

RECORDKEEPING SYSTEM PROCUREMENT

An electronic recordkeeping system is a system consisting of software, hardware, policies, and processes to automate the preparation, organization, tracking, distribution, and disposition of records, regardless of media.¹ Such systems are excellent resources to improve your management of electronic records, but they do require some research, foundation building, and strategic planning to find one to meet your office's needs. This guide will cover some of the steps to procure one.

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 the 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:

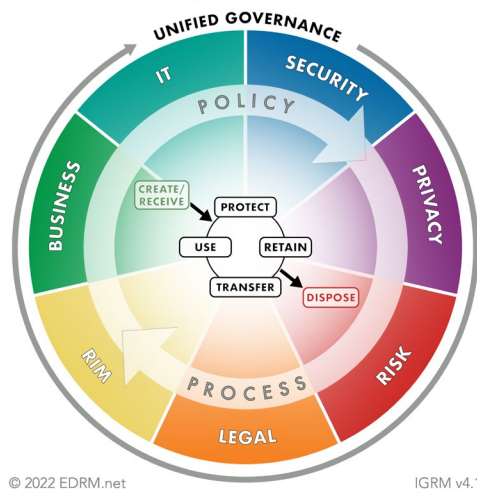
- **An RFP gives you a greater degree of control over the purchasing process**
- **Competition is increased with an RFP, requiring vendors to address needs**
- **Developing an RFP is an effective way to define required system functionalities**
- **An RFP assists with methodical decision-making by creating 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. **Per the OhioERC guide on [Information Governance](#), forming an information governance committee composed of the following stakeholders will be useful as they all have some input in acquiring a tool like a recordkeeping system.**

Information Governance Reference Model (IGRM)
Balancing Value, Risk and Cost



Business

- Subject matter experts who use information assets for their work.

IT & Security

- Implements tools and resources to manage and protect info assets.

Legal, Privacy, Risk, & RIM

- Concerned with duty to preserve information as well as dispose of it when no longer needed.

¹ ARMA International. *Glossary of Records Management and Information Governance Terms*. Technical Report TR 22-2016, 5th ed., Overland Park, KS, ARMA International, 2016.

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 for a recordkeeping system. These functional requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Document Capture
- Document 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 bidder's 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 regard 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.

