State of Minnesota
Explore Minnesota Tourism

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

2021 Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference

SWIFT Event #2000010525

Date Posted: February 28, 2020

- Responses must be received not later than 3:00PM, Central Time, March 24, 2020
- Late responses will not be considered

**Minnesota’s Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion**

The State of Minnesota is committed to diversity and inclusion in its public procurement process. The goal is to ensure that those providing goods and services to the State are representative of our Minnesota communities and include businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. Creating broader opportunities for historically under-represented groups provides for additional options and greater competition in the marketplace, creates stronger relationships and engagement within our communities, and fosters economic development and equality.

To further this commitment, the Department of Administration operates a program for Minnesota-based small businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. For additional information on this program, or to determine eligibility, please call 651-296-2600 or go to [www.mn.gov/admin/oep](http://www.mn.gov/admin/oep).

SPECIAL NOTICE: This is a request for proposal. It does not obligate the State of Minnesota or the Explore Minnesota Tourism Department to award a contract or complete the proposed program, and the State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered in its best interest.
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Solicitation Attachments

- Attachment A: Responder Declarations
- Attachment B: Exceptions to State's Terms and Conditions
- Attachment C: Cost Proposal
- Attachment D: Responder Forms
  - Veterans Preference Form
  - Workforce Certification

Sample Contract

- Exhibit A: Contract Terms
- Exhibit B: Insurance Requirements
- Exhibit C: Specifications, Duties, and Scope of Work
- Exhibit D: Pricing
SECTION 1 – INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDERS

Steps for Completing Your Response

Follow the steps below to complete your response to this Solicitation:

Step 1: Read the solicitation document and ask questions, if any
Step 2: Write your response
Step 3: Sign and submit your response

Incomplete Submittals

A response must be submitted along with any required additional documents. Incomplete responses that materially deviate from the required format and content may be rejected.

STEP 1 – READ THE SOLICITATION DOCUMENT & ASK QUESTIONS, IF ANY

How to Ask Questions

The contact person for questions is:

Solicitation Administrator
Erin McCormack, Buyer II
Department of Administration
erin.mccormack@state.mn.us

Questions should be emailed to the contact by March 17, 2020.
Other personnel are not authorized to answer questions regarding this Solicitation.

STEP 2 – WRITE YOUR RESPONSE

The Proposal Content section is in Section 4. Prepare a written response and supply all requested content.

STEP 3 – SIGN & SUBMIT YOUR RESPONSE

Where to Send Your Response

Emailed responses will not be accepted. Upload your response in the SWIFT Supplier Portal. By signing this response, your company is making a binding legal offer for the period of time set forth below in Section 6, Paragraph 10, Conditions of Offer.

All costs incurred in responding to this solicitation will be borne by the Responder.

Response Submission Deadline

Must be received not later than 3:00 PM, Central Time, March 24, 2020, as indicated by a notation made by the Receptionist.
Late responses will not be considered.
SECTION 2 – SUMMARY OF SCOPE

1. Procurement Overview and Goals.
The purpose of this Solicitation is to establish a Contract for a conference as detailed in the attached Exhibit C, including Exhibit C – Attachment 1. The number of attendees is an estimate only. The State does not guarantee a minimum number of lodging rooms or meals. The contract prices shall not be adjusted if the number of attendees falls below the estimate.

The State reserves the right to award this conference to a facility that is clean, well maintained, provides adequate space, and is located in the State of Minnesota. If a geographic area for the conference is defined, distance will be measured using Google Maps™.
SECTION 3 – PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Anticipated Contract Term.
The term of this contract is anticipated to be from April 7, 2020 to May 31, 2021.

2. Question and Answer Period.
Prospective responders who have any questions regarding this solicitation may contact the Solicitation Administrator listed in Section 1.

All questions should be submitted no later than the date and time listed in Section 1, Instructions to Responders. The State is not obligated to answer questions submitted after the questions/clarifications due date and time.

Only personnel listed above are authorized to discuss this solicitation with responders. Contact regarding this solicitation with any personnel not listed above could result in disqualification. If a Responder discovers any significant ambiguity, error, conflict, discrepancy, omission, or other deficiency in the solicitation, please immediately notify the contact person detailed above in writing of such error and request modification or clarification of the document.

3. Additional Tasks or Activities.
Responders are encouraged to propose additional or alternative tasks, activities, or goods if they will substantially improve the results of this procurement. These items should be separated from the required items on the cost component of the response.

