



Principles for Effectively Stating Your Needs in a Procurement Process

Best practices for proceeding



Planning

Whether you're drafting a request for proposal, a contract, a performance work statement, statement of work or other form that documents your procurement needs, the following principles can help ensure that the proposals and ultimately the contractual work itself meet your needs. Before finalizing your statement of needs, in whatever form that takes, ask the acquisition team to review the drafts statements to verify the principles below are being met.

Be clear

Use precise, unambiguous terms so others understand your needs as you understand them. Provide definitions for any terms that might be subject to interpretation, and spell out acronyms.

Be complete

Articulate your needs fully. Don't make assumptions about what the respondents understand about your needs. Also be clear about who has what roles and responsibilities; don't assume the vendor will perform tasks unless they are specified.

Be concrete

Avoid vague terms and concepts; carefully look for possible sources of ambiguity or confusion.

Be consistent

Ensure the statement of your needs matches your objectives, requirements and other aspects of the solicitation document and/or contract. Ensure IIS-specific provisions don't contradict your jurisdiction's boilerplate provisions or language.

Be simple

State one thing and state it well.

Emphasize the what, not the how

Let the respondents propose approaches or solutions (which hopefully will be better than yours!).

Write from the bidder's perspective

Anticipate and address questions that respondents may have.

Be realistic

Don't ask for more than you can pay for within the planned time frame.

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