# Sharpening Procurement Practices: Cost Estimates & RFPs

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Texas General Land Office • Commissioner Dawn Buckingham, M.D.

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## Setting the Stage

aka Why Procurement Matters

- Disasters create urgency that often puts pressure on procurement timelines
- Procurement issues are among HUD's most common monitoring findings
- Unclear RFPs lead to inconsistent vendor pricing, protest risk, scoring headaches
- Weak cost estimates = budget overruns, delays, re-procurements
- Strong procurement accelerates funding – and faster funding means faster community recovery



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# The Texas Two-Step

## aka How TX Procures Vendors

1st Step:

- **RFQ**
  - Pre-position your vendors and service needs in advance of the actual need
  - Choose services you need help with
  - Consider size and scope of potential future work
  - Example categories for CDBG-DR:
    - General Services and Implementation
    - Financial Services
    - Environmental
    - Engineering
    - Builders
    - Monitoring & Quality Assurance

**RESULT:** List of qualified vendors to "shop" from. All have base IDIQ $0 Contracts – NOT a promise for work!

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# The Texas Two-Step

## aka How TX Procures Vendors

2nd Step:

- **RFP**
  - Once need arises, detailed scope is written
  - Consider phased approach with distinct deliverables
  - Provide clear budget table with unit rates
  - Confirm if info from RFQ list is still valid:
    - Winning team still in place?
    - Financial capability?
    - Availability to do the work?

**RESULT:** List of best-value vendors to perform the work. Selected ones will receive a Work Order attached to their base contract with an NTE amount – NOT a promise to hit that!

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# Common Missteps

## aka Things That Will Trip Up Procurement

- Scopes copied from other grantees without tailoring
- Evaluation criteria misaligned with goals
- Overly broad RFPs that attract the wrong vendors
- Missing assumptions → messy pricing
- Not defining deliverables and deadlines clearly
- Not documenting everything …no really…

  EVERYTHING



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# Best Dance Moves

## aka Best Procurement Practices

- Start procurement process early
- Have a pre-bid meeting for Q&As and provide clarifications
- Don't eat lunch (with them)
- Justify the evaluation team
- Document the independent cost estimate before responses are submitted
- Write a clear RFP; you'll get better responses
- Consider choosing multiple vendors for same need
- Include liquidated damages language in contract
- Have a Procurement file – make sure it tells the story



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# Encore!

aka After the RFP

- Consider how the vendor(s) will be managed
- Keep the relationship strong
  - Set expectations early
  - Hold regular check-ins
  - Consider both sides
  - Address issues quickly and directly
  - Keep communication professional, consistent, and transparent
  - Celebrate wins together

**RESULT:** A strong partnership that hopefully lasts years …or at least until your next RFP!

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# Questions?

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