsolicited proposal, provide information on agency objectives, existing research programs, and techniques to assist the offeror in developing its proposal.
- When designated by the point of contact, participate in a comprehensive evaluation of unsolicited proposals and provide the necessary evaluation documentation.

REE Point of Contact (Chief, PB, APD) (301-504-1725)

- Coordinates the receipt and handling of unsolicited proposals.
- Provides guidance to potential offerors of unsolicited proposals as to the criteria for determining valid unsolicited proposals and guidance on the procedures for their submission and evaluation.

6. Glossary

Advertising Material. Material designed to acquaint the Government with a prospective contractor's present products, services, potential capabilities, or designed to stimulate the Government's interest in buying such products or services.

Commercial Item Offer. An offer of a commercial item that the vendor wishes to see introduced in the Government's supply system as an alternate or a replacement for an existing supply item. This term does not include innovative or unique configurations or uses of commercial items that are being offered for further development and that may be submitted as an unsolicited proposal.

Contribution. A concept, suggestion, or idea presented to the Government for its use with no indication that the source intends to devote any further effort to it on the Government's behalf.

Unsolicited Proposal. A written proposal for a new or innovative idea that is submitted to an agency on the initiative of the offeror for the purpose of obtaining a contract with the Government and that is not in response to a request for proposals, Broad Agency Announcement, Small Business Innovation Research topic, Small Business Technology Transfer Research topic, Program Research and Development Announcement, or any other Government-initiated solicitation or program.

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