

# RECORDKEEPING SYSTEM PROCUREMENT

## WHAT IS AN RFP?

A “Request for Proposal” (RFP) is a tool used to solicit responses, information, and pricing on commercial solutions for a variety of workplace systems and software.

An RFP is often issued (and in many cases, required when an intended purchase is expected to exceed a particular monetary threshold) when an institution or government is considering purchase of a recordkeeping system and may take several months to develop as part of a larger process of analyzing business workflows, needs, and efficiencies. RFPs are beneficial for the following reasons:

- **An RFP gives you a greater degree of control over the purchasing process**
- **Competition is increased with an RFP, requiring vendors to address needs**
- **Developing an RFP is an effective way to define required system functionalities**
- **An RFP assists with methodical decision-making by creating a coherent set of criteria**

During the procurement process additional documentation that may be required include but is not limited to: a Request for Information that is typically an informal request for information from the larger market of potential vendors, and may precede an RFP; a Request for Quote that is used to determine the pricing of a specific known need (for example, a large equipment purchase); or a Request for Qualifications that is used to gather vendor information to generate a pool of prospects prior to the release of an RFP.

## WHO'S AT THE TABLE?

Many institutions have formal policies and procedures for the RFP process, including a sign-off list. Consult these resources to ensure that all necessary parties are involved at the appropriate stages during the RFP process. **Failure to include these parties may lead to a system that does not meet the diverse needs of your institutional stakeholders and/or fails to comply with appropriate regulations and policies.**

### **ARCHIVISTS/RECORDS MANAGERS:**

provide the knowledge to implement records and lifecycle management and to identify essential and valuable records.

### **SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS:**

provide advice on relevant business process best practices, data standards, and workflow issues.

### **IT/SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATORS:**

provide the knowledge of the technical environment in which the system must operate, and will be responsible for the day-to-day operation, maintenance and security of the technology infrastructure and software.

### **EXECUTIVE SPONSOR(S)/CHAMPION(S):**

provide the institutional authority and support for the project.

### **PURCHASING:**

provides the knowledge of the process and requirements that are essential to developing a successful RFP.

### **GENERAL COUNSEL:**

provides the knowledge of legal requirements and are often responsible for contract negotiations.

## COMPONENTS OF A GOOD RFP

**IDENTIFYING NEEDS:** One of the major components of an RFP is the functional requirements that the proposed solution must meet. The requirements include but are not limited to:

- Capture
- Storage
- Access, Search and Retrieval
- Records/Lifecycle Management
- User Management
- Compliance
- Security
- Training and support
- Export for migration and archival preservation

Requirements must note what the system should be able to carry out, as well as the technical environment in which the system must operate. Needs should be categorized into a matrix of Mandatory vs. Preferred and High vs. Low Priority categories to aid in the evaluation process.

**DEVELOPING A BUDGET/BUSINESS MODEL:** It is important to determine the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) of purchasing and implementing a system. The TCO is not just the cost of the system, but also includes annual maintenance fees, human resource costs for staff and benefits, migration reserves, and may include overhead charges such as rent or plant operations and maintenance. Staff may include system administrators, workflow developers, business process analysts, scanning and quality control staff.

The development of the TCO allows you to develop a budget and business model for the purchase, implementation, and ongoing use of the system.

**ISSUING THE RFP:** The RFP should include at a minimum:

- information about the organization, its purpose and a centralized point of contact
- describe the need for the proposed system
- number and location of expected users
- a request to explain licensing options (individual users, concurrent users, and enterprise)
- the functional requirements
- a request for a matrix to map the functional requirements to proposed software components/modules
- how to prepare and submit proposals
- information regarding a bidders meeting
- timetable for response and evaluation
- product demonstration requirements for finalists
- scoring rubric

## EVALUATING RESPONSES

- Responses should be evaluated against criteria established in the RFP.
- Develop scoring rubric that weighs responses in regards to mandatory vs. preferred and high vs. low priority.
- Select finalists.
- Systems should be demonstrated to and/or tested by appropriate users and administrators to obtain feedback as part of the evaluation process.
- Notify winner, as well as those who were not selected.
- Set aside adequate time to negotiate the final contract.

