



Office of  
**Small Business Programs** (OSBP)  
where small business makes a **big** difference



# Responding Strategically to NASA Market Research and RFPs

# What is the purpose of Market Research ?

- To determine if there is potential for a small business set-aside.
- it is a chance to For Industry to help influence the potential for a Small Business set-aside.
- FAR part 10 requires the Federal Government to conduct Market Research.
- FAR part 19.502 states that the contracting officer shall set aside any acquisition over \$150,000 for small business participation when there is a reasonable expectation that—
  - (1) Offers will be obtained from at least two responsible small business concerns offering the products of different small business concern; and
  - (2) Award will be made at fair market prices. Total small business set-asides shall not be made unless such a reasonable expectation exists.

# What is the purpose of Market Research ?

- Helps to establish subcontracting goals if the requirement is not set aside.
- The SS\RFI, is looking for capable sources that will likely respond to the solicitation when published.
- Also used to develop an interested parties list.

# What is a Sources Sought(SS) or Request for Information(RFI)?

- SS\RFI announcements typically provide a statement of work and a request to provide capability.
- They also may have specific questions with respect to specific requirements in the SOW. (Certifications, etc)
- Some have page limitations for response.
- They are not Request for Proposal (RFP) or evaluated like RFPs.
- Many times the user or Technical Organization writes the sources sought/RFI.

# How do you respond?

- Don't just answer questions but convince them of your capability. Show them SB can do the job.
- Address each task or element (Question) specifically and with detail.
- If the agency has not defined the key functions they want you to address, address all major functions in the SOW.
- Elements not addressed can be deemed as not having capability or non-responsive.
- Explain your capability level – as prime or sub? If you are responding to be a sub indicate what part of the scope you are responding to.

# How do you respond?

- Be sure to show understanding of the scope of the contract by responding with examples that address the scope of the contract. If there are inherent issues in the type of work, explain how you have handled those issues in the past or how you are set up to handle unexpected issues that may arise.
- For past performance explain how it relates to the SOW.
- Identify contract experience by identifying the contract number, agency, the scope/value of the contract, the length of the contract, the functions you did under the contract, and/or the role your company played.

# How do you respond?

- Security Clearances – Do you have a facility clearance? What clearances do your key personnel hold? Can you obtain cleared personnel?
- Explain your skills and ability to manage the potential contract as a prime if you are seeking to be the prime contractor.
- If something does not make sense ask questions!

# Wrong Way to Respond

- Don't just submit your generic Capability statement to the SS\RFI.
- Don't be the only one to respond. Tell other that are similar in size and certification. (COMPETITION IS YOUR FRIEND)
- Don't try and tell the agency what they need.
- Make sure that your response is on time and to the correct agency.
- Don't go over the page limit if there is one.



# Specific Requirements

- Capability statements should identify past projects with proven General Construction experience preferably in the \$ to \$ range within the last five (5) years with emphasis on work performed on a Federal installation
  - Don't provide information on projects that are not construction related.
  - Make sure that they were performed within the time period given.
  - Ensure that they answer the question asked
- Ability to meet the 15% requirement of work to be performed by the prime contractor, not including the cost of materials.
  - Provide examples. Don't refer to another question. (See #1 above)

# Specific Requirements

- Experience with new construction, additions, maintenance and repair projects including partial and total renovations, refurbishments, alterations of buildings, structures and other real property contracts in a work environment with:
  - special access requirements, and “restricted” periods of time when work can be performed and occupied areas;
  - work performed with hazardous materials such as asbestos, lead paint, etc.
- Experience involving a broad range of skills, including, but not limited to site work, paving, utilities, structures, electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems, finishes, furnishing/outfitting, carpentry.

# Specific Requirements

- Highlight work performed in a tunnel system containing mission critical utilities such as high voltage feeders, energized piping systems, steam, mission critical data cables.
  - Don't talk about roofing projects, renovation projects. Give information specifically related to what is asked.
- Performance of work with specialty items such as operational utility distribution system at an operationally critical site must be demonstrated.

# Summary

- A good SS/RFI response answers all of the questions and demonstrates the professional quality and capability of your firm.
- A good response demonstrates that small business firms can provide quality work.