

# *Pre-proposal Meetings Questions and Answers*

02/11/2020, Coeur d' Alene, ID

02/12/2020, Missoula, MT

02/13/2020, Billings, MT

Will the prices be the same as last year? While the government will do an estimate each year, we are not expecting significant market changes to justify price changes. However, factors such as economic conditions and price indexes are constantly being looked at to obtain fair and reasonable rates.

Will you negotiate if you feel a bid is too high? While we are not required to negotiate due to unreasonable rate offers, we generally allow for reconsideration of offers.

For the Forest Service: if you are placed in negotiations in VIPR, you will be notified by the contracting officer (CO) via email. The CO will detail the reason(s) you were placed in negotiations. Vendors are generally given 10 days to respond in VIPR. NRCG has posted prior year award information at:

[https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/dispatch/equipment\\_supplies/agree-contract/solicitations.htm](https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/dispatch/equipment_supplies/agree-contract/solicitations.htm)

Is all of the solicitation paperwork done online? For the Forest Service: your offer must be made electronically through the VIPR vendor application. There is a hard copy submittal requirement in addition to the electronic offer (see D.16 of the solicitation(s)). For all other Federal and State agencies, your offer is a hard copy submittal.

Can the prices be amended on non-expiring contracts? The Forest Service does allow for the reconsideration of rates during the "rollover modification" time frames during the second and third year of the awards (generally January). The BLM, NPS, MT DNRC list their policy on subsequent years of an award in their solicitation.

Is the Priority List posted? Yes, on the NRCG website at:

[https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/dispatch/equipment\\_supplies/agree-contract/solicitations.htm](https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/dispatch/equipment_supplies/agree-contract/solicitations.htm)

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> week of March, ROSS is shutting down and all the data in ROSS will be converting over to IROC (a new incident ordering system).**

**Contractors should contact their local dispatch centers in March to self-status and to make sure their information is accurate.** (Your information should be correct in SAM and VIPR as well.)

Will we be able to check on our status in IROC? No, not at this point. Hopefully in the near future. You will be notified when self-statusing is available.

If a Contractor were *never* to call in to their dispatch center, would they show as available? Not under ROSS. Every dispatch center has different protocol. Again, call your local dispatch center to touch base, especially during this period of transition from ROSS to IROC. Also remember to call your dispatch center when you return from assignment to verify your current status.

There are two dispatch lists: one for inside the geographic area and one for outside the geographic area (if the award specifications allow).

Are we automatically on both lists? Yes.

A geographic area master list is posted on the NRCG website and fulfills the FOIA requirement. This list is posted once annually following the completion of awards or rollover modifications. This list will not be updated the remainder of the year.

Zone or local dispatch lists accurately reflect current, real time award information. The zone dispatch priority lists are updated immediately following the completion of all modifications.

{Each dispatch center also manages Emergency Equipment Rental Agreements.}

## Fallers

For Faller solicitations, do the references need to have a 'company signature'? No, but they should include references with contact numbers. Fallers require the arduous pack test and annual fireline safety refresher, but not FFT2 qualifications.

## Mechanics - Resume and Certification is required

Are there pre-season inspections? Not for the service truck. The submittals for the mechanic are listed in D.16 and will be evaluated.

Can a mechanic be typed as heavy equipment as well as normal mechanic? Yes, as long as they qualify for both.

Can different mechanics be assigned to different dispatch centers? No. (However, you could have multiple trucks – i.e. one could be in Missoula, another in Hamilton.)

If you had a Dozer Agreement and a Heavy Equipment Task Force Agreement and the Dozer is on assignment, can I find another dozer to fill out the task force as long as it is the same "type"?  
Yes, as long as it meets specifications in the agreement. Be sure to let dispatch know the situation.  
(FYI: Heavy Equipment Task Force Agreements are unique to the Northern Rockies.)

Equipment FYI - There are new Typing Standard Requirements for Excavators and Dozers in 2020. These are posted under contracting updates on the *NRCG Contracting for Fire* webpage.

Can you have a heavy equipment task force agreement and individual equipment agreement?  
Yes.

