CITY OF AUSTIN
PURCHASING OFFICE
SOLICITATION INSTRUCTIONS V2 JUNE 26, 2018

1. **VENDOR REGISTRATION:** All Vendors, Contractors, Subcontractors, Consultants, and Subconsultants desiring to sell to the City must be registered to do business with the City prior to submitting an Offer to a City solicitation. Prime Contractors/Consultants are responsible for ensuring that their Subcontractors/Subconsultants are registered. Registration can be done through the City's online vendor registration system. Log onto http://www.austintexas.gov/financeonline/vendor_connection/index.cfm and follow the directions.

2. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:**

   A. **Equal Employment Opportunity:** No Contractor, or Contractor's agent, shall engage in any discriminatory employment practice as defined in Chapter 5-4 of the City Code. No Offer submitted to the City shall be considered, nor any Purchase Order issued, or any Contract awarded by the City unless the Offeror has executed and filed with the City Purchasing Office a current Non-Discrimination Certification. Non-compliance with Chapter 5-4 of the City Code may result in sanctions, including termination of the contract and the Contractor's suspension or debarment from participation on future City contracts until deemed compliant with Chapter 5-4.

   B. **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance:** No Contractor, or Contractor's agent, shall engage in any discriminatory practice against individuals with disabilities as defined in the ADA, including but not limited to: employment, accessibility to goods and services, reasonable accommodations, and effective communications.

3. **MINORITY AND WOMEN OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (MBE/WBE) PROCUREMENT PROGRAM:** All City procurements are subject to the City's Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program found at Chapters 2-9A, 2-9B, 2-9C, and 2-9D of the City Code. The Program provides Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MBEs/WBEs) full opportunity to participate in all City contracts. Goals for MBE/WBE participation are stated in each Solicitation and differ from contract to contract based on the type of contract, the availability of MBEs/WBEs to perform the functions of the contract, and other factors. Information on achieving the goals or documenting good faith efforts to achieve the goals are contained in the MBE/WBE Program Package contained in Section 0900 of the Solicitation. When goals are established, Offerors are required to complete and return the MBE/WBE Compliance Plan with their Offer. If no goals are established, Offerors are required to submit the No Goals Utilization Plan. If a Compliance Plan or No Goals Utilization Plan is not submitted prior to the date and time set forth in the Solicitation, the Offer will not be accepted for consideration.

4. **SOLICITATION:**

   A. **Review of Documents:** Offerors are expected to examine all documents that make up the Solicitation. Offerors shall promptly notify the City of any omission, ambiguity, inconsistency or error that they may discover upon examination of the Solicitation. Offerors must use a complete Solicitation to prepare Offers. The City assumes no responsibility for any errors or misrepresentations that result from the use of incomplete Solicitations.

   B. **Location of Documents:** Solicitations are issued by the Purchasing Office. The location and phone number for the Purchasing Office are specified in the advertisement and in the Solicitation.

5. **WRITTEN EXPLANATIONS OR CLARIFICATIONS:** Any material information given to one Offeror concerning a Solicitation will be furnished as an Addendum to all Offerors who have been issued a Solicitation. Any explanation, clarification, interpretation or change to the Solicitation made in any other manner is not binding upon the City, and Offerors shall not rely upon such explanation, clarification, interpretation or change. Oral explanations or instructions given before the award of the Contract are not binding. Requests for explanations, clarifications or interpretations may be faxed to the City at (512) 974-2388. The fax must clearly identify the buyer's name and solicitation number.

6. **PRE-BID / PROPOSAL / RESPONSE CONFERENCE:** If a Pre-Bid/Proposal/Response conference is mandatory, the time, place and mandatory nature of the conference will be specified on the cover page of the Solicitation. If a Pre-Bid/Proposal/Response Conference is mandatory and is not attended by an Offeror, their Offer will be rejected.

7. **PREPARATION OF OFFERS:**

   A. **Alternate Offers:** Alternate Offers will be rejected unless the Solicitation authorizes the submission of Alternates.

