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**Timeline: RFP Process**

*This timeline is intended to help RI state agencies plan for and execute the Request for Proposals (RFP) procurement process, from identifying the need for a procurement to the issuance of a purchase order. For more procurement resources, access the* [*Procurement Campus*](https://ridop.ecms.ri.gov/agency-procurement-club-and-campus/agency-procurement-campus) *on the Division of Purchases website which provides procurement courses and resources that are arranged in curriculum by procurement roles. PROC 301 includes the materials that you may find helpful during the procurement process. Note that if you know the name of the documents you are looking for you can get them quickly at the* [*Agency Procurement Library*](https://ridop.ri.gov/node/606)*, where they are catalogued in alphabetic order. For further questions, contact the Division of Purchases at (401) 574-8100.*

**Start early!** Critical procurements require nuanced thinking up front about what your team really needs, what type of procurement best suits those needs, and what solutions exist in the marketplace. Doing this work up front means that the procurement process itself will move more smoothly. The Division of Purchases recommends that your team begin the RFP process *at least nine months prior to your desired contract signing date*. You may need to plan additional time for projects that are large or complex, require transition periods between vendors, or will involve additional parties such as consultants or advisors.

**Start at the end!** It will be most helpful to fill out this timeline backward, beginning with the date you desire work related to this contract to begin.

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| **Date**  **to be completed** |  | **Tasks to complete** |
|  |  | **Identify those individuals that will lead the development of the RFP.** |
|  |  | Build additional time into this timeline to secure outside resources such as consultants, other advisors, or external funding. |
|  |  | **Complete needs assessment and identify outstanding policy and procurement strategy questions.** |
|  |  | Identify important questions around the procurement strategy and related policy. Complete the Needs Assessment Worksheet, available at the [*Agency Procurement Library*](https://ridop.ri.gov/node/606)*. Suggested timeframe: 2-4 weeks to complete needs assessment, with longer time frames for more complex procurements.* |
|  |  | **Resolve policy questions and finalize procurement strategy** |
|  |  | *Suggested timeframe: At least 4 weeks to resolve policy questions and finalize strategy, with longer time frames for more complex procurements.* |
|  |  | **Draft an RFP and template contract** |
|  |  | Complete the RFP Development Worksheet1. Use the completed worksheet to draft the RFP in the Division of Purchases RFP template.1 Work with your legal counsel to draft a template of the contract to attach with the RFP.  *Suggested timeframe: 4 weeks to draft RFP and template contract.* |
|  |  | **Finalize RFP draft and contract draft** |
|  |  | Circulate RFP for feedback from (a) those entities required by your agency process (e.g., legal or finance), (b) entities that could provide useful comments (e.g., other agencies that will be affected by this procurement), and (c) someone unfamiliar with the procurement that can verify whether the RFP is easily understandable for new or unfamiliar vendors. Submit the final draft RFP and contract draft with the requisition.  *Suggested timeframe: 6 weeks to get feedback and finalize drafts.* |
|  |  | **RFP Released** |
|  |  | Requisition is processed and RFP is released once review is complete.  *Suggested timeframe: 2 weeks.* |
|  |  | **Pre-Bid Conference (optional)** |
|  |  | Hold pre-bid conference to answer vendor questions and discuss RFP.  *Suggested timeframe: 1-2 weeks after RFP is posted.* |
|  |  | **Deadline for written vendor questions** |
|  |  | Vendors prepare and submit questions to the Division of Purchases.  *Suggested timeframe: 1 week after pre-bid conference.* |
|  |  | **Responses to vendor questions posted** |
|  |  | Prepare responses to vendor questions and post these through the Division of Purchases.  *Suggested timeframe: 1 week after questions are due.* |
|  |  | **Proposal submission deadline** |
|  |  | Prospective vendors submit proposals to the Division of Purchases.  *Suggested timeframe: 2 weeks after responses are posted.* |
|  |  | **Recommend a vendor for tentative award** |
|  |  | Review and score proposals. Recommend a vendor for tentative award.  *Suggested timeframe: 4 weeks to review and make a recommendation* |
|  |  | **Tentative award issued through the Division of Purchases** |
|  |  | The tentatively awarded vendor is notified by the Division of Purchases after the technical and cost evaluation process is complete.  *Suggested timeframe: 1 week for Purchases to issue a tentative award.* |
|  |  | **Contract signed by all parties** |
|  |  | *Suggested timeframe: Allow 8 weeks for contract negotiations.* |
|  |  | **Purchase Agreement issued by the Division of Purchases** |
|  |  | The Purchase Agreement is a notice of award, not a notice that delivery of services or goods can begin.  *Suggested timeframe: 2-3 business days for Purchases to issue a Purchase Agreement after the contract is signed.* |
|  |  | **Release against Purchase Agreement issued by your agency** |
|  |  | Your agency must issue a release against the Purchase Agreement for a Purchase Order to be created.  *Suggested timeframe: 1 business day for your agency to issue a release.* |
|  |  | **Purchase Order issued by the Division of Purchases** |
|  |  | The issuance of a Purchase Order means that work associated with this contract can now begin.  *Suggested timeframe: 2-3 business days after the release against the Purchase Agreement is submitted by your agency. Target this date for at least 1 week before the vendor will be expected to do work related to the contract.* |
|  |  | **Work related to the contract begins.** |
|  |  | This is the date you expect the vendor to begin work related to this contract, including work related to transitioning between vendors, if applicable. |

**Start Here!**

Then build out your timeline by working backward