



Fireside Chats

How to Avoid Disqualifications in a Proposal

May 7th, 2021



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Welcome to Fireside Chats



All submittals take:



Time

Money

Effort

GOAL



To save Time, Money, & Effort
by avoiding a disqualification in
your submittal.



There is a chance that your team may be the most qualified for the procurement

If your submittal is disqualified, the Consultant Selection Team will never know how qualified your team really is

It's a loss to you and a loss to the State



Welcome to



No more special deliveries needed
Online Submittals are here
PEPS Goal = Zero Disqualifications



Attachment 1: Cover Page / Questionnaire

Attachment 2: Proposal (Federal) or Questions & Responses (Q&R) Template (State)

Attachment 3: Project Team Composition (PTC) form (Parts 1, 2, and 3)

Attachment 4: Subprovider Contact Information (Federal) or HUB Subcontracting Plan (HSP) (State)

Attachment 5: Non-Listed Category (NLC) Qualifications Template



- Must submit in **Excel format**
- Be sure to read the instructions

Question Set 1: Cover Page Template

Question Set 1 Instructions

Complete each question in the Question Set. This questionnaire becomes the cover page for your response to the solicitation.

For the General questions - type the required information in the Comment column.

For the Certification questions - select a response of "YES" or "NO" using the dropdown in the Response column.

For the Attestation questions - type the required information in the Comment column.

For the Response Submittal Contents questions - select a response of "INCLUDED" or "NOT INCLUDED" using the dropdown in the Response column.

- Check for completeness
- Check for accuracy
 - Verify the certification questions are answered correctly
 - Ensure Project Manager and Deputy Project Manger requirements are met.



Proposal Format

- Must submit in **PDF format**
- Provide the correct number of pages
- Readability

Proposal Content

- Must be legible when printed on 8.5 inches by 11 inches paper (11-point Calibri font is recommended, unreadable text will be ignored);
- Include adequate margins (a minimum margin of 0.5 inches is recommended, text not printed due to inadequate margins will be ignored);
- Include the prime firm name on each page;
- Include the solicitation number on each page; and
- Include page numbers on each page.



- The Proposal and Project Team Composition (PTC) need to be consistent.
 - If you mention somebody as a Task Leader in the Proposal, they have to be the Task Leader in the PTC.
- Do not provide false statements



Attachment 2 (State): Question & Response (Q&R) Template

Must submit in **PDF format.**

The Question & Response (Q&R) template and PTC need to be consistent.

Do not provide false statements

Solicitation Number: 601CT0000004769

Attachment 2: Question & Response Template

*Instructions: * All firms must complete the sections below. Print completed forms and submit with the SOQsubmittal packet.*

Provider Name:

Question 1: (20%) During the ongoing COVID-19 situation, construction projects across the state have suffered major delays. Describe your firm's approach on dealing with limited resources such as lodging and travel on remote surveying project locations. What is your approach on challenges faced on the current project schedules and unexpected delays? How did your team deal with COVID-19 safety concerns making sure field crews were safe and projects were being executed?

Response limited 6000 characters (with spaces).

Attachment 3: Project Team Composition form (Parts 1, 2, and 3)



Must submit in **PDF format** and we must receive all three parts.

Be sure to use the legal firm names as registered with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

Task Leaders identified in the Proposal or Q&R need to match the task leader listed on the PTC form for the same Work Category.

Be sure to read and follow all the instructions.



Administrative Qualifications

- Engineering and design related items
- Verify each firms status from TxDOT website
- Administrative Qualification Status by Firm lists posted on the TxDOT website must either be the same as the legal name listed on the PTC form, or be the same as a dba which has been noted in the Proposal.



(Federal) DBE assigned goal must be met or it will be considered non-responsive

Firms must be DBE certified in the particular work category.

(State) HUB assigned goal is an “aspirational” goal

You must follow the instructions, fill out the HSP correctly, and sign it.

Attachment 3: Project Team Composition form (Parts 1, 2, and 3)

Pre-Certifications

Make sure each Task Leaders are pre-certified (check CCIS) for their respective field.

Make sure the Firm has an active status on day of closing

- Remember - Firm's active status in CCIS needs to be renewed annually

Note: CCIS data Date (bottom right on page 2 of 3)

If you need to provide comments:

- PDF Text Tools if needed
- Engineering & Design Explanation button on Federal PTC (not on State)



Firms Eligible to Do Business with TxDOT

[Texas Department of Transportation](#) > [Business](#) > [Consultants](#)
> [Architectural, Engineering and Surveying Consultants](#)

Active Precertified Firms

- [Active Precertified Firms](#)
- [Active Precertified Firms by Work Category](#)

Administrative Qualification Status by Firm

- [Guidance](#)
- [Firms that are Administratively Qualified](#)
- [Firms Participating in the Federal SafeHarbor Program](#)
- [Firms ONLY Eligible to Compete for TXDOT's State Processes \(non-Federal\)](#)
- [Non-Engineering Firms](#)