   B. **Bid Preparation Costs:** All costs associated with preparing a Bid in response to a Solicitation shall be borne by the Bidder.

   C. **Bid / Proposal / Response Guaranty or Bond:** When required by the Solicitation, an Offer must be accompanied by a Bid/Proposal/Response Guaranty or a Bid / Proposal / Response Bond with Power of Attorney attached, issued by a solvent surety authorized under laws of the State of Texas and acceptable to the City.

   D. **Brand Name or Equal:** If the Solicitation indicates brand name or "equal" products are acceptable, the Offeror may propose an "equal" product but must be prepared to demonstrate those features that render it equal. Final determination of a product as an "equal" remains with the City.

   E. **Delivery Time:** Delivery time, if stated as a number of days, will be based on calendar days. Time is of the essence in any City purchase. If the indicated date cannot be met or the date is not indicated, the Offeror shall state its best delivery time.

   F. **Exceptions:** Exceptions that are taken to any portion of the Solicitation may jeopardize acceptance of the Offer.

   G. **Free on Board (FOB) Point:** The Offeror should quote its lowest and best price, with the goods delivered to the place specified, at the Offeror's expense and risk, and there tender delivery to the City.

   H. **Payment:** Payment terms shall be net 30 days.

   I. **Prices:** Offers shall be firm unless otherwise specified. Pricing shall be entered on the Bid/Quote Sheet (if applicable) in ink. Totals shall be entered in the "Total Price" column of the Bid/Quote Sheet. In the event of a discrepancy between unit price and extended price, the unit price shall govern.

   J. **Proposal Preparation Costs:** All costs directly or indirectly related to preparation of a Response to an RFP or any oral presentation required to supplement and/or clarify a Proposal which may be required by the City shall be the sole responsibility of the Proposer.

   K. **Proprietary Information:**

      i. All material submitted to the City becomes public property and is subject to the Texas Public Information Act, Chapter 552, Texas Government Code, upon receipt.
      ii. If an Offeror does not desire proprietary information in the Offer to be disclosed, each page must be identified and marked proprietary at time of submittal. The City will, to the extent allowed by law, endeavor to protect such information from disclosure. The final decision as to what information must be disclosed, however, lies with the Texas Attorney General.
      iii. Failure to identify proprietary information will result in all unmarked sections being deemed nonproprietary and available upon public request.
      iv. For Bids submitted in response to an Invitation for Bids (IFB), the City will not consider any requests to keep the contents of a Bid Sheet Proprietary or Confidential.

L. **Signature:** The Offeror must sign each document in the Solicitation requiring a signature. Any change made to the Offer must be initialed by the Offeror.

M. **Taxes:** Purchases of Goods or Services for City use are usually exempt from City, State, and most Federal Taxes. Offers should not include exempted taxes. The successful Offeror should request a Tax Exemption Certificate from the Purchasing Office. Under no circumstances shall the City be liable to pay exempt taxes under any Contract.

N. **Anti-Lobbying and Procurement:** Article 6, Chapter 2-7, City Code, repealed and replaced effective on June 25, 2018, prohibits lobbying activities or representations by Offerors during the No-Lobbying Period.

1. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(A) The council finds that persons who enter a competitive process for a city contract voluntarily agree to abide by the terms of the competitive process, including the provisions of this article.

(B) The council finds that it is in the City's interest:

(i) to provide the most fair, equitable, and competitive process possible for selection among potential vendors in order to acquire the best and most competitive goods and services; and

(ii) to further compliance with State law procurement requirements.

(C) The council intends that:

(i) each response is considered on the same basis as all others; and

(ii) respondents have equal access to information regarding a solicitation, and the same opportunity to present information regarding the solicitation for consideration by the City.

2. APPLICABILITY.

(A) This article applies to all solicitations except:

(i) City social service funding;

(ii) City cultural arts funding;

(iii) federal, state or City block grant funding;

(iv) the sale or rental of real property;

(v) interlocal contracts or agreements; and

(vi) solicitations specifically exempted from this article by council.

