

# WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PROCUREMENT RESOURCES

## INTRODUCTION

*These resources have been designed to assist organizations in meeting the goals of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).*

The goal of procurement is “to get the best possible product and/or service at the best possible price.” The traditional role of procurement management is to ensure that there is a supply of goods and services to support the organization's operations and save money in the process. The common tactic to accomplish this is through competitive bidding to ensure that suppliers provide their best price.

Cost reduction is only *part* of the procurement goal for organizations; the best use of procurement is to maximize the value of goods and services for the organization. To do this, the organization must define how procurement activities will be organized, conducted, and managed.

There are also specific Federal regulations, [2 CFR 200](#), that establish procurement standards that must be followed, and each Grantee will have their own set of requirements based on their state laws and agency practices. All of this must be incorporated into how the organization procures goods and/or services for WAP.

The purpose of the *Weatherization Assistance Program Procurement Resources* is to provide examples for *illustrative purposes only* of documents that can be used in purchasing services and/or materials.

**The Step-by-Step Process for Procurement** provides the basic checklist/framework for procurement and allows the agency to identify the steps critical to their own journey. There are slight variations if purchasing services vs. purchasing materials. Where there are significant differences, these are distinguished, for the sake of clarity. Additional materials and resources are available in the Appendix. These can serve as references or starting points for developing a procurement package.

Included in the Appendix:

- Step-by-Step Process to Procurement, Checklist – To help track progress.
- Preliminary Materials for Building an Agency List of Bidders – To outline information agencies may want to collect in advance to build a collection of contractors with the necessary credentials and eligible to receive federal funds.
- General Instructions Template – To outline the Request for Quotation. It is important to incorporate all individual State and/or organizational requirements into the General Instructions that are to be used by your organization.
- Specification Examples – To provide both a training example and measures/materials example.
- Evaluation Criteria Examples – To illustrate how the agency may evaluate and score bids.

## THE STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS TO PROCUREMENT

### STEP ONE

**Determine what you will be purchasing.** The agency will determine what they will request cost quotations (the term cost quotations will include invitations for bids, request for proposals, and request for quotation) for. The clearer the scope, the better the bids. A detailed scope of work is critical to being able to compare “apples to apples” when evaluating proposals, bids, or quotes.

Services	Measures/Materials/Equipment
<p><i>Procuring Services-ensure the Scope of Work includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of services needed (e.g., comprehensive training, monitoring support, quality control inspections, etc.).</li> <li>• Specific experience or credentials required of bidders (e.g., certification(s), years of experience training WAP workers, etc.).</li> <li>• Timeframe for needed services (e.g., designate specific times, within a specific period, etc.).</li> <li>• Quantity/Level of Effort (e.g., how many trainees, how many hours of support, etc.).</li> </ul> <p><i>Procuring Training Services, ensure the Scope of Work includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of training and anticipated audience (e.g., numbers, level, etc.).</li> <li>• Applicable standards trainees should be taught to.</li> <li>• Experience and/or accreditations required of the bidders.</li> <li>• Pre-identified needs and/or training goals of the agency.</li> <li>• Training delivery specifications (e.g., in person, remote, self-paced, etc.).</li> <li>• Frequency and/or length of training.</li> <li>• Curriculum development expectations and/or training preparation.</li> <li>• Evaluation tools bidder will use to conduct student pre-assessments.</li> <li>• Expectations around training qualifying for certification testing or Continuing Education Units (CEUs).</li> <li>• End of course evaluation.</li> <li>• Training retention activities.</li> <li>• Location and logistics.</li> <li>• Administration expectations.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Measures/Materials/Equipment-ensure the Scope of the Procurement includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specify if the cost is the material or the material, plus installation? Identify specific parameters surrounding delivery (e.g., bulk delivery and warehousing materials or purchasing on a house-by-house basis from a designated vendor)?</li> </ul> <p><i>Weatherization Measures/Materials ensure the scope of work includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Material standards outlined in <a href="#">Appendix A of 10 CFR 440</a>.</li> <li>• Material disposal requirements that meet or exceed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recovered material rule of <a href="#">2 CFR 200.323</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Standard Work Specifications</a> (SWS), by reference.</li> <li>• Detailed requirements for the contractor to adhere to federal safety standards.</li> <li>• Contractor liability requirements regarding damage to client property/belongings.</li> <li>• Detailed expectations around warranties and client education components.</li> </ul>

## STEP TWO

**Establish timeframe for the procurement(s).** The agency determines the procurement cycle which will include what they will be purchasing, when they will need the services and/or materials, and in what quantities. It is important that the potential providers of the services and/or materials are aware of the timeframes including when quotes are due (best practice is to allow 30 days, during which time the bidders conference and any mods or responses to questions are addressed), when the agreement will be signed (generally within 30 days of when bids are due), and date items/services are required (which can vary greatly, depending on the type of procurement).

Services	Materials/Equipment
It is important to be realistic around timeframes when requesting services. Availability varies depending on multiple factors including other Training & Technical Assistance (T&TA) commitments, staffing levels, state and national conferences, etc. The more flexible the timeframe for delivery of services, the more bids the agency is likely to attract.	Plan production carefully to ensure the delivery of materials/equipment closely aligns with installation and to avoid unnecessary storage. Consider whether bulk ordering and managing an inventory is advantageous.

## STEP THREE

**Identify the lead individual within the organization that will handle the procurement(s).** It is important that a single individual coordinates the solicitation activities and serves as the agency contact for all potential bidders.

