

GUIDELINE FOR EVALUATING  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  
RESPONSES (RFPs)

# RFP EVALUATION PROCESS

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## INTRODUCTION

This RFP Evaluation Process Handbook, prepared by APS Purchasing Department, provides staff with a helpful reference guide for the policy and procedures in reviewing and evaluating RFP's.

The use of evaluation criteria is established in the RFP to fairly and objectively evaluate the technical process by applying the greatest *weight* and placing the utmost importance on the Offerors' technical approach.

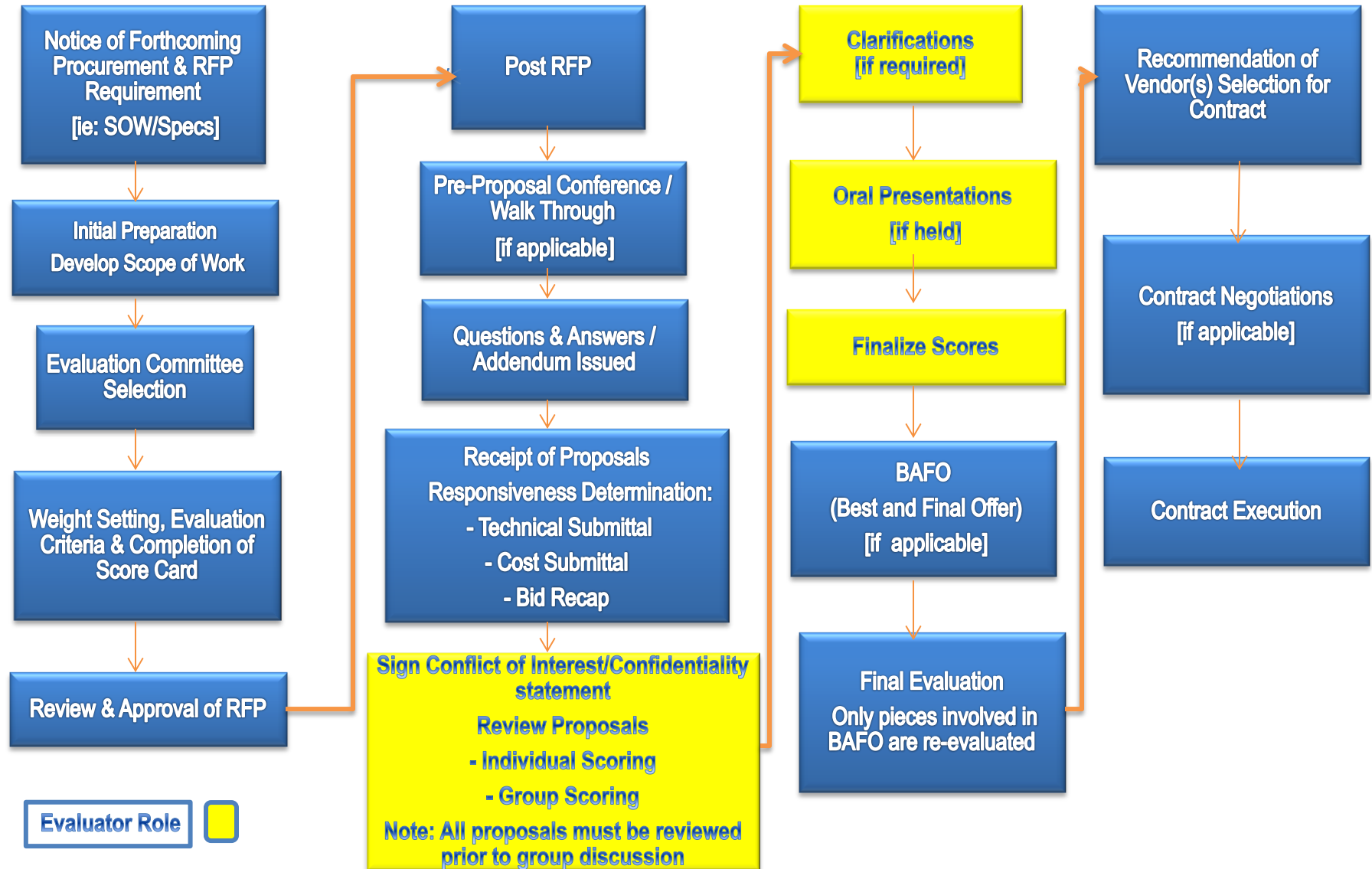
This process ensures that all Offerors' proposals are evaluated in a fair and systematic manner.

Please take the time to review and adhere to all procedures as detailed in this RFP Evaluation Process Handbook.