(B) Absent an affirmative determination by the council, the purchasing officer has the discretion to apply this article to any other competitive process.

(C) City Code Section 1-1-99 (*Offenses; General Penalty*) does not apply to this article.

3. DEFINITIONS.

In this article:

(A) AGENT means a person authorized by a respondent to act for or in place of the respondent in order to communicate on behalf of that respondent. Each of the following is presumed to be an agent:

(i) a current full-time or part-time employee, owner, director, officer, member, or manager of a respondent;

(ii) a person related within the first degree of consanguinity or affinity to a current full-time or part-time employee, owner, director, officer, member, or manager of a respondent;

(iii) a person related within the first degree of consanguinity or affinity to the respondent, if a respondent is an individual person; and

(iv) a lobbyist, attorney, or other legal representative of the respondent that has been retained by the respondent with respect to the subject matter of either the solicitation or the respondent's response to the solicitation.

(B) AUTHORIZED CONTACT PERSON means a City employee designated in a City solicitation as the point of contact for all purposes for that solicitation.

(C) CITY EMPLOYEE is defined in Section 2-7-2 (*Definitions*), and further includes an independent contractor hired by the City with respect to the solicitation.

(D) CITY OFFICIAL is defined in Section 2-7-2 (*Definitions*).

(E) NO-LOBBYING PERIOD means the period of time beginning at the date and time a solicitation is published and continuing through the earliest of the following:

- (i) the date the last contract resulting from the solicitation is signed;
- (ii) 60 days following council authorization of the last contract resulting from the solicitation; or
- (iii) cancellation of the solicitation by the City

(F) PURCHASING OFFICER means the City employee authorized to carry out the purchasing and procurement functions and authority of the City.

(G) RESPONSE means a written offer or submission in reply to a solicitation.

(H) RESPONDENT means a person or entity that has timely submitted or subsequently timely submits a response to a City solicitation, even if that person subsequently withdraws its response or has been disqualified by the City for any reason. Respondent includes:

- (i) a subsidiary or parent of a respondent;
- (ii) a joint enterprise, joint venture, or partnership with an interest in a response and in which a respondent is a member or is otherwise involved, including any partner in such joint enterprise, joint venture, or partnership; and
- (iii) a subcontractor to a respondent in connection with that respondent's response.

(I) SOLICITATION means an opportunity to compete to conduct business with the City that requires council approval under City Charter Article VII Section 15 (*Purchase Procedure*), and includes, without limitation:

- (i) an invitation for bids;
- (ii) a request for proposals;
- (iii) a request for qualifications;
- (iv) a notice of funding availability; and
- (v) any other competitive solicitation process for which the purchasing officer, in the purchasing officer's sole discretion, affirmatively determines this article should apply in accordance with Section 2-B.

4. RESTRICTION ON LOBBYING.

Subject to the exclusions in Section 5 (*Permitted Communications*), during a no-lobbying period,

(A) a respondent or an agent shall not communicate directly with a City official or a City employee, or both in order to:

- (i) provide substantive information about any respondent or response with respect to the solicitation to which the communication relates;
- (ii) encourage the City to reject one or more of the responses to the solicitation to which the communication relates;
- (iii) convey a complaint about the solicitation to which the communication relates; or
- (iv) ask any City official or City employee to favor or oppose, recommend or not recommend, vote for or against, consider or not consider, or take action or refrain from taking action on any vote, decision, or agenda item regarding the solicitation to which the communication relates.

(B) a City official shall not contact or communicate with a respondent regarding a response or the solicitation to which the no-lobbying period applies;

(C) a City employee, other than the authorized contact person, shall not contact or communicate with a respondent regarding a response or the solicitation to which the no-lobbying period applies.