What weight criteria will you be using? We use weights published by the manufacturers. RichieSpecs is also a pretty accurate source.

Can you lease a piece(s) of equipment and snap a picture of its serial number for use in the solicitation? Yes, vendors who use leased equipment for their normal operation would be able to make an offer using that same equipment.

For Type Class, are you valuing horse power more than weight? No, we are looking at both.

Are you requiring sweeps on dozers? No.

Do we send in photos with our solicitation, even if we've had an agreement in the past? Yes, all offers must be a complete package including submittals complying with D.16.

I was awarded a dozer agreement; later on I acquire a winch, can this be updated? Yes, this attribute can be corrected through modification.

For heavy equipment, what is the 'Best Value' you refer to? Does that mean lowest price? Price is very important but we also consider attributes. "Best Value" is a term used when attributes are considered in addition to price.

Where are attributes listed? Exhibit J. (For excavators, there are no attributes, price only.)

Awarding is based on: \*Price \*Specifications \*Performance Risk

Is a 6-way blade on an excavator an attribute? No.

For Heavy Equipment, do we list our employees in the solicitation? No, but dispatch will ask for the names of your operators when issuing a resource order. Employees must meet the Personnel Standards which are: completion of RT-130 Wildland Fire Safety Training and a Walk Test.

Are transports always kept on site of an incident? Retaining transports is an operational decision. Incident operation personnel need to consider mobility of the heavy equipment, space and access on the line, and finally cost.

Will the transporter used to haul equipment to an assignment be used on an incident? If the transport is retained at the incident, it generally will not be broken away for the heavy equipment it mobilized. If, however, the incident does have need of a separate transport, a transport may be used if it is under VIPR agreement as a standalone transport – which would indicate it has the proper cargo insurance to haul commercially.

**\*There is a new Hand Held Radio requirement for dozers and excavators in 2020**

Does the new radio requirement apply to Fallers too? No.

Is a mobile radio required in transport also? No, just heavy equipment.

Does a Task Force have to have hand held radios? Not yet, just equipment on stand-alone resource order will need their own radio.

What if I have a radio already? The new requirement is for a handheld radio. Use the list provided which shows approved models. The expectation is it will be "portable". If you already have a mobile mounted radio that is on the approved list, let Chris Loraas know.

**MEDICAL** This is the first 3 year contract solicitation. Medical is not a national contract; it is state specific.

Can another company "bid in" in year 2? No.

Will the solicitations for the Medical Agreement be due on 03/31/2020? We usually give people 40 days to submit their solicitation. We will try to give people as much time as possible keeping in mind the major changes taking place in dispatch this year. Closing date of medical will be 04/13/2020.

Last year, the supplementals were not due until May, will it be the same this year? Jeff Gardner, last year's CO, used a 2 tier approach to the solicitation. We are still deciding on the format of this year's solicitation, keeping in mind the changes happening in dispatch (moving from ROSS to IROC). However, we are anticipating the same flexibility considering the challenges dealing with college students obtaining training from 3<sup>rd</sup> party vendors.

Still requiring 3<sup>rd</sup> party verification for R-130 wildland fire safety training for medical personnel? No, the Government will do the verifications in 2020.

Can I replace resources? The limit to the number of personnel is set at the time of award. However, this can be replaced at a later date; work with the CO.

Does the RT-130 class have to be taken in the same Region as the solicitation? No, we accept any RT-130 class certificate from other Regional Training Providers.

## Miscellaneous

Be sure to inquire about any solicitation advantages you may be eligible for such as: HUB Zone, Women Owned Small Business, or Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business.

PTAC (Procurement Technical Assistance Center) with local offices in Montana and Idaho, are great sources of information about these programs and can assist in all aspects of contracting with the federal government.

When will National Park Service Weed Washing solicitation be out? We are hoping the solicitation will be out by early April. Rhonda Canell is the Contracting Officer and her contact number is: 1-406-888-7070. The solicitation will be posted in Fed Connect.

Tent solicitation is still a ways out.

{State of Montana will be soliciting for Rental Vehicles (no drivers) and Type 2 Crews. Closes 04/01/2020}