Please contact the Purchasing Department for any questions regarding this process.

Thank You for participating in the APS- RFP Evaluation Process.

## RFP Process Overview Chart



### Standards of Conduct

- Members of the Evaluation Committee will not be identified by the District
- Members of the Evaluation Committee are:
  - Required to sign a *Conflict of Interest/Confidentiality Statement* and adhere to the provisions specified
  - Prohibited from informing anyone that they are a voting member or divulging any of the other voting members' names
  - Prohibited from meeting with Offerors or other committee members to discuss the RFP, the proposals, or any related matters except in formal, scheduled committee meetings
  - Required to keep proposals, notes and evaluations forms secure and confidential
  - Prohibited from comparing one Offeror's proposal to another
  - Prohibited from disclosing scores to Offerors
  - Prohibited from disclosing proposals of non-selected Offerors

### Understanding the Evaluation Process

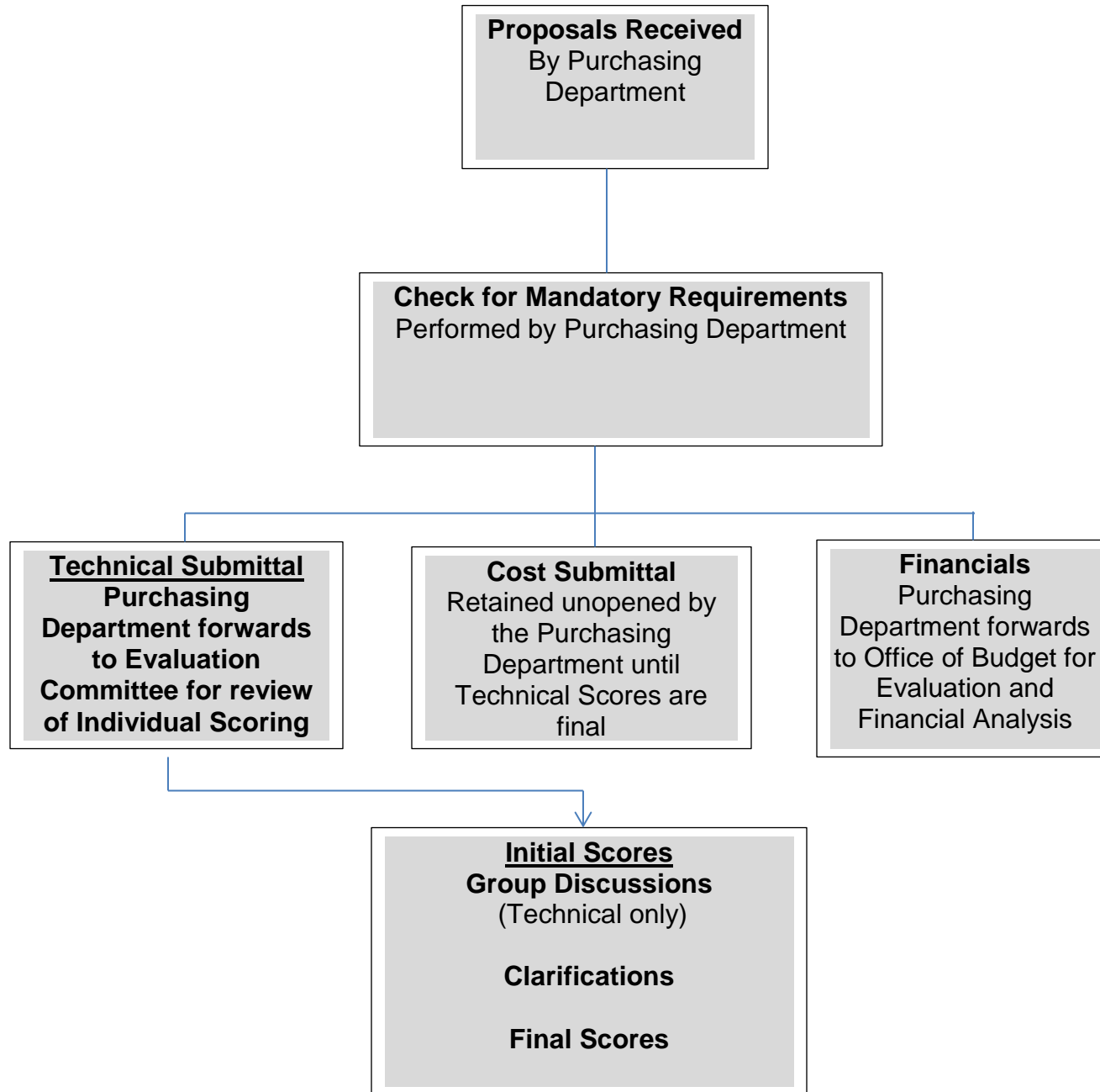
#### 80% Rule

- A 100 point scale is used to evaluate the two (2) main parts of the proposal response. Typically, the percentage allotment is:

Technical	85%	85 points
Cost	15%	15 points
Total Points:		100 points

- Technical Proposal Evaluation threshold must be at least 80% of the total available **Technical** points (80% of 85 points = 68 points).
  - Any Offeror that does not achieve **80% of the total available technical points**, is determined to be non-responsible and will not receive further consideration in the process.
- **Evaluators must keep the "80% Rule" in mind during the evaluation process.**

# Overview of Evaluation Process



## **Evaluation/Scoring Process**

**Two steps of the Evaluation Scoring Process are:**

- 1. Independent Scoring**
- 2. Group Discussion**

### **INDEPENDENT SCORING**

#### **Ground Rules**

- Understand the RFP's Scope of Work (SOW)
- Read every proposal in detail
- Be objective; free from bias (previous knowledge/experience), dishonesty and injustice
- Refrain from performing research of any nature, including Internet searches or obtaining information regarding an Offeror
- Evaluators may not discuss proposals or independent scores with anyone, except with committee members during formal scheduled meetings

#### **What to Consider in Scoring a Proposal**

- Completeness of the Offeror's response to the requirements or questions asked
- Consistency in scoring the Offeror's responses
- Offeror's experience and demonstrated understanding of the contract requirements outlined in the SOW
- Did the Offeror simply repeat the SOW? Reiterating the SOW should not be considered an indication that an Offeror understands the contract requirements
- Proposals should provide specifics in the Offeror's approach; not merely repeat or paraphrase the RFP
- After an objective assessment, identify the proposal's viability, feasibility and acceptability

### **Do's & Don'ts**

- **DO** give each proposal the same consideration up front
  - The name of the Offeror should not influence (positively or negatively) the evaluator's comments or ratings, except when evaluating past performance
- **DO** be fair and consistent in the proposal evaluation
- **DO** provide detailed comments and accurate references
  - If an item is a strength/weakness for one proposal, it must also be noted as a strength/weakness when it appears in other proposals
- **DO NOT** rate an idea as a positive in one proposal and the same idea as a negative in another
- **DO NOT** evaluate or compare proposals against one another
- **DO NOT** score based on criteria that is not included in the RFP
- **DO NOT** "take it easy" or "be overly harsh". Fairly evaluate all proposals against the requirements of the RFP

### **Documentation**

- It is extremely important that evaluators document and justify their scores
  - This information is used during debriefing conferences with unsuccessful Offerors

### **Always ask yourself:**

**If I was present at the debriefing conference, would I be able to defend this assessment?**

- Ensure that your comments are clear, concise and professionally stated
  - The evaluation documents may be used during litigation and should not contain informal or unrelated remarks
- Antagonistic or inflammatory comments can lead to a protest and must be avoided



- All 0% and 100% scores must be fully justified

### **EVALUATOR SCORING GUIDE**

The Evaluator Scoring Guide was developed as a reference tool for Evaluators to use when scoring proposals (see Exhibit A)

- **Benefits**
  - Provides a consistent approach to evaluating proposals
  - Easy to use and understand
- **Failure to follow the Scoring Guide may result in an undesirable Offeror**

#### **When finished scoring a proposal, always ask yourself:**

**Did this Offeror demonstrate sufficient competence to be awarded the contract?**

- If your scores do not reflect how you responded to this question, then you should revisit your scores

#### **How Do I Use It?**

- Read each proposal and evaluate based on the requirements in the RFP (See Exhibit B for example)
- Consider the examples of the employee performance question in Exhibit B. How would one score the responses below using the Evaluator Scoring Guide?
  - If the first response was **marginal**
    - Evaluator reviews the guide and notes that a marginal response should receive between 60%-69% of the points allotted for the question
    - Evaluator determines it deserves 65% of the points allotted for the question
- If the second response was **excellent**
  - Evaluator reviews the guide and notes that an excellent response should receive between 90%-100% of the points allotted for the question

- Evaluator determines it deserves 100% of the points allotted for the question

### **GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

- Group discussions are used to ensure evaluators have a common understanding of the proposal and to allow evaluators to change their scores based on the committee's understanding of the proposal and discussion

**Note:** Evaluators must provide written justification for any revised scores

#### **Items to be discussed:**

- **Strengths and Weaknesses**

- Beneficial for debriefing sessions
- Independent Scoring overview of each proposal