5. PERMITTED COMMUNICATIONS.

The following communications are permitted under this article at any time:

(A) any communication between a respondent or agent and any authorized contact person, including, without limitation and in accordance with regulation, any complaint concerning the solicitation;

(B) any communication between a respondent or agent and any person to the extent the communication relates solely to an existing contract between a respondent and the City, even when the scope, products, or services of the current contract are the same or similar to those contained in an active solicitation;

(C) any communication between a respondent or an agent and a City employee to the extent the communication relates solely to a non-substantive, procedural matter related to a response or solicitation;

(D) any communication required by or made during the course of a formal protest hearing related to a solicitation;

(E) any communication between a respondent or an agent and the City's Small & Minority Business Resources Department, that solely relates to compliance with Chapters 2-9A through 2-9D (*Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Procurement Program*) of the City Code;

(F) any communication between an attorney representing a respondent and an attorney authorized to represent the City, to the extent the communication is permitted by the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct;

(G) any communication made by a respondent or an agent to the applicable governing body during the course of a meeting properly noticed and held under Texas Government Code Chapter 551 (*Open Meetings Act*);

(H) any communication between a respondent or an agent and a City employee whose official responsibility encompasses the setting of minimum insurance requirements for the solicitation to which the communication relates, to the extent the communication relates solely to the insurance requirements established by the City in the solicitation; and

(I) any contribution or expenditure as defined in Chapter 2-2 (*Campaign Finance*).

6. MODIFICATION OF RESTRICTION.

The purchasing officer may waive, modify, or reduce the requirements in Section 4 (*Restrictions on Lobbying*) in order to allow respondents to communicate with a City employee or a City official other than the authorized contact person when the purchasing officer determines, in writing, that the solicitation must be conducted in an expedited manner, including but not limited to a solicitation conducted for reasons of health or safety under the shortest schedule possible with no extensions. Any such modification authorized by the purchasing officer shall be stated in the solicitation.

7. NOTICE.

(A) Each solicitation shall include a notice advising respondents and prospective respondents:

(i) of the requirements of this article;

(ii) that any communication initiated by a City employee or City official, other than the authorized contact person, during the no-lobbying period regarding a response or the solicitation may result in a violation of Section 4(A) if the respondent subsequently lobbies that City employee or City official.

(B) The purchasing officer, or a City employee designated by the purchasing officer, shall provide weekly written notice, accessible to all City employees and City officials, of each solicitation for which the no-lobbying period is in effect.

8. DISCLOSURE OF VIOLATION.

A City official or a City employee other than the authorized contact person that becomes aware of a violation of Section 4 (*Restrictions on Lobbying*) shall notify the authorized contact person in writing as soon as practicable.

9. ENFORCEMENT.

(A) A respondent that has been disqualified pursuant to Section 10(A) (*Disqualification; Contract Voidable*) may appeal such disqualification to a subcommittee that is less than a quorum of the Ethics Review Commission established in Chapter 2-7, Article 2 (*Ethics Review Commission*), whose decision on appeal shall be final and binding. Any appeal must be filed in the manner prescribed by the Ethics Review Commission within 5 calendar days of the notice given by the purchasing officer pursuant to Section 10(B).

(B) The purchasing officer shall waive a violation of Section 4(A) if the violation was solely the result of communications initiated by a City official or a City employee other than the authorized contact person.

(C) The purchasing officer has the authority to enforce this article through rules promulgated in accordance with Chapter 1-2 (*Adoption of Rules*), which at a minimum shall include a notice and protest process for respondents disqualified pursuant to Section 10 (*Disqualification; Contract Voidable*), including:

(1) written notice of the disqualification imposed pursuant to Section 10 (*Disqualification; Contract Voidable*);
(2) written notice of the right to protest the disqualification imposed; and
(3) written notice of the right to request an impartial hearing process.

10. DISQUALIFICATION; CONTRACT VOIDABLE.

(A) If the purchasing officer finds that a respondent has violated Section 2-7-104(1), the respondent is disqualified from participating in the solicitation to which the violation related.

(B) The purchasing officer shall promptly provide written notice of disqualification to a disqualified respondent.

(C) If a respondent is disqualified from participating in a solicitation as a result of violating Section 2-7-104(1) and the solicitation is cancelled for any reason, that respondent is also disqualified from submitting a response to any reissue of the same or similar solicitation for the same or similar project. For the purposes of this section, the purchasing officer may determine whether any particular solicitation constitutes a “same or similar solicitation for the same or similar project”.