## STEP FOUR

**Prepare general instructions.** The general instructions can be used for all cost quotations and should include general information that will be applicable to all suppliers and/or contractors. The general instructions are a critical component of the solicitation activities as they provide the agency requirements and rules for providing weatherization services and/or materials to potential suppliers. It is important to work with your State office to ensure that all State requirements are included in the instructions.

An example of general instructions is in the Appendix that can be modified, as appropriate, and used by your agency. General information the agency should consider and include in the instructions, in addition to items in previous steps, include:

- Outlining details of the agreement and payment schedule.
- Identifying key dates for the procurement schedule.
- Deciding how the bids will be collected and any specific submission requirements.
- Determining if there are any Licenses, Accreditations, and/or Certifications necessary.

- Establishing evaluation criteria and scoring rubric including how price will be weighted and what other factors or preferences will be used in the scoring of bids (e.g., experience, type of business, etc.).

## STEP FIVE

**Prepare specifications and price quote sheets.** The specification and price quote sheets detail specifically what the agency will be purchasing and provide the offeror with the format that proposals, bids, and quotations are to be submitted. The preparation of the specifications is the most important component of any solicitation to ensure that the agency receives the services and/or materials that they procure, in the timeframe that they want them, at the best possible price. Agencies should include detailed price quote sheets to ensure all bidders are using the same parameters to establish the bid. The Appendix includes examples of specification and price quote sheets for training, building shell, mechanical, electric baseload, and health and safety measures. There are also examples of materials and whole house weatherization specifications, as well as price quote sheets that can be modified as appropriate and used by your agency. Refer to the Appendix for Specifications Examples for a Beginner, Comprehensive Energy Auditor Training Course, and an example of a Measures/Materials Request.

## STEP SIX

**Advertise the solicitation.** All procurements above your agency's small procurement threshold must be advertised, according to your agency requirements, unless noncompetitive procurement has been approved by the entity providing the funds. The objective is to inform as many potential vendors and contractors as possible of the solicitation.

Agencies should be as inclusive as possible and look for opportunities to expand vendors participating in the program. As part of the advertisement, the agency may choose to require vendors fill out information by a specific date providing notification to the agency of the vendors "intent to bid." This allows the agency to ensure the entity is qualified to bid on the work.

The Appendix includes two documents an agency may find helpful in soliciting information as part of an "intent to bid" process or information the agency can gather from potential vendors that contact the agency outside a specific bid event.

- 1) **Contractor Information/Application Form** – Includes general information to assist the agency in determining the qualifications of the contractor to support the work (much of this information will be required again in the Request for Proposal/Invitation for Bid/Request for Quotation).
- 2) **Contractor Information Regarding Debarment and Suspension** – Requires the contractor to self-certify they are not barred from participating in receiving federal grant funds. The agency must also independently check and document the contractor is not on the Federal government's list of suspended or debarred companies.

## STEP SEVEN

**Conduct bidders' conference (optional but recommended).** The purpose of the bidders' conference is to provide information to all potential providers of the services and/or materials that they will need to know about the solicitation and the level of expectation for services and materials. It is also a good time to respond to questions about the solicitation. It is recommended that the bidders conference be mandatory and provided virtually so no one must travel to attend. Alternatively, the agency may request that all potential suppliers and contractors submit questions by a specific date. The agency would develop responses to the questions and send the information to all individuals that had requested the Request for Proposals/Invitation to Bid/Request for Quotations or post on a publicly available website that all bidders would have access to.

## STEP EIGHT

**Receive quotations.** An individual within your organization should be designated to receive the proposals up until the closing date and time. The individual would maintain the unopened quotes. If required in hard copy, the quotes are placed in a locked cabinet. If received through an electronic portal, the "box" is not accessed until the closing date and time. To ensure the integrity of the process and maintain "checks and balances," it is recommended the individual designated as the point of contact for the vendors should not be the same individual as the lead individual receiving the solicitations for the agency.

## STEP NINE

**Evaluate quotations.** The agency will then evaluate the quotations submitted and select the successful vendor(s) and/or contractor(s). The agency will do a first review to ensure all offerors meet the minimum requirements. Part of the Federal award requires that non-Federal entities must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus areas are used, when possible. For all factors being considered in the evaluation (e.g., cost, preferences, experience, references, etc.) the agency will apply weights and/or points to each of the criteria and assess each criterion for each quote.

Examples of evaluation documents are included in the Appendix for review and modification.

## STEP TEN

**Select vendor(s) and/or contractor(s).** Based on the evaluation of quotes one or more vendors and contractors will be selected and notified of the selection in writing. Unsuccessful bidders should also receive written notification.

## STEP ELEVEN

**Establish solicitation file.** It is important to maintain a solicitation file separate from the selected vendor or contractor file. The solicitation file is available for inspection should anyone question the process the agency followed in making the award. It will also assist in making refinements to future solicitations.

The solicitation file should include:

- Request for Quotation document(s) including general instructions, specifications, and price quotes.
- Copy of the advertisement and listing of ways the agency posted the solicitation.
- Contractor interest/intent to bid forms that include date received, if required as part of the bid process.
- List of attendees and minutes of the bidders' conference, any documentation outlining questions received, and how questions/answers were distributed to all bidders.
- Quotes received.
- Reviewer evaluation papers.
- Copy of the notice to the successful vendor(s) and/or contractor(s).
- Copy of the notice to any unsuccessful vendor(s) and/or contractor(s).

## **STEP TWELVE**

**Enter into Agreements with vendor(s) and/or contractor(s), as appropriate.** After the agency has made their selection, the agency enters into the agreement with the vendor(s) and/or contractor(s). It is important to work with the funding source and State office to ensure that all requirements are included in the agreement.