- **Variance in Scores**

- The group should discuss any criteria which has a significant variance in score. An evaluator may take the opportunity to revise his/her scores

#### **Example:**

- **3 out of 5** evaluators scored in a range between 90%-100%
- **2** evaluators scored in a range between 0%-59%

During group discussions, evaluators may determine a need for oral or written clarification on an Offeror's proposal

1. Clarifications may:

- Be different for each Offeror's proposal
- Address one (1) or more Offerors' technical proposals

2. Offerors shall only provide additional information to clarify their original response

- This is not an opportunity for the Offeror to change their response to the original question

3. Evaluators review each Offeror's clarification response

- Technical scores may be revised when related to a clarification question
  - ❖ Revising technical scores requires written justification

During group discussions, evaluators may determine whether a Best and Final Offer (BAFO) is needed

BAFOs may:

- Differ for each Offeror's proposal
- Include any combination of the proposal (Technical or Cost)
- Address one (1) or more Offerors' technical proposals

During group discussions, the Evaluation Committee will also discuss items to be included in negotiations on the technical portion of the proposal

At the end of the scoring process, evaluators must sign and date their individual scoring sheets, verifying that their scores are accurate and final

**Important Reminders**

- Contact the Purchasing Department if you have any questions regarding the RFP and/or the Offeror's proposal
- Proposals shall not be discussed outside of the Evaluation Committee meetings
- Independent scoring is just that...**independent scoring**
- Your role as an evaluator requires you to commit a significant amount of time and concentrated effort to the project

RFP Evaluation Process  
Evaluator Scoring Guide

<b>Percent Score</b>	<b>Quality of Response</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Strengths Relative to Requirements</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Confidence in Proposed Approach</b>
<b>90-100</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	The proposal addresses the requirements completely, exhibits outstanding knowledge, creativity, innovation or other factors to justify this rating.	Meets requirements - numerous strengths in key areas.	None	Very High
<b>80-89</b>	<b>Good</b>	The proposal addresses the requirements completely and addresses some elements of the requirements in an outstanding manner.	Meets requirements - some strengths in key areas.	Minor - not in key areas	High
<b>70-79</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	The proposal addresses most elements of the requirements.	Meets most requirements - minimal strengths provided in their response.	Moderate - does not outweigh strengths	Moderate
<b>60-69</b>	<b>Marginal</b>	The proposal meets some of the RFP requirements.	Meets some of the requirements with some clear strengths.	Exist in key areas - outweighs strengths	Low
<b>0-59</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	The proposal meets a few to none of the RFP requirements.	Meets a few to none of the requirements with few or no clear strengths.	Significant and numerous	No Confidence

**EXAMPLE: The RFP asked the Offeror to answer:**

**What is your process for dealing with an employee performance issue?**

<u><b>Offeror Response #1</b></u>	What is <b>Wrong</b> with Offeror Response #1?	<u><b>Offeror Response #2</b></u>	What is <b>Right</b> with Offeror Response #2?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· We are committed to perform responsibly in the review and administrative policies and procedures. Such policies and procedures would be to ensure that customer complaints are addressed in a timely and courteous manner, always with the ultimate consideration for customer satisfaction. Matters that would most often require close attention include:</li> <li>- Late arrivals for service</li> <li>- Failure to appear at scheduled service site</li> <li>- Unprofessional behavior</li> <li>- Unprofessional attire</li> <li>- Suspicion of substance abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Did you see a process for identifying, responding to and resolving performance issues?</li> <li>· Did the response discuss <b>how</b> they will address the performance issues?</li> <li>· Whose responsibility is it to address the performance issue?</li> <li>· What is the timeframe for addressing and resolving the performance issue?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· <b>Offeror provided mechanisms for early identification and response</b></li> <li>· <b>Offeror discussed its employment expectations and provided documentation of such</b></li> <li>· <b>Offeror discussed its 24-hour Corporate Compliance Program</b></li> <li>· <b>Offeror discussed the process it would use to deal with an employee issue:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigation</li> <li>- Verbal Warning</li> <li>- Written Warning</li> <li>- Termination</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The Offeror discussed its process and the various stages at which the process is initiated                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigation</li> <li>- Verbal Warning</li> <li>- Written Warning</li> <li>- Termination</li> </ul> </li> <li>· It also provided an "added bonus" of utilizing <b>"Mechanisms for Early Identification and Response"</b></li> </ul>



## Aurora Public Schools RFP

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Your willingness to participate as an RFP evaluator is an integral part of the procurement process. Purchasing truly appreciates your assistance and expertise.