(D) If a respondent violates Section 104(1) and is awarded a contract resulting from the solicitation to which the violation relates, the City may void that contract.

(E) Respondents that violate Section 2-7-104(1) three or more times during a five year period may be subject to debarment from participating in any new contracts with the City for a period of up to three years.

8. **SUBMISSION OF OFFERS:** Offerors are required to submit an executed original and copies of the Offer as specified on the Offer Sheet of the Solicitation.

A. **Documents required with Offer:** Submit the following documents with the Offer, as applicable, prior to the Due Date (**SEE SECTIONS 0400, 0500 and 0600 IN THE SOLICITATION FOR ADDITIONAL REQUIRED INFORMATION). Failure to submit the documents may be grounds to reject the Offer:**

i. Cover Page, Offer Sheet signed by an authorized representative; ii. Section 0600, Bid/Quote Sheet or Offer, as applicable; iii. Section 0605, Local Business Presence Identification, if applicable;
iv. Section 0700, Reference Sheet, as applicable ;
v. Sections 0835 – Non-Resident Bidder Provisions;

vi. 0815, Living Wage and Benefits Contractor Certification, if applicable;
vii. Section 0900, MBE/WBE Procurement Program Package;
viii. Bid/Proposal Guaranty, if applicable; and ix.. any other document included in the Solicitation requiring completion or execution by the Offeror.

All other pages in the Solicitation should be retained by the Offeror.

B. **Mailing:** Offers and Compliance Plans (when required by the Solicitation), must be returned in a sealed envelope or container marked on the outside with the:

Offeror's Name & Address
Solicitation Number
Due Date and Time

i. If a MBE/WBE Compliance Plan is required, it may be submitted with the sealed Offer or in a separate sealed envelope. If the Compliance Plan is included with the Offer, the outside of the envelope must indicate that the Compliance Plan is included. If the Compliance Plan is submitted in a separate envelope, the outside of the envelope must identify the contents as the "Compliance Plan" and must also include the Offeror's name & address, the Solicitation number, and the Due Date and Time. If a Compliance Plan is required but is not submitted prior to the time set forth in the Solicitation, the Offer will not be accepted for consideration.
ii. When sending an Offer and/or Compliance Plan, use the proper address as shown below:

Address for US Mail (Only)	**Address for Fedex, UPS, Hand Delivery or Courier Service**
City of Austin	City of Austin, Municipal Building
Purchasing Office-Response Enclosed for Solicitation #	Purchasing Office-Response Enclosed for Solicitation #
P.O. Box 1088	124 W 8th Street, Rm 310
Austin, Texas 78767-8845	Austin, Texas 78701
	Reception Phone: (512) 974-2500

Note: Offers (including Compliance Plans) that are not submitted in a sealed envelope or container will not be considered.

iii. Unless authorized in the Solicitation, email, facsimile, or electronic Offers will not be accepted.

C. **Addendum:** Receipt of an Addendum should be acknowledged by signing and returning the Addendum with the Offer or under separate cover prior to the Due Date. The Addendum should be returned with the Offeror's name, address, the Solicitation number, and the Due Date and Time. If the elements covered in the addendum directly impact cost and the addendum is not returned before the Due Date and Time, the offer will be disqualified.

D. **Acceptance of Offers:** Offers must be received and time stamped at the receptionist's desk in the Purchasing Office prior to the Due Date and Time. The time stamp clock on the receptionist's desk in the Purchasing Office is the official time of record and is verified daily with the local time service at (512) 476-7744. It is the sole responsibility of the Offeror to ensure timely delivery of the Offer. The City will not be responsible for failure of service on the part of the U.S. Postal Office, courier companies, or any other form of delivery service chosen by the Offeror.

