

# U.S. Department of the Interior

## A Guide to Unsolicited Proposals

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**“Small Businesses are the Cornerstone to our Economy”**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION, MISSION AND GOALS**

This guide is prepared for use by vendors who intend to submit unsolicited proposals to the Department of the Interior (DOI). The guide serves the purpose of informing vendors about the DOI and its mission. The guidance is outlined in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) 15.6 **Unsolicited Proposals**. The Department of the Interior consists of eight Bureaus and several other offices which are listed on page 6 of this guide.

### **DOI MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian Tribes and our commitments to island communities.

### **Goals:**

Interior has established five Departmental goals that encompass the major responsibilities of the Department. These goals provide a framework for the strategic plans of Interior's bureaus. The Departmental goals are as follows:

- Resource Protection - Protect the Nation's Natural, Cultural, and Heritage Resources
- Resource Use - Manage Resources to Promote Responsible Use and Sustain a Dynamic Economy
- Recreation - Provide recreation opportunities for America
- Serving Communities - Safeguard lives, property and assets, advance scientific knowledge, and improve the quality of life for communities we serve
- Management Excellence - Manage the Department to be highly skilled, accountable, modern, functionally integrated, citizen-centered and result-oriented

## ***Department of the Interior Procurement***

Each of the Department of the Interior bureaus and other major organizations within DOI has its own procurement office. The DOI procurement organizations contract with the private sector for a variety of supplies, equipment and services. Services that have been acquired by contract are training, architect-engineer services, advisory and assistance services, custodial services, guard services, operation and maintenance, telecommunications services and information technology (IT) services, maintenance and support. Supplies and equipment that have been acquired by contract are office supplies, office furnishings, furniture, IT equipment such as computers (micros, minis, mainframes, and peripherals), forklifts, copiers, facsimile machines, and telephone equipment. The value of DOI purchases spans a wide range, from less than \$3,000 up to several billion dollars.

Prospective contractors are encouraged to follow the more conventional practice of submitting offers in response to official DOI solicitations for supplies, equipment and services. Solicitation documents specify the supplies, equipment or services that will be acquired to support the mission of the DOI.

Another way that the DOI acquires supplies, equipment or services is through acceptance of unsolicited proposals. Advertising material, commercial item offers, contributions, and routine correspondence on technical issues are not considered unsolicited proposals. (See FAR 15.601 and 15.603).

Definitions of terms pertaining to unsolicited proposals are on the next page. Please consult these definitions while preparing your unsolicited proposal.

## 2. DEFINITIONS (FAR 15.601):

**Advertising material** means material designed to acquaint the Government with a prospective contractor's present products, services, or potential capabilities, or designed to stimulate the Government's interest in buying such products or services.

**Commercial item offer** means an offer of a commercial item that the vendor wishes to see introduced in the Government's supply system as an alternate or a replacement for an existing supply item. This term does not include innovative or unique configurations or uses of commercial items that are being offered for further development and that may be submitted as an unsolicited proposal.

**Contribution** means a concept, suggestion, or idea presented to the Government for its use with no indication that the source intends to devote any further effort to it on the Government's behalf.

### **The following define terms used throughout this guide and are compatible with FAR Part 15.6**

**Unsolicited proposal** means a written proposal for a new or innovative idea developed outside the Government and submitted to an agency on the initiative of the offeror for the purpose of obtaining a contract with the Government. The written proposal is not in response to a request for proposals, Broad Agency Announcement, Program Research and Development Announcement, or any other Government-initiated solicitation or program. FAR Part 15.603(a) prescribes that unsolicited proposals are offered with the intent that the Government will enter into a contract with the offeror for research and developments or other efforts supporting the Government mission, and often represent a sizable investment of time and effort by the offeror.

**Routine correspondence on technical issues** is a written request for information regarding Government interest in research areas, submission of research descriptions, pre-proposal exploration, and other written technical inquiries. Routine correspondence on technical issues is not considered to be an unsolicited proposal.

