

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Request for Proposals (RFP) process?

- The Department of Labor and Industry is required by law to use the Request for Proposal process to solicit for and secure Professional and Technical Service contracts with electrical inspection service providers (“vendors”).

State agencies must comply with certain laws and rules to ensure that:

- 1) Contracting with qualified professionals is necessary to accomplish the intended task;
- 2) Contracting will result in greater cost efficiency;
- 3) There is opportunity for all minimally qualified entities/individuals to participate in the RFP process, and;
- 4) The agency will maintain the capability to prescribe, monitor and evaluate the work performed by the vendor.

An RFP is a formal invitation to a vendor, to submit a proposal to provide a service to the agency. The RFP is also a procurement process where the agency can judge if the vendors experience, qualifications and work plan will provide the best service.

Is there a cost associated with submitting a proposal?

- Other than time, there is no cost, fees or charges of any kind.

The packet does not contain an application form - did I get all of the documents that I need to submit a proposal?

- This is a Request for Proposal, not a job application.

What should the proposal content include?

- See the *Proposal Content* and *Proposal Instructions* of the detailed Request for Proposals (RFP) document included in the information packet.

How does a vendor know if their proposal is complete enough?

- The RFP packet that is provided to vendors outlines all of the department’s requirements and expectations. When a vendor reviews the *Proposal Content and Proposal Instructions* and includes each of the items listed, the proposal would be very complete.
- Proposals should include information and detail that will enable the department to make a clear distinction between competing proposals. Vendors that are, or have been under contract should not assume that their response will be given priority or preferential treatment.

Can I submit more than one proposal?

- Yes. There is no limit to the number of proposals that a vendor may submit.
 - When submitting multiple proposals for a single District, list the District Area numbers with your name and license number on the Technical Proposal.
 - A separate Cost Proposal will need to be completed for each District Area.

How do I submit a proposal to provide electrical inspection service in other than a defined geographical area? For example, what if I want to provide service part-time, such as certain days of the week or for selected months? What if I want to provide service across the entire Twin Cities metro area on an as-needed basis?

- Part-time inspection service is identified as “supplemental” inspection service in the RFP as described below.
- In addition to seeking proposals for designated inspection areas, the department routinely seeks proposals from vendors who are able to provide supplemental inspection service. Contract electrical inspectors who provide such supplemental inspection service are informally referred to as “floaters.” Unlike primary inspectors who are responsible for the daily management of a designated inspection area, floaters provide a broad range of service from part-time to full-time, in concentrated geographical areas or larger regional areas.
- Although there is no guarantee of work under contracts to provide supplemental inspection service, inspectors in this category are typically provided with work that meets or exceeds their proposal.

How will the proposals be evaluated? (How are points awarded?)

- You will find this information in the section entitled ‘Proposal Evaluation’ on page nine of the detailed Request for Proposals. A three-person committee evaluates all proposals. A 100-point scale is used with the following breakdown:
 - 35 Points - Qualifications/Experience
 - 35 Points - Statement of Understanding /Detailed work plan/References/Interview
 - 30 Points - Cost Detail

An additional 6 Points is awarded to Targeted Group Business which may increase a respondent’s total score over 100.

What exactly is the "cost proposal" portion of the proposal and how it should be proposed?

Vendors must include a cost proposal for providing inspections service Refer to the Compensation/Cost Proposal page in the RFP packet to see the compensation percentage rate estimated for the inspection area published. Unlike a Request for Bid in which the bid amount is not disclosed until the bid opening, the department has an estimated compensation rate for the identified geographical areas. The cost proposal is expected to include a percentage value.

The STATE has provided an estimated compensation rate range for each geographical inspection area, which is found on the attached District Area Report in the column labeled Estimated Compensation Rate.

- Example of cost proposal: “Inspector proposes a compensation rate for inspection services of ___% of the electrical fees submitted by permit applicants.”
- Example of inspection fee payment: Inspector contracts for a compensation rate of 95%. This means that after providing inspection services, the inspector will receive 95% of the permit inspection fees paid by the permit applicant. For this example, a typical new single family home permit amount is \$135.00 and will require two inspection trips to the site. The Inspector performs the rough-in inspection, enters the required inspection information for the rough-in in eTrakit then the Inspector receives \$33.25 (95% of \$35.00) from the STATE. The second trip to the inspection site results in a final inspection; inspector enters the final inspection information into eTrakit and receives \$95.00 (95% of \$100.00), the balance of the inspection fees on the permit.

