

Solicitation Process

While it is the desire of Sourcewell to meet our members' procurement requirements, it is ultimately our members' responsibility to interpret local purchasing laws to determine their own ability to access and utilize Sourcewell contracts.

Our rigorous request for proposal (RFP) process is continuously being refined to meet the changing needs of our members. The desired result is a national, competitively solicited procurement and contract process that is not only valued by members but meets or exceeds their requirements—offering exceptional products and services from nationally acclaimed vendors.

1. Identify Member Needs and Research Solutions

Sourcewell identifies areas of need through daily member interactions and advisory committees, then researches the best approach for each offering.

2. Seek Authorization from Sourcewell's Board of Directors

After establishing the existence of member needs and a viable industry solution, permission from the publicly elected Sourcewell Board of Directors is sought to officially begin the development of the solicitation and overall procurement process.

3. Draft Solicitation, Public Advertisement, and Notice

Our solicitation document is the cornerstone of cooperative contract purchasing. The consistency of the solicitation document, its response forms and evaluation criteria, are some of our greatest assets.

Sourcewell advertises each RFP:

- In print and online: [Salt Lake News](#) (Utah), [USA Today](#) (National), [Daily Journal of Commerce](#) (Oregon), [The State](#) (South Carolina)
- On the Sourcewell website
- On e-commerce sites: [Biddingo](#), [MERX](#), [Onvia](#), [PublicPurchase](#)

We also notify each state procurement department for re-posting of the solicitation within their system at their option.

4. Conduct Pre-Proposal Conference, Followed by Receipt of Responses

Proposers are typically given five to six weeks from the advertisement of the RFP to respond. A Pre-Proposal Conference is conducted to answer questions and provide clarification. An addendum may be issued as necessary.

For accuracy, Sourcewell time and date stamps each Proposal immediately upon receipt at our office in Staples, MN. Sourcewell conducts a public opening of the proposals received at the time, date, and place specified in the RFP.

5. Evaluate Responses

Evaluation begins at the proposal opening by determining the responsiveness of each proposal. The final evaluation is conducted using the "Proposal Evaluation" form defined in the RFP (Form G). [Click here for an example.](#)

6. Provide Recommendation to Chief Procurement Officer (CPO)

Recommendations of the evaluation committee are presented to the CPO for final review and possible award. The CPO has the final authority to issue or deny a procurement contract.

7. Award Vendors

Upon approval by the CPO, the recommended vendor is awarded a four-year contract term with the potential for an additional one-year extension at the discretion of Sourcewell. The Procurement Department sends Notice of Award or Non-Award to all respondents via email.

8. Posting and Reviewing Approved Contract Documents

A complete procurement file is maintained by Sourcewell, and contract documentation is posted on our website for review by our members and are periodically reviewed for compliance and effectiveness. Vendors are allowed to seek price and product changes upon the approval from Sourcewell.