Directories

- [Texas Unified Certification Program \(TUCP\) DBE Directory](#)
[Centralized Master Bidders List - HUB Directory Search](#)

Attachment 4 (State): HUB Subcontracting Plan (HSP)



- Must submit in **PDF format**
- Follow all Instructions
 - There are embedded links to help
- Be sure to complete everything required
- Civil Rights Division has a presentation posted externally to help you with this document. “[HSP Completion Overview](#)”
- If you have questions, ask the Civil Rights Division



HUB Subcontracting Plan (HSP)

Rev. 2/17

In accordance with Texas Gov't Code §2161.252, the contracting agency has determined that subcontracting opportunities are probable under this contract. Therefore, all respondents, including State of Texas certified Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) must complete and submit this State of Texas HUB Subcontracting Plan (HSP) with their response to the bid requisition (solicitation).

NOTE: Responses that do not include a completed HSP shall be rejected pursuant to Texas Gov't Code §2161.252(b).

The HUB Program promotes equal business opportunities for economically disadvantaged persons to contract with the State of Texas in accordance with the goals specified in the 2009 State of Texas Disparity Study. The statewide HUB goals defined in 34 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §20.284 are:

- **11.2 percent for heavy construction other than building contracts,**
- **21.1 percent for all building construction, including general contractors and operative builders' contracts,**
- **32.9 percent for all special trade construction contracts,**
- **23.7 percent for professional services contracts,**
- **26.0 percent for all other services contracts, and**
- **21.1 percent for commodities contracts.**

-- Agency Special Instructions/Additional Requirements --

*In accordance with 34 TAC §20.285(d)(1)(D)(iii), a respondent (prime contractor) may demonstrate good faith effort to utilize Texas certified HUBs for its subcontracting opportunities if the total value of the respondent's subcontracts with Texas certified HUBs meets or exceeds the statewide HUB goal or the agency specific HUB goal, whichever is higher. When a respondent uses this method to demonstrate good faith effort, the respondent must identify the HUBs with which it will subcontract. If using existing contracts with Texas certified HUBs to satisfy this requirement, only the aggregate percentage of the contracts expected to be subcontracted to HUBs with which the respondent **does not** have a **continuous contract*** in place for **more than five (5) years** shall qualify for meeting the HUB goal. This limitation is designed to encourage vendor rotation as recommended by the 2009 Texas Disparity Study.*

Attachment 5: Non-Listed Category (NLC) Qualifications Template



- Must submit in **PDF format**
- Check for completeness
- Check for accuracy
- Be sure to include the experience that is being requested
- Do not provide false statements

Solicitation Number: 601CT000004685			
Non-Listed Category (NLC) Qualifications Template			
<i>Instructions: All firms must complete the sections below. Print completed forms and submit with the solicitation response packet.</i>			
Task Leader's Name:		Task Leader's Credentials:	
Task Leader's Firm Name:			
For the fields below, refer to the Solicitation. Refer to the Section Work Categories and the % of Work Per Category:			
NLC Number:	NLC-1	Required Experience (years):	5
NLC Name: Construction Record Keeper			
Describe how your proposed Task Leader meets the minimum requirements of the NLC listed in the Solicitation according to its description of specific years of experience in this work category, if applicable. Include project examples with starting and ending dates which document the amount of experience requested in the NLC description. (Response limited to 600 characters per project example.)			
Project No. 1	Start Date	End Date	Duration (mo.) 0
Project No. 2	Start Date	End Date	Duration (mo.) 0
Project No. 3	Start Date	End Date	Duration (mo.) 0



A lot of information

A lot of directions
to follow

REMEMINDERS

- Read the entire RFP / RFQ
- Check the TxDOT website for updates and directions

Bonfire Electronic Submittal Platform

PEPS procurements are posted in the Bonfire electronic submittal and evaluation tool (eSET) prior to each wave. Vendors will use eSET to submit responses to PEPS solicitations.

- [Bonfire Frequently Asked Questions - April 2021](#)
- [Electronic Submittals Presentation - October 14, 2020](#)

- Follow ALL the instructions
- If you have questions, don't be afraid to ask for answers

REMEMINDERS

- Things change - instructions, forms, etc.
- Check for addenda
- Allow time for QA/QC
- Allow some time to submit it... Be sure you submit it on time

