Do you know the difference between a RFQ, a RFP and an IFB?

When you are talking to someone in the Office of Procurement & Business Services (OPBS), you will often hear us mention one of these terms. The following will explain in more detail the difference between the three expressions:

**What is a Request for Quote (RFQ)?**

This is an informal invitation to a vendor asking them to submit a quote, usually for standardized goods or services, at a value between $2,500.01 and $50,000.00. Purchases that will not exceed $10,000.00 The initiating department may solicit written quotations from a minimum of three potential suppliers. The request may be made verbally or in writing. The OPBS strongly suggests that requests be written to ensure that all suppliers are given the same description of significant features and the same information about the intended purchase. Responses from suppliers may be mailed, hand delivered, faxed or emailed to the initiator. The quote(s) and/or evidence that an attempt was made to obtain additional quotes must be attached to your requisition before submitting it to OPBS. Purchases from $10,000.01 to $50,000.00 – the initiating department should submit a requisition for the anticipated amount of the purchase to the OPBS. Attachments to the requisition should include any details or description of the intended purchase (i.e. part number, part description, quantity, quality level, delivery requirements, pertinent specifications, potential supplier list, etc.). The OPBS will issue a written solicitation to qualified sources of supply as well as advertise it in the South Carolina Business Opportunities (SCBO) publication. Responses from suppliers may be mailed, hand delivered, faxed or emailed to the OPBS. The OPBS will notify the initiator and issue a purchase order to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

**What is an Invitation for Bid (IFB)?**

This is a formal invitation, issued by the OPBS, for the purchase of goods/services exceeding $50,000.00. The solicitation document includes specifications and all contractual terms and conditions applicable to the procurement and is designed to encourage competitive sealed bidding. The initiating department should submit a requisition for the anticipated amount of the purchase to the OPBS. Attachments to the requisition should include any details or description of the intended purchase (i.e. part number, part description, quantity, quality level, delivery requirements, pertinent specifications, potential supplier list, etc.). The OPBS will issue a written solicitation and advertise it in the South Carolina Business Opportunities (SCBO) publication. Responses from suppliers must arrive at the OPBS sealed and remain unopened until the specified date and time and are then opened publicly; faxed and emailed responses are not acceptable. All responsive proposals are ranked from most advantageous to least advantageous to the University by a panel of members with relevant knowledge of the service being offered versus our request. When evaluations are complete, the OPBS may begin price negotiations with the highest ranked Offeror.

**What is a Request for Proposal (RFP)?**

This type of solicitation is typically used for services and is designed for an award based upon criteria other than price alone. In fact, many times the lowest priced offer is not selected. The RFP allows us to establish our own evaluation criteria (i.e. evaluating Offerors based on how well their service meets our needs). The initiating department should submit a requisition for the anticipated amount of the purchase to the OPBS. Attachments to the requisition should include justification as why a RFP is appropriate for this procurement, background information of proposed project, any pertinent details, implementation date, potential supplier list, etc. The OPBS will issue a written solicitation and advertise it in the South Carolina Business Opportunities (SCBO) publication. Responses from suppliers must arrive at the OPBS sealed and remain unopened until the specified date and time and are then opened publicly; faxed and emailed responses are not acceptable. All responsive proposals are ranked from most advantageous to least advantageous to the University by a panel of members with relevant knowledge of the service being offered versus our request. When evaluations are complete, the OPBS may begin price negotiations with the highest ranked Offeror.

**OPBS Staff Profile**

A suggestion was made by Kay Alford, Director of Academic Testing, to include background information in our “OPBS Staff Profile”. Thanks, Kay!

Annette Roberts, 
Procurement Specialist

Call Annette for information pertaining to such areas as:
~Procurements less than $10,000
~Info on Business Services & Procurement issues
~Administrative Specialist backup

About Annette… Annette moved to Conway in 2008 from East Albany, Vermont. She has 2 children and 2 granddaughters. Besides dressing up for Halloween occasionally, she also volunteers at her church through Youth Group and Prison Ministries. Annette loves the warm climate in S.C. and is glad she flew down! Contact Annette at 349-2161 or aroberts@coastal.edu