

# Kansas Annual Business Summit 2025

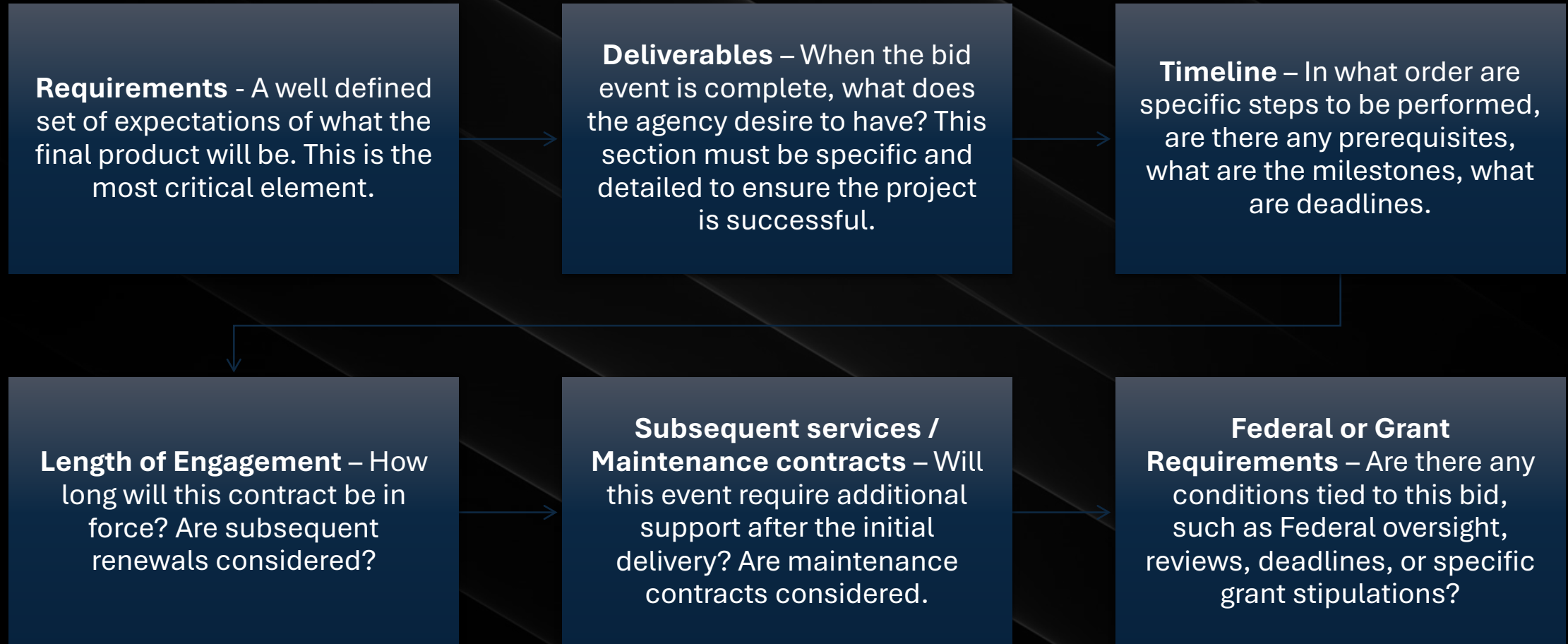
## IT Bid Specifications

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## Specifications provide a roadmap for the vendors to understand the agency's need.



# The Power of Detailed Specifications

- Less questions during the number phase of the bid. Bids that have an excessive number of questions indicate a lack of specificity in the specifications and often must be rebid.
- Ensure the vendor's response will align with the agency's need.
- The details of the contract award are based on the agency's specification document. Clearly written and defined specifications result in a stronger contract. The specifications **CANNOT** be changed at award time.
- Is better sustainable through a challenge. Vendors who do not meet written specifications can be eliminated based upon their response (or lack of). Without written documentation, agencies lack the ability to assess their needs verses the vendor's response.
- Allows the agency to determine the best value for the event if all responses are similar.
- Allow the reviewers to quickly weed out vendor's who solution does not fit.
- Provide a technical response that is detailed based upon the written specifications.
- Allows the agency to ask focus on details of the event and to ask appropriate questions. Events with less detailed specs waste time trying to determine what the vendor is proposing.

# Please Do

- **Perform market research.** Bid events are intended to fulfill a need within an agency. The agency is expected to be the Subject Matter Expert (SME) for this event. As such, OPC relies upon the agency to provide enough detail for a successful event.
- **Talk to vendors before drafting your specification.** Prior to posting a bid event, agencies can (and should) talk with vendors about their specific requirements. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about new technology, gain insight on the latest trends, and see options that may enhance the process more than originally considered. OPC often hears from agencies who did not know about a technology until the vendor's bid submission. It is too late to make this a requirement at this point.
- **Talk to neighboring states or organizations.** These resources can provide guidance to avoid common pitfalls or suggestions to make the process go smoother.
- **Have the bid fully vetted by ALL PARTIES prior to submission.** A bid event can be modified after posting; however, this causes confusion and additional work for the vendor. A bid with multiple modifications appears to be disorganized and often vendors will be hesitant to bid. Specs often need Federal review or oversight by other partners.
- **Include your IT department early in the process.** Most IT initiatives start with a business need. Business units are typically concerned with the solution; however, IT focuses on process. Often an existing solution can be modified or enhanced to expedite the process. OITS is actively seeking Enterprise solutions, which your CIO should be aware of.
- **Understand that IT bids must go through multiple vetting processes.** This is handled by your agency's IT and security team. It is imperative that they are involved early and throughout the process. Failure to integrate them results in delays and modifications.