Your designation as an RFP evaluator requires that you fully understand the policies regarding potential conflicts of interest and the confidential nature of the proposals and all that is contained therein.

**Confidentiality.** The competitive procurement process and the obligations imposed by Colorado state law require Purchasing to ensure that the competitive process operates in a fair and equitable manner. As an RFP evaluator, you have access to information not generally available to the public and are charged with special professional and ethical responsibilities. You may have access to information about proposers that is to be used only during the evaluation process, and for discussion only with fellow evaluators. You shall not discuss the evaluation, scoring, or status of any proposal or business entity at any time prior to, during, or after the procurement process. You shall not use such information obtained as an RFP evaluator for any personal benefit, pecuniary or otherwise, nor copy and/ or disseminate any portion of any proposal at any time prior to, during, or after the procurement process.

**Confidentiality of Evaluators.** During the evaluation process, Purchasing makes every effort to keep the identity of evaluators confidential and will maintain that confidentiality to the fullest extent provided by law. As an evaluator, you shall not discuss or reveal the names of evaluators to proposers or other individuals.

**Conflict of Interest and Ethical Considerations.** A conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest may occur if you are directly or indirectly involved with an organization that has submitted a proposal for evaluation. Prior to reviewing any proposals, you must inform the RFP Coordinator of any potential conflicts of interest. If you become aware of any potential conflict of interest as you review a proposal, you must immediately notify the RFP Coordinator. You may be disqualified as an RFP evaluator if you conduct yourself in a way that could create the appearance of bias or unfair advantage with or on behalf of any competitive proposer, potential proposer, agent, subcontractor, or other business entity, whether through direct association with contract representatives, indirect associations, through recreational activities or otherwise. Examples of potential biasing affiliations or relations are listed below:

1. Your solicitation, acceptance, or agreement to accept from anyone any benefit, pecuniary or otherwise, as consideration for your decision or recommendation as it pertains to your evaluation of any proposal.
2. Your affiliation with a bidding company or institution. For example, a conflict may exist when you:
  - (a) are employed by or are being considered for employment with the company or institution submitting any bid or hold a consulting, advisory, or other similar position with said company or institution;

- (b) hold any current membership on a committee, board, or similar position with the company or institution;
  - (c) hold ownership of the company or institution, securities, or other evidences of debt;
  - (d) are currently a student or employee in the department or school submitting a proposal, such as the case.
3. Your relationship with someone who has a personal interest in the proposal. This includes any affiliation or relationship by marriage or through family membership, any business or professional partnership, close personal friendship, or any other relationship that you think might tend to affect your objectivity or judgment or may give an appearance of impropriety to someone viewing it from outside the relationship.

To assure the integrity of the RFP process, all evaluators are required to complete the RFP Conflict of Interest/Confidentiality Statement.

# RFP EVALUATOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST/CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

I, the undersigned, a member of the Evaluation Committee for Request for Proposal No. \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ will perform the evaluation under the guidelines, procedures and requirements provided by the RFP Coordinator.

Further, whether I am an employee of Aurora Public Schools or a consultant assisting in the valuation of the proposal, I represent as follows:

1. I have a professional interest in seeing that the scoring and evaluation of the proposer responses to this RFP can be supported and defended, and that the recommendation of the Evaluation Committee will lead to the selection of the proposal most advantageous to APS, taking into consideration the price and evaluation factors set forth in the RFP.
2. Except as I have disclosed in detail, I neither have nor shall I during the evaluation acquire any financial interest, direct or indirect, in any proposer that would conflict in any manner or degree with my evaluation responsibilities. Members of my immediate family (spouse or children) and other family members who are in my household are subject to the same restriction and disclosure requirements. For purposes of this provision, publicly traded shares in stock of any offeror that are selected and administered by a third person, e.g. a mutual fund or retirement plan, are not subject to this restriction. Otherwise, the nature and extent of such financial interests must be disclosed by me to the RFP Coordinator for their evaluation of the significance of the financial interest on participation in this evaluation.
3. Notwithstanding my termination of employment or other later disassociation from this evaluation committee, I may not participate in the development of proposals in response to this solicitation.
4. I am aware that this evaluation will involve my knowledge of official information and possible proposer commercial information not publicly known. I agree not to disclose any information gained during the course of my service on this evaluation committee to any person, except to other APS employees who may in the normal course of business have a need for such information.

I have read this document and understand my obligations as explained herein. I further understand that I must advise the RFP Coordinator if a conflict currently exists or arises during my term of service as an RFP evaluator. I further understand that I must sign and deliver this statement to the RFP Coordinator prior to participating in the evaluation process.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

RFP #: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_