E. **Late Offers:** All Offers received after the Due Date and Time are considered late and will be returned to the Offeror. It is the responsibility of the Offeror to ensure that their Offer arrives at the proper location by the time and date indicated. Arrival at the City's mailroom, mail terminal, or post office box will not constitute the Offer arriving on time. Late Offers will be rejected unless the Purchasing Office, at its sole discretion, determines that the City's misdirection or mishandling was the sole or main cause for the Offer's late receipt at the designated location.

F. **Rejection of Offers:** The City reserves the right to reject any or all Offers and to waive any minor informality in any Offer or solicitation procedure (a minor informality is one that does not affect the competitiveness of the Offer).

9. **MODIFICATION OR WITHDRAWAL OF OFFERS:**

A. **Modification of Offers:** Offers may be modified in writing at any time prior to the Due Date.

B. **Withdrawal of Offers:** Offers may be withdrawn in writing, by email, or by facsimile (provided that the facsimile is signed by the Offeror) at any time prior to the Due Date. An Offeror may also withdraw an Offer in person, provided the withdrawal is made prior to the Due Date. A receipt of withdrawal must be signed by the Offeror. Withdrawn Offers may be resubmitted, with or without modifications, up to the Due Date.

10. **OPENING OF BIDS:** The Purchasing Office representative responsible for opening Bids shall confirm the time and announce the Bid opening. The representative shall then personally and publicly open all Bids timely received, reading each Bid aloud. Following the Bid opening, the City will post on the City's website the Bid Sheets from all timely received Bids.

11. **OPENING OF PROPOSALS / QUALIFICATIONS STATEMENTS AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION:** Proposals / Qualifications Statements will be opened in a manner that avoids disclosure of the contents. Following the Opening of Proposals / Qualification Statements, the City will post on the City's website the names of all Offerors submitting Proposals / Qualification Statements. At its sole discretion, the City may release to the public information that is contained in an opened Proposals / Qualifications Statement after City staff review, except as prescribed by State law, including Texas Government Code Chapter 552 and Local Government Code Chapter 252, provided that the City determines that the disclosure will not create a competitive disadvantage for the City.

12. **EVALUATION FACTORS AND AWARD FOR QUOTES AND BIDS:**

A. **Evaluation:** Offerors may furnish pricing for all or any portion of the Solicitation (unless otherwise specified). However, the City may evaluate and award the Contract for any item or group of items shown on the Solicitation, or any combination deemed most advantageous to the City. Offers that specify an "all or none" award may be considered if a single award is advantageous. An Offer containing prices significantly lower than all other Offeror's prices for an item will present a rebuttable presumption of irresponsibility.

B. **Award:** Request for Quotations and Invitations for Bids will be awarded to the Lowest Responsible Offeror. Invitation for Bids – Best Value will be awarded to the offeror who provides goods or services at the best value for the City based on factors outlined in Section 0600. Request for Quotations – Sale and Invitation for Bids – Sale will be awarded to the Highest Responsible Offeror.

C. **Local Business Presence:** A firm (Offeror or Subcontractor) is considered to have a Local Business Presence if the firm is headquartered in the Austin Corporate City Limits, or has a branch office located in the Austin Corporate City Limits in operation for the last five (5) years, currently employs residents of the City of Austin, Texas, and will use employees that reside in the City of Austin, Texas, to support this Contract. The City defines headquarters as the administrative center where most of the important

functions and full responsibility for managing and coordinating the business activities of the firm are located. The City defines branch office as a smaller, remotely located office that is separate from a firm's headquarters that offers the services requested and required under this solicitation.

(1) For Invitations for Bids if the City receives a competitive sealed bid from an offeror who has Local Business Presences and whose bid is within three percent of the lowest bid price received from an offeror who does not have Local Business Presence, the City may enter into a contract with the local vendor.

(2) For Request for Proposals and Invitation For Bids-Best Value: Points will be awarded through a combination of the Offeror's Local Business Presence and/or the Local Business Presence of their subcontractors per the below evaluation criteria. Evaluation of the Team's Percentage of Local Business Presence will be based on the dollar amount of goods and/or services as reflected in the Offeror's MBE/WBE Compliance Plan or MBE/WBE Utilization Plan. For Local Business Presence to be considered a completed Section 0605 must be returned with the Offer.

