

What are IFBs and RFPs?

IFB

An **Invitation for Bid (IFB)** is a sealed bidding process used when a department has a clear description of the project scope, requirements, and proposer qualifications. IFB evaluations are heavily determined by pricing. An IFB does still value and consider vendors' experience, but awards are generally made to the low bidder; provided State compliance and other regulations are followed. IFBs are favored for state agencies like Rowan University, requiring a higher standard of transparency and helping to prevent corruption and favoritism. IFBs are usually utilized for products and construction projects.

RFP

A **Request for Proposal (RFP)** is a process designed to illuminate new ideas and plans to help the department accomplish their goal. Rowan University publishes RFPs to solicit proposals from potential vendors for a particular project solution not considering price alone. The RFP specifies what the entity is looking for and describes the criteria for evaluating the proposals it receives. Rowan University issues RFPs to ensure transparency. Public entities, by law, are accountable for project goals and vendor choices when using taxpayer money.

Differences

Whereas an IFB will evaluate proposals largely based on price, RFPs will consider price as well as details of the bidding organization's operational plan, staff experience and education, timeline estimates and more. The review process for an RFP is typically longer than those of IFBs. RFP processes, for example, often include additional interviews and/or negotiations for short-listed vendors, whereas an IFB will generally award its contract to the lowest qualified bidder.

Which is Right for You?

Timing and transparency are important factors of consideration for departments weighing RFP versus IFB processes. If there is a clear understanding of the product or project needs, an IFB offers a standardized procedure to receive a number of offers quickly. Additionally, because the evaluation process is much more straightforward, departments needing to maintain transparency often take the IFB route. This is why state agencies and academic institutions often leverage IFB processes for vendor needs.

If your department is seeking a more comprehensive analysis of potential project partners, RFPs are an excellent strategy to pursue. A strong process can help gather an array of innovative strategies for success. RFPs can prove beneficial in identifying products or implementations your team may not have even previously considered!

If you have any questions, please reach out to the [Office of Contracting and Procurement](#).