## 3. ACCEPTABLE UNSOLICITED PROPOSALS

Please be aware that there is not any obligation on the part of the Department of Interior to accept an unsolicited proposal. By regulation, an unsolicited proposal must fulfill the requirements that are found in FAR 15.603(c). This means it must:

- (1) Be innovative and unique;
- (2) Be independently originated and developed by the offeror;

- (3) Be prepared without Government supervision, endorsement, direction, or direct Government involvement;
- (4) Include sufficient detail to permit a determination that Government support could be worthwhile and the proposed work could benefit the agency's research and development or other mission responsibilities;
- (5) Not be an advance proposal for a known agency requirement that can be acquired by competitive methods; and
- (6) Not address a previously published agency requirement.

#### **4. PRELIMINARY CONTACTS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

Because unsolicited proposals are developed on the initiative of the submitter, the Government is not responsible for any costs incurred in the preparation or processing of an unsolicited proposal. For this reason, the DOI recommends that you contact the agency before expending extensive effort on a detailed unsolicited proposal or before submitting proprietary data to the Government.

*Agency technical personnel **may only be contacted for the limited purpose of obtaining an understanding of the agency's mission and the responsibilities relative to fulfilling that mission. Agency technical personnel do not possess the authority to enter into contracts on behalf of the agency.***

Your preliminary contacts should include inquiries as to the general need for the type of effort contemplated. Agency technical personnel may only be contacted for the limited purpose of obtaining an understanding of the agency mission and the responsibilities relative to fulfilling that mission. Meetings with agency technical personnel are strictly informal discussions for the purpose of gathering information. You may not construe these discussions as authority to begin contractual work performance.

Be advised that detailed discussions may also be limited, depending on the circumstances, by particular laws that govern the conduct of lobbying efforts in connection with the expenditure of Congressionally-appropriated funds (see Public Law 101-121, Restrictions on Lobbying), and that control the exchange of information in connection with procurements already underway (see Public Law 101-189, Procurement Integrity).

Should questions arise during the preparation of an unsolicited proposal, the proposer is encouraged to contact the individual manager for the respective office that you wish to submit an unsolicited proposal to. Those offices are:

## **5. U.S. Department of the Interior Unsolicited Proposal Managers**

### **Office of the Secretary**

Unsolicited Proposals Manager  
Megan Olsen - (703) 964-8461  
National Business Center  
381 Elden Street, Suite 4000  
Herndon VA 20170  
[Megan.Olsen@aqd.nbc.gov](mailto:Megan.Olsen@aqd.nbc.gov)

### **Bureau of Indian Affairs**

Unsolicited Proposals Manager  
Kathy Daum – (703) 390-6460  
2051 Mercator Drive  
Reston, VA 20191  
[Kathy.Daum@bia.gov](mailto:Kathy.Daum@bia.gov)

### **Bureau of Land Management**

Unsolicited Proposals Manager  
Eric Pagal – (202) 912-7073  
Washington Office WO850  
1849 C Street NW 1075LS  
Washington DC 20240  
[Eric\\_Pagal@blm.gov](mailto:Eric_Pagal@blm.gov)

### **Bureau of Reclamation**

Unsolicited Proposals Manager  
Ed Paker - (303) 445-2431  
Denver Federal Center  
Sixth and Kipling, Building 56  
Denver, CO 80225  
[EPAKER@usbr.gov](mailto:EPAKER@usbr.gov)

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Unsolicited Proposals Manager  
Jean Chausse – (703) 358-1993  
4401 North Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop: 7118-43  
Arlington, VA 22203  
[Jean\\_Chausse@fws.gov](mailto:Jean_Chausse@fws.gov)

### **Minerals Management Service**

Unsolicited Proposals Manager  
Rhonda Fernandez – (703) 787-1348  
381 Elden Street  
Herndon, VA 20170  
[Rhonda.Fernandez@mms.gov](mailto:Rhonda.Fernandez@mms.gov)