# Please Don't

- **Simply reuse a prior bid event.** IT is a rapidly changing world and specifications that were designed three or more years ago are obsolete. It is probably true that they worked fine then, but there is new technology and better programs.
- **Assume the vendor knows what you expect.** Vendors often are required to respond to many requests, throughout the public and private sector. A process that is common in Kansas, may not be to Vermont. Acronyms that we use may be misconstrued in another context. Even industry standard processes may not be assumed. If something appears to be too basic to explain, you probably need to.
- **Expect a demonstration to replace solid specifications.** OPC allows for demonstrations on the top one or two vendors if requested. The agency must submit questions based on their specifications and request clarification from the vendor's responses. Demonstrations are very time intensive and should be used to validate (or clarify) how the vendor will meet the agency's need.
- **Submit a bid with more than one or two attachments.** Bids with more than one or two attachments are confusing and are easily misunderstood. If there is a specific need, find a way to call it out in the specifications.
- **Assume that a bid can be expedited in all cases.** Talk with OPC if an event has special needs. Many of the timelines OPC operates under are a combination of statutory requirements and best practices.
- **Have non-procurement staff contact OPC or request a meeting.** Often managers and other SMEs want to call OPC to expediate a bid. OPC requires a single point of contact at each agency, who should work as the conduit. Explaining the bid process, requirements, and other details of an RFP will delay the bid. The IT team will work with agency CIOs to provide technical guidance when needed.

# Scope of Work

**This section should explain what the agency is hoping to accomplish and how the vendor is expected to perform.**

- Is the deliverable something new to the agency or designed to replace an existing product?
- Is the deliverable for internal use only or will the public have access to it?
- What type of data will be involved (IRS, CJIS, PII, etc.)?
- Does this event require any type of security certifications (FedRamp / GovRamp)
- How many people will need access?
- Is the agency looking for a commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) product or will this need to be custom written?
- Are there any legislative bills or expectations tied to the project
- Are there any deadlines associated?

# Deliverables – The expectation of the vendors

Quantifying the deliverables is the most difficult part of the process. It is imperative that the agency involve both IT and the business unit to design both the specifications and deliverables to ensure the success of the project.

- **Business examples**

Detailing the specific need of the project. This must be as detailed as possible and explain any existing pain points.

Expense and budget

Flow and handling of data. Data entry, reporting, electronic transmission, interagency sharing.

Separation of duties

Managerial oversight / Executive reviews

Description of future expansion

Training

- **IT consideration examples**

Security and classification of data

Reuse of existing systems

Technology of new system, including hosting location (on-site, vendor, cloud), database, programming language

Support expected / required

Vendor access to system

Design and implementation of inter-system interfaces (APIs) and inter-agency sharing.

Authentication and/or SSO

# OPC working with the Agency

OPC functions in various capacities regarding bid events. Primarily, our function is to ensure the statutory requirements are met; however, we also enforce a level of statewide consistency between all agencies.

Examples include:

- Bidding the request under the proper type of event (RFQ, IFB, or RFP).
- Provide alternate methods of procurement to be used instead of a bid (Existing contract, partnering with another agency, referring to OITS, etc.).
- Reviewing submissions for required documents, such as the RFP letter and demand authorization.
- Ensuring IT projects have been vetted by the KARS process, as well as the agency specific security team as outlined in SB-291.
- Make sure the agency has provided at least 3 suggested vendors.
- Provide guidance to the agency regarding specifications, bid documents, and pricing sheets.
- Guidance for procurement staff and/or agency CIOs.

# Summary

- A single point of contact is imperative for a successful event. The design of specifications and discussions may need multiple people, but the agency must designate a contact who is familiar with procurement policies.
- Bid events take time, money, and considerable effort. The goal is to provide as much information up front, so the event does not need to be rebid or fails a challenge from a non-selected vendor.
- OPC is your **partner** when bidding. Our goal is to provide a vehicle for you to procure your needed goods or services. OPC must be involved early, during the planning process to avoid subsequent delays,
- Often an existing solution will be required to be explored in lieu of a bid event. While we understand every project is unique, contracted solutions are flexible and should be considered first. These vendors work diligently to be offered a contract and should not be bypassed. This method saves a lot of time as well.
- At any time, each procurement officer is handling multiple events from multiple agencies. We ask that agencies understand that the order bids are processed is determined by a variety of factors.
- Continued debate over documents, the process, and “how it has been done in the past,” will result in delays. OPC does not want to delay a bid or push back; however, we are mandated to make sure bids follow the proper procedure. Failure to provide adequate documentation up front always results in more work for the award.