4. Response Submission Instructions.
All responses to this solicitation (termed an “Event” within SWIFT) must be submitted through SWIFT using the Supplier portal (http://supplier.swift.state.mn.us/). Training and documentation on how to submit your response is available through the Supplier portal link above.

All responses to this solicitation must be submitted and received in SWIFT no later than the Event End Date and time as set forth in the SWIFT Event Details applicable to this solicitation. Late responses will not be considered. Fax, e-mail, and printed responses will not be accepted or considered. All costs incurred in responding to this solicitation will be borne by the responder.

Responses received after End Date above will not be considered, even if errors or delays were caused by issues outside of responders’ control. If you need assistance please contact the SWIFT Vendor Assistance Helpline at 651-201-8100, Option 1, and then Option 1.
SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL CONTENT

Please submit the following information:

1. **Cost Proposal Detail.** Complete and submit Exhibit D – Attachment 1, “Cost Proposal,” attached to this solicitation.

Submit all requested documentation, including, but not limited to, the following documents:

1. Attachment A: Responder Declarations
2. Attachment B: Exceptions to State's Standard Terms and Conditions
3. Responder Forms
   a. Veterans Preference Form
   b. Workforce Certification
   c. Equal Pay Certificate Form

The State reserves the right to request at any time a copy of any third-party document, including any agreement for lodging, space rental, or equipment rental.
SECTION 5 – EVALUATION PROCEDURE AND CRITERIA

The State will conduct an evaluation of responses to this Solicitation. The evaluations will be conducted in three phases:

Phase 1 - Review responses for responsiveness and pass/fail requirements
Phase 2 - Evaluate responses
Phase 3 - Select finalist(s)

1. Phase 1 – Responsiveness and Pass/Fail Requirements:
The purpose of this phase is to determine if each response complies with mandatory requirements. The State will first review each proposal for responsiveness to determine if the Responder satisfies all mandatory requirements. The State will evaluate these requirements on a pass/fail basis.

2. Phase 2 - Evaluate Responses.
Only those responses found to have met Phase 1 criteria will be considered in Phase 2.

Responses will be rated as follows:

The factors and weighting on which responses will be judged are:

1. Acceptance of State’s Terms and Conditions  100 points
2. Cancellation Policy 100 points
3. Cost Detail  800 points
   1000 points
4. Preference Points (if applicable) 60 points (in addition to 1,000 available)

Preferences points are described under Solicitation Terms and will be applied to the total score after points have been awarded.

3. Phase 3 - Select Finalist(s).
Only those responses that have been evaluated under Phase 2 shall be eligible for Phase 3.

The State shall make its selection based on best value, as determined by this evaluation process. The State reserves the right to pursue negotiations on any exception taken to the State’s standard terms and conditions. In the event that negotiated terms cannot be reached, the State reserves the right to terminate negotiations and begin negotiating with the next highest scoring responder or take other actions as the state deems appropriate. If the state anticipates multiple awards, the state reserves the right to negotiate with more than one Responder.

It is anticipated that the evaluation and selection will be completed by March 28, 2020.
SECTION 6 – SOLICITATION TERMS

1. **Competition in Responding.**
The State desires open and fair competition. Questions from responders regarding any of the requirements of the Solicitation must be submitted in writing to the Solicitation Administrator listed in the Solicitation before the due date and time. If changes are made the State will issue an addendum.

Any evidence of collusion among responders in any form designed to defeat competitive responses will be reported to the Minnesota Attorney General for investigation and appropriate action.

2. **Addenda to the Solicitation.**
Changes to the Solicitation will be made by addendum with notification and posted in the same manner as the original Solicitation. Any addenda issued will become part of the Solicitation.

3. **Joint Ventures.**
The State allows joint ventures among groups of responders when responding to the solicitation. However, one responder must submit a response on behalf of all the others in the group. The responder that submits the response will be considered legally responsible for the response (and the contract, if awarded).

4. **Withdrawing Response.**
Before the time for responding has ended, a responder may withdraw its response. For solicitations in the SWIFT Supplier Portal, a responder may withdraw its response from the SWIFT Supplier Portal. For solicitations done any other way, a responder may withdraw its response by notifying the contact person for this solicitation in writing of the desire to withdraw.

After the time for responding has ended, a responder may withdraw a response only upon showing that an obvious error exists in the response. The showing and request for withdrawal must be made in writing to the contact person for this solicitation within a reasonable time and prior to the State’s detrimental reliance on the response.