**National Business Center**

Unsolicited Proposals Manager  
Megan Olsen - (703) 964-8461  
National Business Center  
381 Elden Street, Suite 4000  
Herndon VA 20170  
[Megan.Olsen@aqd.nbc.gov](mailto:Megan.Olsen@aqd.nbc.gov)

**National Park Service**

Unsolicited Proposals Manager  
Cynthia Adonoo – (202) 354-1946  
1201 Eye Street NW, Mail Stop: 2623  
Washington, DC 20005  
[Cynthia\\_Adonoo@nps.gov](mailto:Cynthia_Adonoo@nps.gov)

**Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement**

Unsolicited Proposals Manager  
Nancy E. Sloanhoffer - (202) 208-2902  
1951 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20240  
[Nsloanhoffer@osmre.gov](mailto:Nsloanhoffer@osmre.gov)

**Office of the Inspector General**

Daniel J. Stanley - (703) 487-5445  
12030 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 350  
Reston, VA 20191  
[Daniel.Stanley@doioig.gov](mailto:Daniel.Stanley@doioig.gov)

**U.S. Geological Survey**

Unsolicited Proposals Manager  
Sherri Bredesen (703) 648-7485  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Mail Stop: 205  
Reston, VA 20192-0002  
[Sbredesen@usgs.gov](mailto:Sbredesen@usgs.gov)

**6. WHO MAY SUBMIT PROPOSALS**

The Department of the Interior will only accept unsolicited proposals from individuals or organizations determined to be responsible, prospective contractors. To qualify as a responsible, prospective contractor you must satisfy the following regulatory requirements that are contained at FAR 9.104.1

**Responsible Prospective Contractors – General standards**

- a) Have adequate financial resources to perform the contract, or the ability to obtain them;
- b) Be able to comply with the required or proposed delivery or performance schedule, taking into consideration all existing commercial and Governmental business commitments;
- c) Have a satisfactory performance record. A prospective contractor shall not be determined responsible or non-responsible solely on the basis of a lack of relevant performance history;
- d) Have a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics;
- e) Have the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills, or the ability to obtain them;
- f) Have the necessary production, construction, and technical equipment and facilities, or the ability to obtain them; and
- g) Be otherwise qualified and eligible to receive an award under applicable laws and regulations.

## **7. WHAT TO SUBMIT**

Those who are interested in preparing an unsolicited proposal package for submission to the DOI must begin by preparing the following:

### **8. TECHNICAL INFORMATION (FAR 15.605)(b)**

- 1) Concise title and abstract (approximately 200 words) of the proposed effort;
- 2) A reasonably complete discussion stating the objectives of the effort or activity, the method of approach and extent of effort to be employed, the nature and extent of the anticipated results, and the manner in which the work will help to support accomplishment of the agency's mission (this document is a separate document from the abstract);
- 3) Names and biographical information on the offeror's key personnel who would be involved, including alternates; and
- 4) Type of support needed from the agency; e.g., Government property, or personnel resources.

The abstract (approximately 200 words in length) should contain a description of the proposed project including project objectives and benefits. The statement of work which is a separate document from the abstract should contain a complete

functional description of the project to be undertaken, with a reasonably complete discussion stating the objectives of the effort or activity, the method of approach and extent of effort to be employed, the nature and extent of the anticipated results, and the manner in which the work will help to support accomplishments of the agency's mission. It should also include a list of facilities, equipment, materials, or personnel resources to be used during the project, including whether these are to be Government-furnished; a schedule of major tasks and events to be accomplished; and a list of items to be delivered to the Government as the end result of contract performance. In other words the statement of work should describe in reasonable enough detail what is anticipated to be accomplished if a contract were awarded based on the unsolicited proposal.

In addition to the project technical information above, unsolicited proposals should contain the following basic and supporting information to permit consideration in an objective and timely manner:

#### **9. BASIC INFORMATION (FAR 15.605(a))**

- 1) Offeror's name and address and type of organization; e.g., profit, nonprofit, educational, small business;
- 2) Names and telephone numbers of technical and business personnel to be contacted for evaluation or negotiation purposes;
- 3) Identification of proprietary data to be used only for evaluation purposes;
- 4) Names of other Federal, State, Local agencies, or parties receiving the proposal or funding the proposed effort;
- 5) Date of submission; and
- 6) Signature of a person authorized to represent and contractually obligate the offeror.

