



## Evaluator scoring methodology

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This document is intended to assist evaluation committee members in qualitative scoring of vendor responses to a formal solicitation. Applying these guidelines to your scoring process will ensure that scoring is as consistent and unbiased as possible, which is critical when deciding whether to make an award and to whom.

### **2. EVALUATION FACTORS AND RELATIVE WEIGHTS**

The evaluation factors of a solicitation inform prospective vendors of the things the State values in identifying which vendor may best meet the State's needs in completing a proposed project. [NRS 333.335](#) requires that the State publish the evaluation factors in the solicitation and that the relative weights of the evaluation factors be determined before the release of the solicitation. [NAC 333.162](#) requires each committee member to score each evaluation factor. The evaluation factors for a solicitation are both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative factors include mandatory minimum requirements that are a pass or fail evaluation and factors like cost that can be comparatively evaluated using a mathematical formula. Qualitative factors, also called technical factors, can be any evaluation factor defined by the State that is relevant to determining best value. Ideally qualitative factors are focused on the areas that differentiate responses.

### **3. INDIVIDUAL SCORING**

The State of Nevada expects each evaluator to score individually. Evaluators should not be communicating with other evaluators outside of group meetings that include the single point of contact that is facilitating the solicitation. Evaluators should not be communicating individually with outside consultants, other agency staff, or anyone else regarding their individual evaluation. In situations where the State has contracted with an outside consultant to assist with the evaluation process, their communications with the evaluation committee must flow through the single point of contact. Each evaluator will be provided the vendor responses and other materials necessary to give each response a score for each qualitative evaluation factor.

### **4. SCORING SCALE**

After reviewing all of the vendor responses and other materials, each evaluator will score each qualitative evaluation factor for each vendor response. For scoring, each evaluation factor has a maximum of 100 points available. You will give each response a score from 70 to 100 for each evaluation factor. Scoring is intended to differentiate responses, so for each evaluation factor, no response should receive the exact same score.

- A. Responses that do not meet the stated minimum requirements, do not address the entire project, do not appear realistic, or are otherwise unacceptable to an evaluator should have comments provided but should not be scored. The State had no duty to consider responses that do not meet our needs.
- B. Responses that meet the minimum standards but are otherwise unremarkable or ordinary or contain minor deficiencies should be scored in the 70-79 points range. This is the work of a C student.
- C. Responses that exceed minimum standards, but remain average in overall quality should be scored in the 80-89 points range. This is the work of a B student.
- D. Responses that exceed expectations, provide unique or innovative solutions, and demonstrate a strong understanding of the project should be scored in the 90-100 points range. This is the work of an A student.

## **5. WEIGHTED SCORING**

Each evaluation factor is assigned a relative weight prior to release of the solicitation. While each evaluation factor is scored by an evaluator on a scale from 70 to 100, once all scoring is complete those scores are converted to a score relative to the weight assigned to that evaluation factor. Additionally, to ensure that qualitative factors and quantitative factors are fairly applied when weighted scores are combined, the weighted scores for qualitative evaluation factors are apportioned based on the highest score received rather than the total available points. This is sometimes called grading on a curve. The weighted score is the evaluation weight multiplied by that vendor response score divided by the highest scoring response for that factor (Score = Weight \* Response score / Highest score)

For example: If an evaluation factor has a weight of 25, and the highest scoring response on that factor received 95 out of 100, that response receives all 25 available points and all other responses would be XX out of 95 instead of out of 100.

## **6. EVALUATION MEETING AND AVERAGE TECHNICAL SCORING**

Once all evaluators have scored individually, the evaluation committee can meet to discuss the responses and their opinions of the responses. This process may take a few hours or a few days, depending on the number and length of responses and the availability of the evaluation committee members. The State does not attempt to reach consensus on evaluation scoring, however, if the discussions lead an evaluator to change their opinion about a response they are allowed to update their individual scores during the meeting. Once individual scores are finalized, they are turned in to the facilitator. Individual qualitative technical scores from 70-100 are averaged together to give a vendor an average score for that evaluation factor. The weighted formula above is then applied to the average evaluation factors scores to determine each weighted score. Weighted scores are added together for technical subtotal.

## **7. ADDITIONAL SCORING ROUNDS**

After technical scoring is complete, the facilitator may review the rankings of the responses with the evaluation committee and find a natural break in the scores to draw a line and limit participation in future scoring rounds to responses in a competitive range. Often a natural break aligns with vendors who receive at least 90% of the available points. It benefits the State to only evaluate cost and conduct presentations with vendors who have a reasonable chance of award. This winnowing process may occur again after a second round and before a third round of scoring.

The State generally evaluates cost before presentations; however, the reverse may occur on a solicitation as well. Presentation scoring is qualitative scoring conducted in the same manner as technical scoring, just with additional or different evaluation factors and relative weights.

## **8. COST SCORING**

Cost is evaluated quantitatively using a mathematical formula. The highest proposed cost from any vendor and the lowest proposed cost from any vendor will be added together to generate a combined total. For each vendor response, that proposed cost will be subtracted from the previously combined total. This number is then divided by the highest proposed cost. The resulting number is multiplied by the cost factor weight to generate a weighted cost score. (Score = Weight \* (Highest cost + Lowest cost – Vendor cost) / Highest cost)

## **9. PREFERENCES**

On solicitations for projects that are supported exclusively by non-federal funding sources, the State allows for a five percent score bonus as a preference for responses from Nevada-based businesses. There is also an inverse preference applied to responses from vendors in States that have an in-state preference that hurts Nevada-based businesses.

## **10. COMBINED TOTAL SCORES**

Once all rounds of scoring are complete, the weighted scores for each evaluation factor are added together, along with any preferences, to create total scores for each vendor response. The response(s) receiving the highest score will be offered the opportunity to negotiate a final contract with the State.