5. **Rights Reserved.**
The State reserves the right to:

- Reject any and all responses received;
- Waive or modify any informalities, irregularities, or inconsistencies in the responses received;
- Negotiate with the highest scoring Responder[s];
- Terminate negotiations and select the next response providing the best value for the State;
- Short list the highest scoring Responders;
- Require Responders to conduct presentations, demonstrations, or submit samples;
- Award by item (including category, location, etc.), by groups of items, or all items, therefore, the Responder is encouraged to offer a response for all items;
- Award by preferred date, by conference year, or with or without Shuttle Services, or to a responder that can provide all the requirements in one facility;
- Interview key personnel or references; and
- Request a best and final offer from one or more Responders.

6. **Evaluation of Responses.**
The State reserves the right to use estimated usage or scenarios for the purpose of conducting pricing evaluations. The State reserves the right to modify scenarios, and to request or add additional scenarios for the evaluation.
7. **Samples and Demonstrations.**
Upon request, Responders are to provide samples to the State at no charge. Except for those destroyed or mutilated in testing, the State will return samples if requested and at the Responder’s expense. All costs to conduct and associated with a demonstration will be the sole responsibility of the Responder.

8. **Responses are Nonpublic during Evaluation Process.**
All materials submitted in response to this Solicitation will become property of the State. During the evaluation process, all information concerning the responses submitted will remain private or nonpublic and will not be disclosed to anyone whose official duties do not require such knowledge. Responses are private or nonpublic data until the completion of the evaluation process as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.591. The completion of the evaluation process is defined as the State having completed negotiating a contract with the selected responder. The State will notify all responders in writing of the evaluation results.

9. **Nondisclosure of Confidential Information.**
   
   9.1 Responder must not submit as part of their response trade secret material, as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37. In the event trade secret data are submitted, Responder must defend any action seeking release of data it believes to be trade secret, and indemnify and hold harmless the State, its agents and employees, from any judgments awarded against the State in favor of the party requesting the data, and any and all costs connected with that defense. The State reserves the right to request additional information as part of the evaluation process.

   9.2 The State does not consider cost to be trade secret material, as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37.

10. **Conditions of Offer.**
Unless otherwise approved of by the State in writing, the prices and terms offered in its response pertaining to the sale of goods or general services will remain firm for 180 days, until they are accepted or rejected by the State, or they are changed by further negotiations with the State prior to contract execution.

11. **Award.**
Any award that may result from this solicitation will be based upon the total accumulated points as established in the solicitation. The State reserves the right to award this solicitation to a single Responder, or to multiple Responders, whichever is in the best interest of the State, providing each Responder is in compliance with all terms and conditions of the solicitation. The State reserves the right to accept all or part of an offer, to reject all offers, to cancel the solicitation, or to re-issue the solicitation, whichever is in the best interest of the State.

12. **Requirements Prior to Contract Execution.**
Contract documents, including the bond and insurance requirements stated in the Solicitation, must be submitted to the State prior to contract execution. Failure to comply may result in cancellation of the award.

13. **Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged Business, Veteran-Owned and Individual Preference.**
Unless a greater preference is applicable and allowed by law, in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 16C.16, businesses that are eligible and certified by the State as targeted group (TG) businesses, economically disadvantaged (ED) businesses, and veteran-owned businesses will receive points equal to 6% percent of the total points available as preference.

   For TG/ED/VO certification and eligibility information visit the Office of Equity in Procurement website at https://mn.gov/admin/business/vendor-info/oep/ or call the Division’s Helpline at 651.296.2600.

14. **Reciprocity.**
State shall comply with Minn. Stat. § 16C.06, subd. 7, as that applies to a non-resident vendor. This paragraph does not apply for any project in which federal funds are expended.
15. DEED and DHS Preference.
In accordance with Minn. Stat. § 16C.155, eligible DEED/DHS providers will receive points equal to 6% percent of the total points available.

Response will be held to strict compliance with the specifications. If a response deviates from the specifications, the deviation must be clearly noted and the State reserves the right to reject the response. All specifications are for new items unless otherwise noted in the solicitation. When brand name or manufacturer’s name or numbers are stated in the specifications, they are intended to establish a standard only and are not restrictive unless the solicitation states: “No Substitute.” Responses may be considered on other alternate makes, models, or brands having comparable quality, style, and performance characteristics. Any alternates included in a response are subject to State approval.

17. Prompt Payment Discounts Offered.
If a responder offers a discount for a payment made in less than 30 days, this discount will not be considered in the evaluation of the response. The date from which discount time is calculated shall be the date of receipt of the invoice, receipt of shipment, or date or acceptance, whichever is later. If testing is performed, however, then the date shall be the date of acceptance of the goods or services.