

Tips for Writing a Better Technical Proposal

- Pay attention to the response due date and time. Late proposals are normally unacceptable.
- Review the Statement of Work/Specifications (Section C of most solicitations). Understand what the project entails and requires. Be realistic in assessing your ability to do the work.
- Review the Schedule of Items (Section B). If it's important enough to be detailed in this schedule, it's important enough to be addressed in your technical proposal. Do not simply use this schedule to create a calendar of events, but do incorporate all elements in your plan of operation. If you possess a unique skill, qualification, license, certification, etc. be sure to mention it.
- Pay attention to detail... if you "cut and paste" from previous proposals, be sure to update things like solicitation numbers and the name of the project. Turn on spell checker and proof-read your proposal for obvious grammatical/syntax errors. The attention to detail you devote to your proposal does reflect on the attention you might be expected to devote to our project. Do not "hop scotch" back and forth between topics. If you are addressing experience/past projects, consolidate them into one section. If a previous project is not "obviously" related to this project; discuss what particular skills were required / demonstrated that translate to this one.
- Review and carefully follow the Instructions to Offerors (Section L). If it lists four items that must be included in your proposal, include them, and in the same relative order listed.
- Most construction RFPs will require four key sections in the technical proposal: (1) organization, (2) equipment, (3) plan of operation, and (4) quality control.
 - Organization is where you list the general experience of key employees like project managers/superintendents and any sub-contractors.
 - The list of equipment is meant to demonstrate both that you know what equipment will be required to complete the project and that you have access to it. If you are going to dig pits or trenches, a sturdy shovel will suffice, but we'd usually prefer to see an excavator. The fact that you own an obscure piece of equipment that won't be used on this project is irrelevant.
 - The plan of operations is the "heart" of the technical proposal. It should be a narrative that logically incorporates all the key elements in Sections B and C with sufficient detail to demonstrate your understanding of the project, your vision for organizing, sequencing and completing the various work elements, and that supports/justifies your price.
 - Quality control is more than a supervisor paying attention to or spot-checking the job being done by workers. How are you measuring, evaluating and controlling the work being done? What assurances do you offer that construction will be square/level/plumb? Or that a pipeline will be pressure/leak tested before being buried?
- If a key project element infers a specific skill (e.g., plumbing, which would normally necessitate a qualified plumber) don't neglect to mention that when you address organization/experience.

- A few concise details are almost always preferable to fluffy generalities. Likewise when 3 – 5 examples of previous, comparable projects are requested, don't feel obligated to list two dozen.
- Many proposals quit after noting WHAT you are going to do... we generally know in advance what you are going to do, we're much more interested in the HOW and WHY. A proposal that offers a unique insight into why a certain method or technique should be employed on this project vs. another (arguably more conventional) approach generally demonstrates that serious thought, analysis and planning went into your technical proposal. One that does not outline HOW you intend to proceed, but which merely regurgitates the tasks from the statement of work, is in serious risk of being rated "unsatisfactory".
- When presenting past performance it is much more beneficial to discuss three recent/ relevant examples of jobs you have performed than a laundry list of ten or more w/ virtually no discussion. Your unstated goal should be to impress us that you can complete our project and moreover that we should be comfortable in awarding it to you.
- Finally, an often asked question is "how long should my proposal be?" Unless specific guidelines or limitations are noted in the solicitation, it should offer sufficient detail, given the magnitude/scope of the project, to instill confidence in your ability to complete the project on time, on budget, and w/o undue oversight by the government.