Use the Screening Checklist located on the TxDOT website

Proposal Screening Checklist

Criteria	RFP Requirements	Pass	Fail
Cover Page Certifications (Criterion B-1)	All the certification statements are checked yes.		
Cover Page Screening (Criterion B-2)	The Prime Provider Project Manager is an employee of the prime firm and has entered the required license information. The project manager identified in the cover page questionnaire must match the project manager listed in the proposal or the proposal will be considered non-responsive. If required in the RFP, the Deputy PM is listed on the cover page, is an employee of the prime firm, and has entered the required license information.		
Prohibited Agency (Criterion C-1)	Per SB 252, Texas agencies are prohibited by law from conducting business with companies on the list and Investing Entities listed in Govt. Code 2270.001 (7) have divestment requirements related to any investments in these companies. Check link below for Prime Provider Name. https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/publications/divestment.php		
Debarred Agency (Criterion C-2)	Verify that the Prime Provider firm is not on the list of FHWA excluded firms at: https://www.sam.gov/		
Proposal within Page Limits (Criterion C-3)	The number of pages within the proposal package does not exceed the number of pages specified in the RFP. If the proposal contains more pages than specified, only the correct number of pages will be scored, the rest will be omitted. This is not a disqualification.		
Proposal Formatted Correctly (Criterion C-4)	The proposal is in substantial compliance with the remainder of the formatting requirements identified in the RFP. A proposal will not be disqualified for minor formatting issues.		
Not Precluded (Criterion C-5)	If the RFP includes a preclusion statement, verify that the prime provider and all subproviders are not precluded from competing for the advertised contract. Address any disclosure or other requirement related to the management of conflicts of interest, as applicable.		
Follows Core Team Restrictions (Criterion C-6)	If the RFP includes a core team restriction statement, verify that the core team members are not submitted as core team members on other teams competing for this solicitation or others in this wave as applicable.		
PTC DBE Goal Good (Criterion C-7)	The project team meets the assigned DBE goal. If not, demonstration of good faith effort documentation is attached. Each prime and sub firm listed to meet the assigned goal is found in the TUCP Directory. Refer to the "Verification of DBE Certifications, Guidance and Instructions." Subproviders: Each subprovider listed to meet the goal must be certified in the NAICS Code applicable to the type of service being offered by that firm. If not, the firm cannot be counted toward the assigned DBE goal. The proposal package will not be disqualified if the overall DBE goal is met with qualified subproviders. Prime Providers: A DBE prime provider may be counted toward the goal. DBE prime providers do not need to be screened for NAICS codes. If the prime is a DBE firm, and a subprovider does not have an acceptable NAICS code, the proposal will not be disqualified.		

Proposal Screening Checklist

Criteria	RFP Requirements	Pass	Fail
PTC Firms AQ (Criterion C-8)	Each prime or sub firm proposing to perform engineering or design-related services must be either 1) administratively qualified (AQ) as of the proposal deadline date or 2) determined to be eligible by the TxDOT AQ Group to use the federal safe harbor rate as of the Proposal deadline date. Verify the AQ status of firms and save a highlighted copy in the procurement file on the P drive for each response (per PEPS AQ list posted at: https://www.txdot.gov/business/consultants/architectural-engineering-surveying/list-of-firms.html).		
PTC Task Leaders Precertified (Criterion C-9)	The task leader for each work category is precertified in the category. If not, verify the status of the firm proposed to provide the task leader. If the firm has active precertification status and employs at least one individual that is precertified in the work category, do not disqualify. A firm providing a task leader must have active precertification status in that category in the CCIS database: http://www.notstate.tx.us/des/precert/precert1.htm as of the proposal deadline date. If the firm is inactive, and the proposal closing date was on or before March 31, and the screening is performed after March 31, then additional steps are required to verify renewal status. See the PEPS guidance: Firm Renewal Status and Verification of Precertification Guidance and Instructions.		
PTC Task Leaders Consistent (Criterion C-10)	A task leader identified in the proposal should match the task leader listed on the PTC form for the same Work Category or the proposal may be considered non-responsive. Not all task leaders on the PTC form need to be mentioned in the proposal. If a person is mentioned in the proposal but is not referenced as a task leader, the person does not need to be listed on the PTC form.		
Subprovider Information Good (Criterion C-11)	Verify that the subprovider firms identified with "yes" under the column labeled "Subprovider is Part of the Team" are consistent with those identified as part of the team on the PTC. This form must include the subprovider name and address, and should be consistent with the team members shown on the PTC. If a subprovider listed on the PTC is not included on the form, the proposal package will not be disqualified. Minor discrepancies such as missing signature, email address, phone number, and/or spelling errors, will not be subject for DQ.		
Overall Consistent (Criterion C-12)	The project team is consistent, as presented in the PTC, NLC Template, CCIS, and DBE Subprovider Contact Information form. A minor discrepancy such as an inconsistent spelling does not automatically disqualify the proposal package, provided the intent is clear. If the makeup of the project team is not obvious, however, the proposal package is non-responsive.		
Screening Determination (Criterion C-13)	The screener must determine if the proposal package passes or fails the minimum qualifications as specified in the RFP. If the proposal package passes, it shall be long-listed for evaluation. If the proposal package fails, it shall be considered non-responsive and disqualified from further consideration. The decision will be confirmed by the procurement engineer and service center manager in the subsequent screening groups.		



“QUALITY IS NOT AN ACT, IT IS A HABIT”

- ARISTOTLE (~350 B.C.)






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