#### **10. SUPPORTING INFORMATION (FAR 15.605 (c))**

- 1) Proposed price or total estimated cost for the effort in sufficient detail for meaningful evaluation;
- 2) Period of time for which the proposal is valid (a six month minimum is suggested);
- 3) Type of contract preferred;
- 4) Proposed duration of effort;

- 5) Brief description of the organization, previous experience, relevant past performance, and facilities to be used;
- 6) Other statements, if applicable, about organizational conflicts of interest; security clearances, and environmental impacts; and
- 7) The names and telephone numbers of agency technical or other agency points of contact already contacted regarding the proposal.

#### **11. LIMITED USE OF DATA (FAR 15.609)**

If an unsolicited proposal contains information the offeror wishes to protect from unwanted disclosure the title page must be marked with the legend in Appendix B.

Ensure that the offeror also mark each restricted sheet with the following legend:

***“Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this proposal.”***

The agency or bureau Point of Contact (POC) shall return to the offeror any unsolicited proposal marked with a legend different from that identified in Appendix B. The return letter will state that the proposal cannot be considered because it is impracticable for the Government to comply with the legend, but will consider the proposal if it is resubmitted with the proper legend.

The agency or bureau POC shall place a cover sheet on the proposal, or clearly mark it with the legend identified in Appendix C, unless the offeror clearly states in writing that no restrictions are imposed on the disclosure or use of the data contained in the proposal.

#### **12. EVALUATION OF THE UNSOLICITED PROPOSAL**

The Department of the Interior will acknowledge receipt of unsolicited proposals within 10 workdays after the proposal is received by the office or bureau. The submitter will be notified by letter by that office or bureau that the proposal has been received and is undergoing evaluation. The office or bureau conducting the review will provide the preparer for an estimate of the date by which the review will be completed. Upon completion of the evaluation the preparer will be notified of the results of the evaluation. At that time the unsolicited proposal will either be returned to the preparer if not further action is to be taken or the preparer will be advised that the proposal has been forwarded to the contracting officer who is responsible for the program that the proposal is intended to support.

Clarity and completeness of the unsolicited proposal are important. The proposal that possesses these qualities will result in a thorough substantive review and prompt a quicker response.

In conducting a comprehensive evaluation of an unsolicited proposal, evaluators will consider the following factors (see (FAR 15.606-2), in addition to any others appropriate for the particular proposal:

- 1) Unique, innovative, and meritorious methods, approaches or concepts demonstrated by the proposal;
- 2) Overall scientific, technical, or socioeconomic merits of the proposal;
- 3) Potential contribution of the effort to the agency's or bureau's specific mission;
- 4) The offeror's capabilities, related experience, facilities, techniques, or unique combinations of these which are integral factors for achieving the proposal objectives;
- 5) The qualifications, capabilities, and experience of the proposed principal investigator, team leader, or key personnel who are critical in achieving the proposal objectives; and
- 6) The realism of the proposed cost.

The evaluators shall notify the agency point of contact of their recommendations when the evaluation is completed.

Offerors must take note that a favorable evaluation of an unsolicited proposal does not in itself, justify awarding a contract without providing for full and open competition, nor does it constitute any obligation on the part of the Government to accept the proposal.

Other priorities or program funding limitations may preclude the Department of the Interior from making an award even if the evaluation is favorable.

If an unsolicited proposal does not meet statutory criteria for award of a sole-source, or other noncompetitive contract, then a contract cannot be awarded in direct response to that proposal. In that case, a contract may only be awarded if the proposal is subsequently selected after full and open competition is obtained. Criteria for authorizing the Government to use noncompetitive contracts are found in the Competition in Contracting Act (Public Law 98-369) and in FAR Part 6. A market search will be necessary to determine whether there are capable, alternative sources or means by which the Government may obtain the proposed product or services.