LOCAL BUSINESS PRESENCE (Maximum 10 points)

Team's Local Business Presence	Points Awarded
Local business presence of 90% to 100%	10
Local business presence of 75% to 89%	8
Local business presence of 50% to 74%	6
Local business presence of 25% to 49%	4
Local presence of between 1 and 24%	2
No local presence	0

D. **Acceptance of Quote/Bid:** Acceptance of a Quote/Bid for an open market purchase or supply or service Master Agreement will be by a Purchase Order or a Contract as appropriate. Subsequent Delivery Orders may be issued as appropriate. The contents of a Quote/Bid shall become a part of the Purchase Order/Contract. Under no circumstances will the City be responsible for Goods or Services provided without an acceptance signed by or authorized by an Authorized City Representative.

13. **EVALUATION FACTORS AND AWARD FOR PROPOSALS AND RESPONSES:**

Competitive Selection: This procurement will comply with applicable City of Austin Policy. The successful Proposer will be selected by the City on a rational basis. Evaluation factors outlined in Section 0600 of the Solicitation shall be applied to all eligible, responsive Proposers in comparing proposals and selecting the successful Proposer. Award of a contract may be made without discussion with Proposers after proposals are received. Proposals should, therefore, be submitted on the most favorable terms.

14. **RESERVATIONS:** The City expressly reserves the right to:

A. specify approximate quantities in the Solicitation;
B. extend the Solicitation closing date and time;
C. waive as an informality, minor deviations from specifications provided they do not affect competition or result in functionally unacceptable Goods or Services;
D. waive any minor informality in any Offer or Solicitation procedure (a minor informality is one that does not affect the competitiveness of the Offeror);
E. add additional terms or modify existing terms in the Solicitation;
F. reject an Offer containing exceptions, additions, qualifications or conditions not called for in the solicitation;
G. reject an Offer received from an Offeror who is currently debarred or suspended by the City or State;

H. reject an Offer received from an Offeror who is currently debarred or suspended by the Federal Government (Applicable if project receives Federal funding);
I. reject an Offer that contains fraudulent information;
J. reject an Offer that has material omissions;
K. reject or cancel any or all Offers;
L. reissue a Solicitation;
M. procure any item by other means;
N. consider and accept alternate Offers, if specified in the Solicitation, when most advantageous to the City; and/or
O. reject an Offer because of unbalanced unit prices;

15. **NEGOTIATIONS OF PROPOSALS:** The City reserves the right to negotiate all elements which comprise the Offeror's Proposal to ensure that the best possible consideration be afforded to all concerned.

16. **CONTRACT INCORPORATION:** Offeror should be aware that the contents of the successful Offer will become a part of the subsequent contractual documents. Failure of the successful Offeror to accept this obligation may result in the cancellation of any award. Any damages accruing to the City as a result of the successful Offeror's failure to contract may be recovered from the successful Offeror.

17. **OPPORTUNITY TO PROTEST:** The Purchasing Officer has the authority to settle or resolve any claim of an alleged deficiency or protest. The procedures for notifying the City of Austin of an alleged deficiency or filing a protest are listed below. If you fail to comply with any of these requirements, the Purchasing Officer may dismiss your complaint or protest.

A. **Prior to Offer Due Date:** If you are a prospective Offeror and you become aware of the facts regarding what you believe is a deficiency in the solicitation process before the Due Date for receipt of Offers, you must notify the City in writing of the alleged deficiency before that date, giving the City an opportunity to resolve the situation prior to the Offer Due Date.