For the category of Targeted Group Business, how are the 6 points scored?

- Certified Targeted Group Businesses and individuals submitting proposals as prime contractors are automatically awarded 6 additional points. These additional points are added to the total of the initial score. Additional information can be found at <http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us>

Are vendors interviewed during the selection process?

- Not all vendors are interviewed. Only those vendors that score highest on the proposal evaluation for a specific inspection area will be interviewed. The interview becomes the final step in determining “Best Value” and selecting an inspection service provider.
- When interviews occur they provide opportunity for vendors to ask questions and demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities. The results of this interview are used in addition to the proposal evaluation to further determine those vendors that would provide an overall "best value" level of service to the department and its clientele.

What does “Best Value” mean?

- "Best Value" describes an intended result in the acquisition of all goods and services. Price must be one of the evaluation criteria when acquiring goods and services. However, other combined evaluation criteria is more important and may include, but not be limited to, knowledge, skills, abilities, experience and performance.

What are some important “Best Value” factors?

- A complete, concise and professional proposal
- Good educational and training background
- Professional demeanor, attitude and perspective
- Accredited certification(s)
- Sincere interest in promoting electrical safety
- Demonstrated knowledge, skills and abilities
- Demonstrated performance that meets or exceeds the professional and technical service contract and the Department of Labor and Industry’s expectations
- Extensive and diverse electrical industry experience
- Proximity to designated inspection area
- Reasonable cost for providing the inspection service

Are electrical inspectors state employees? What is a contract electrical inspector?

- No. The department provides electrical inspection service across the state using vendors (individuals and companies) that are under a Professional and Technical Services Contract to provide electrical inspection service. The State of Minnesota does not employ any individuals to provide electrical inspection service.
- Contract electrical inspectors are independent contractors – vendors- they are separate and distinct business entities or enterprise operators that are under contract to provide electrical inspection service to the state.

How do contract electrical inspectors provide uninterrupted service if they are ill, on vacation, at a conference, or are otherwise not available to provide inspection service?

- Contract electrical inspectors network with other adjoining contract electrical inspectors to ensure uninterrupted inspection service. Some contract electrical inspectors have one or more employees that are in place to ensure uninterrupted service.

Do I need to show proof of inspector bond and inspector insurance in order to submit a proposal?

- No. The professional liability insurance and electrical inspector bond would be obtained by the vendor only when the vendor has received and accepted a contract offer from the department. Verification of liability insurance, inspector bond and other insurance coverages would be required before the contract would receive final approval by the department.

Why is there a "sample" contract in the packet and what do I do with it?

- The sample contract is an example of the Professional and Technical Services contract that the State of Minnesota uses when contracting such services. It is informational only.

What is the term of the contract - when does the contract expire?

- The contract term is July 1 through June 30 - this coincides with the state's fiscal year. The contract expiration date can be repeatedly extended with annual amendments (the combined contract and amendments cannot exceed a total of five years).

Can I fax or e-mail the completed proposal?

- No. The proposal packet will consist of several documents. All proposals must be uploaded in the SWIFT Supplier Portal at the RFP Event not later than the event end date. Late, faxed, mailed or emailed proposals will not be considered.

Where can I obtain the required professional technical errors and omissions insurance and electrical inspector bond?

- Your insurance agent will be able to suggest insurance companies for the PT Errors and Omissions Insurance and Bond

In addition to Professional Liability insurance, do I need General Liability insurance coverage?

- Yes. Review the RFP for specific insurance requirement information. Contract inspectors must provide general liability insurance that includes coverage for premises and operations bodily injury and property damage, personal and advertising injury, and other coverage.

What is Extended Reporting Period Coverage and when is it required?

- Extended Reporting Period Coverage is required to be provided for all claims-made policies. Claims-Made coverage is generally a type of insurance that responds only to claims that are brought during the policy period or for a limited period of time after expiration. Extended reporting period coverage provides protection from claims for an extended period of time after the policy has expired.

Does the Department of Labor and Industry provide customized training for all contract inspectors?

- No. However we will work with the inspector and the inspector's personnel to ensure that data entry into the department's inspection database is performed correctly.

If I don't understand part of the RFP, how do I ask questions?

- Any related questions regarding the Request for Proposal should be directed to Robin Geiger via email to dli.electricity@state.mn.us Questions will be accepted via email until 10 days prior to the end date of the Event.
- Questions regarding uploading your technical and/or cost proposal should be directed to the OSP Vendor Help Desk at 651-201-8100, Option 1, Option1