

# How to Respond to a Sources Sought Notice

**Bill Cox**

Central Region Associate Director

Ohio University Procurement Technical Assistance Center

[coxw2@ohio.edu](mailto:coxw2@ohio.edu)

Office: (937) 230-9883

<https://ptac.ohio.edu/>

# Agenda

- **What is a Request for Information (RFI)?**
- **What is a Sources Sought Notice?**
- **Simple Example**
- **What if It Had Been More Complex?**
- **What You Must Submit**
- **Fight for Feedback**
- **What Does the Government Do with Your Submission**
- **Summary**

# What is a Request for Information (RFI)?

- **Simply what it says – the government is looking for knowledge**
  - New technologies, materials, processes, ideas, etc.
- **Usually not tied to an immediate solicitation**
- **Response to the government is freeform, delivery of a white paper typical – no compensation for the deliverable**
- **Why respond?**
  - If you are new to government business, an opportunity to impress, market your company's capabilities, knowledge, expertise, etc
  - An interesting response could generate a request to meet with your company
    - Meet key government personnel, learn more about their concerns and where it could lead
    - Begin to position yourself for future work, establish your company as a credible source

# What is a Sources Sought Notice?

- Formal, likely initial mass communication with industry regarding market research that may result in a future solicitation
- FAR mandates the government perform market research
  - Identify industry interest, capabilities, experience
  - Gain knowledge on technology, etc.
  - Small business capabilities
  - Seek industry input on requirement, acquisition strategy
  - A significant input into the acquisition strategy
- Many companies complain they can never talk to the contracting officer or program manager and their staff
  - *THIS IS ONE WAY AND MAYBE YOUR ONLY WAY!*

# SAM Sources Sought Notice

- **Narrow Plot Tractor**
- 12505B22Q0123SS
- **Awarding Agency: USDA, Agricultural Research Service**
  - Primary POC: Aaron Dimeo, [Aaron.Dimeo@usda.gov](mailto:Aaron.Dimeo@usda.gov)
- **Places of Performance – Wooster, OH**

# What You Must Submit

- **Response due 13 June 2022, 5 PM CST**
- **What is required:**
  - Capability Statement that includes your UEI#
  - Sources Sought Response Form
    - Business Type, i.e. large/small, any socio-economic certifications
  - NDAA 899 Certification
- **No restriction on size of submission**

# If There Had Been an Attached PWS

- **Assess your company's knowledge to perform all tasking paragraphs along with your past performance**
  - An Excel spreadsheet works fine
- **Analyze the results**
  - If you have little knowledge of a significant % of tasking paragraphs or no past performance, will you be a good prime? Could you write a proposal to describe how you'd do this work?
  - If your knowledge/past performance is only deficient in a few areas, this is where a sub-contractor can fill in the gaps
    - Concentrate your search on sub-contractors that fill your gaps



# Past Performance

- **Build a repository of your past performances**
  - You'll use some of them for every opportunity you pursue
  - Once completed, you'll have “draft ready” materiel for sources sought responses and later, the actual proposal
  - Do not skimp on details, be very complete – easier to edit down than to recall details to add later when key participants are no longer available
    - What seems to be an obscure detail today, could become critical in the future



# If You Decide to Be a Sub-Contractor

- Use a matrix to define your capabilities or customer relationships that a prime may want for their team
- Ensure potential primes are aware of:
  - Capabilities
  - Relevant past performance
  - Previous meetings with CO, PM or PM staff
  - Certifications
    - ISO or other industry recognized standards
    - Cybersecurity compliance
    - Socio economic
- Join the team you think will **WIN**, not just any team

# Fight for Feedback

- **Give the government 10 days to review the responses**
- **Call/e-mail the contracting officer, seek feedback on your submission**
  - Did they have any questions or need clarifications regarding your submission?
  - Were they able to contact my past performance references?
  - Will there be an opportunity for a meeting with the CO and/or PM to discuss the submission and where the government is going?
  - Has a decision been made on how this opportunity will be competed and if so, what is the timeline for RFP/RFQ release?
  - If no decision has been made is there a timeline to do so?
- **Be politely persistent, you likely will not reach the CO on the first try**

# How Does the Government React?

- **Reads your submission looking for these key facts:**
  - Does the company appear credible?
  - Did they say something that we didn't know?
  - Have they done similar work before to what we are seeking and if so, for whom? Who can we call to ask about any performance issues?
  - Are they a small business and do they have socio-economic certifications?
  - Should we “put this company on our radar?”
- **Uses your submission to help determine small business interest**
  - Impacts competition decisions

# Summary

- **Your response represents your company!**
  - First impressions can be positive or devastating
  - Do you know enough about the topic to write an interesting response that will generate interest?
- **Look past the sources sought response, consider the bigger picture**
  - Assess your ability to write a compliant proposal
  - Are your writing skills and subject matter knowledge good enough to author even a small proposal?
  - Do you have the past performance or can you obtain it prior to proposal submission?
  - Do you have the resources to write a compliant proposal?
  - Are you competitive or can you become competitive in time for the RFP release?



# Questions?

**Bill Cox, Associate Director**

Ohio University PTAC for Central Ohio

[coxw2@ohio.edu](mailto:coxw2@ohio.edu)

(937) 230-9883

2642 Indian Ripple Rd

Dayton, OH 45440

“Russ Innovation Gateway”