B. **After Offer Due Date:** If you submit an Offer to the City and you believe that there has been a deficiency in the solicitation process or the award, you have the opportunity to protest the solicitation process or the recommended award as follows:

i. You must file written notice of your intent to protest within four (4) calendar days of the date that you know or should have known of the facts relating to the protest. If you do not file a written notice of intent within this time, you have waived all rights to protest the solicitation process or the award.
ii. You must file your written protest within fourteen (14) calendar days of the date that you know or should have known of the facts relating to the protest unless you know of the facts before the Offer has been closed. If you know of the facts before those dates, you must notify the City as stated above.
iii. You must submit your protest in writing and must include the following information:
   (1) your name, address, telephone, and fax number;
   (2) the solicitation number and the CIP number, if applicable;
   (3) a detailed statement of the factual grounds for the protest, including copies of any relevant documents.
iv. Your protest must be concise and presented logically and factually to help with the City's review.
v. When the City receives a timely written protest, the Purchasing Officer will determine whether the grounds for your protest are sufficient. If the Purchasing Officer decides that the grounds are sufficient, the Purchasing Office will schedule a protest hearing, usually within five (5) working days. If the Purchasing Officer determines that your grounds are insufficient, the City will notify you of that decision in writing.
vi. The protest hearing is informal and is not subject to the Open Meetings Act. The purpose of the hearing is to give you a chance to present your case, it is not an adversarial proceeding. Those who may attend from the City are: representatives from the department that requested the

purchase, the Department of Law, the Purchasing Office, and other appropriate City staff. You may bring a representative or anyone else that will present information to support the factual grounds for your protest with you to the hearing.

vii. A decision will usually be made within fifteen (15) calendar days after the hearing.

viii. The City will send you a copy of the hearing decision after the appropriate City staff has reviewed the decision.

ix. When a protest is filed, the City usually will not make an award until a decision on the protest is made. However, the City will not delay an award if the City Manager or the Purchasing Officer determines that:

(1) the City urgently requires the supplies or services to be purchased, or

(2) failure to make an award promptly will unduly delay delivery or performance.

In those instances, the City will notify you and make every effort to resolve your protest before the award.

18. INTERESTED PARTIES DISCLOSURE

As a condition to entering the Contract, the Business Entity constituting the Offeror must provide the following disclosure of Interested Parties to the City prior to the award of a contract with the City on Form 1295 "Certificate of Interested Parties" as prescribed by the Texas Ethics Commission for any contract award requiring council authorization. The Certificate of Interested Parties Form must be completed on the Texas Ethics Commission website, printed, and signed by the authorized agent of the Business Entity with acknowledgment that disclosure is made under oath and under penalty of perjury. The City will submit the "Certificate of Interested Parties" to the Texas Ethics Commission within 30 days of receipt from the successful Offeror. The Offeror is reminded that the provisions of Local Government Code 176, regarding conflicts of interest between the bidders and local officials remains in place. Link to Texas Ethics Commission Form 1295 process and procedures below:

https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/File/

19. POST OFFER DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FROM SUCCESSFUL OFFEROR:

A. **Letters of Intent:** When a MBE/WBE Compliance Plan is required, the successful Offeror must submit to the Purchasing Officer the Letters of Intent to subcontract required by the Compliance Plan within three (3) business days after notification. Failure to submit the required letters will be grounds for rejection of the Offer.

B. **Certificates of Insurance:** When insurance is required, the Offeror must provide proof of coverage prior to execution of a Contract. The Offeror shall provide Certificates of Insurance in the amounts and for the coverages required to the Purchasing Office within 14 calendar days after written request from the City (See also "Insurance" in Section 0400, Supplement Purchase Provisions, of the Solicitation).

C. **Bonds:** When Bonds are required, the Offeror must provide the bonds prior to the execution of the Contract. The Offeror shall provide the Bonds, in the amounts and on the conditions required, within 14 calendar days after notification of award, or as otherwise required by the Solicitation.

D. **Chapter 176 Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** In accordance with Chapter 176 of the Texas Local Government Code, Offeror must file a Conflict of Interest Questionnaire with the Office of the City Clerk no later than 5:00 P.M. on the seventh (7th) business day after the commencement of contract discussions or negotiations with the City or the submission of an Offer, or other writing related to a potential Contract with the City. The questionnaire is available on line at the following website for the City Clerk:

http://www.austintexas.gov/department/conflict-interest-questionnaire

There are statutory penalties for failure to comply with Chapter 176.