If you decide that your proposal either does not meet the requirements for an innovative or unique approach, technique, or concept; closely resembles a pending competitive acquisition requirement; or, that similar products or services are available to the Government without restriction from another source, you may choose to consider submitting your proposal in response to a written solicitation issued by the Government. You may do this by submitting a proposal as a prime contractor or as a subcontractor. Information on federal procurement opportunities is advertised on the Federal Business Opportunities website (FedBizOpps or FBO) found at <http://www.fedbizopps.gov>.

The Department of the Interior and its bureaus use the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) System to find small business sources. The CCR may be accessed at <http://www.ccr.gov>. Click on Begin New Registration to enter your information into CCR. For more information on the CCR or on future procurement opportunities, contact our Small Business Specialists listed on our website ([www.doi.gov/osdbu](http://www.doi.gov/osdbu)) or via phone at (1-877-375-9927 toll-free). Our Small Business Specialists are available to offer advice and assistance, particularly to qualifying small businesses, regarding DOI procurement opportunities. The Small Business Specialists may be reached in the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) during normal business hours.

### **13. WHEN TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS**

Unsolicited proposals may be submitted at any time during the year. Unsolicited proposals should be submitted well in advance of the anticipated starting date. This is to allow the offices or bureaus time to make adjustments to accommodate the acceptance of the unsolicited proposal such as reallocating time and resources for proposal related efforts not anticipated in previously-approved operating and budget plans. Due to funding considerations, action on proposals submitted near the beginning or end of the Federal Government's fiscal year may also be affected by the outcome of deliberations on annual Federal budget appropriations. The new Federal Government fiscal year begins on October 1 of each year.

### **14. WHERE TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS**

All unsolicited proposals should be submitted to the Unsolicited Proposal Managers listed on pages 6 and 7 for the office or bureau that you are interested in working with. The offices within each of the noted contacts act as a central receiving point for the distribution, handling, and reporting of unsolicited proposals. The receiving office or bureaus will forward unsolicited proposals to appropriate program areas for evaluation.

**NOTE: DO NOT** furnish your unsolicited proposal to any other office in DOI to avoid jeopardizing its eligibility as an unsolicited proposal, and to prevent unintended or unwarranted disclosure of its contents.

## APPENDIX A – REFERENCES

The following publications are suggested for additional information: **Title 48 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)**. Chapter 1, The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Subpart 6.3 – Other than Full and Open Competition, and Subpart 15.6 – Unsolicited Proposals, available at the Acquisition Network website at <http://www.arnet.gov>.

**The Department Marketing Publications.** The Department of the Interior Forecast of Procurement Opportunities and the Small Business Subcontracting Opportunities Directory are available at the Office of Small Business Development website at <http://www.doi.gov/osdbu>.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **UNSOLICITED PROPOSAL (FAR 15.609) USE AND DISCLOSURE DATA**

This proposal includes data that shall not be disclosed outside the Government and shall not be duplicated, used, or disclosed – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this proposal. However, if a contract is awarded to this offeror as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of these data, the Government shall have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting contract. This restriction does not limit the Government's right to use information contained in these data if they are obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in Sheets [*insert numbers or other identification of sheets*].

## **APPENDIX C**

### **UNSOLICITED PROPOSAL (FAR 15.609) USE OF DATA LIMITED**

All Government personnel must exercise extreme care to ensure that the information in this proposal is not disclosed to an individual who has not been authorized access to such data in accordance with FAR 3.104, and is not duplicated, used, or disclosed in whole or in part for any purposes other than evaluation of the proposal, without the written permission of the offeror. If a contract is awarded on the basis of this proposal, the terms of the contract shall control disclosure and use. This notice does not limit the Government's right to use information contained in the proposal if it is obtainable from another source without restriction. This is a Government notice, and shall not by itself be construed to impose any liability upon the Government or Government personnel for disclosure or use of data contained in this proposal.