1. Tenderers should understand the fundamental difference between qualification criteria and award criteria. Tenderers should be absolutely clear on what the minimum requirements are and first ensure that they are met. For award criteria, marks are available to be earned; typically award criteria relate to a proposed methodology for delivery of a service, proposed methodology for ensuring equipment is available and maintained to a definable standard, methodology for ensuring that expert staff are always available to the council for the specific project and so on. So whilst selection criteria demonstrates that an organisation is qualified to deliver a service or product or works, award criteria are used to determine who, of the qualified Tenderers, is best placed to deliver the service and win the particular competition. It should be noted also that there are no extra marks or recognition for Tenderers who far exceed stated selection criteria over those who ‘only just’ meet selection criteria requirements. Once tenders have passed the initial selection criteria ‘hurdle’ all are assessed equally based on the award criteria as detailed in the RFT.
2. Tenderers should pay attention to closing dates and times. Tenderers should not leave it to the last minute to work on or deliver tender responses. Tenderers must realise that a late tender is inadmissible even if it is 1 minute late. In this case the tender submission will not be opened and will be available for collection. If not collected within 1 year it will be securely destroyed.
3. A common mistake made in tender submissions is to misread or misinterpret the RFT. If for example a Contracting Authority tenders for services involving activities A, B and C and specifically not D and a Tenderer makes a submission covering A, B, C and D and perhaps goes into some detail on activity D, then this would indicate a lack of understanding of the Contracting Authority's requirements. Therefore, if there are marks for methodology or ability to deliver a service and the Contracting Authority can see that a Tenderer does not grasp what is being asked for, as reflected in the proposed methodology or approach to delivery, then this will result in a lower mark being awarded. Ultimately, the winning Tenderer will have demonstrated that they understand what is being looked for and will provide a level of relevant detail in their methodology statements that satisfies the Contracting Authority as to their ability to deliver. So, it is to be advised that Tenderers read RFTs carefully, make notes of what is in scope and what is not in scope and be absolutely clear what the Contracting Authority is asking for.
4. Another aid to making a good tender submission is to lay out tender responses in a clear and easily readable fashion. In a lot of cases this is done by taking each section of the RFT and making a specific response to each section. It is particularly useful when looking at the specific requirements of an RFT, generally listed in Appendix 1, that Tenderers use this section of the RFT as a starting point. This ensures that each service item/activity required is covered and items that are not required are not expanded on inadvertently.
5. A common feature of RFTs is to permit a maximum number of pages in a submission. So if Tenderers are asked to submit 8 No. A4 Pages in response to a quality criterion, then Tenderers should make every effort to submit just 8 pages in response. Tenderers should avoid spreading their response to a particular criterion across multiple sections and multiple pages and appendices.
6. Tenders should take careful note of the award criteria weightings. If a tender is 80% price and 20% quality, then it is more often than not the case that the lowest priced Tenderer will win, assuming they reach at least the minimum quality standard being sought. If a competition is 80% quality and 20% price, then it is clear that the proposed quality of service is the most important aspect of the competition and a more expensive high quality submission has a better chance of winning.
7. Debriefs: It is Kildare County Council policy to provide debrief information in written format only in the letters sent to successful and unsuccessful Tenderers.