

## Section 1.3

### PRE-BID QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

#### 1.3.1 Purpose

In an effort to improve the quality and interpretation of the contract plans, the Department has developed a process to provide bidders the opportunity to ask questions or seek clarifications prior to submitting bids. As a result of this effort, the Department has established a website for bidders to submit questions and/or clarification requests to the Department. The Department will post responses to those questions and/or clarification requests to the same website.

This section describes the Department's process of listing advertised projects on a Pre-Bid Question and Answer website, receiving questions and/or clarification requests submitted by bidders and providing appropriate responses to those questions and/or clarification requests.

#### 1.3.2 Authority

Sections 20.23(3)(a) and 334.048(3), Florida Statutes

#### 1.3.3 Reference

Section 2, Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction, Section 2-4, Special Provision (SP0020400), Examination of Contract Documents and Site of Work, applicable to all projects

#### 1.3.4 General

Bidders may submit pre-bid questions and/or clarification requests to the Department by posting them to the Department's website at the following URL address: ***<https://fdotwp1.dot.state.fl.us/BidQuestionsAndAnswers/Proposal.aspx/SearchProposal>***. Bidders will review and be familiar with all questions and responses posted to this website prior to the bid opening and to make necessary adjustments to the bid proposal, accordingly.

The Department will utilize the same Pre-bid Question and Answer website to post responses for questions and/or clarification requests submitted by bidders.

The Pre-Bid Question and Answer website shall not be used by the Department to correct

errors in the Contract Documents identified by the Department or Contractors. Clarifications and/or corrections of errors identified by the Department shall be handled in accordance with current processes governing the issuance of ***Contract Addendums***.

### **1.3.5 Operation and Maintenance of the Pre-Bid Question and Answer Website**

#### **District Responsibilities**

The District Construction Office (DCO), with support from the Office of Information Systems (OIS), is responsible for administration of the Pre-bid Question and Answer website on all projects in their respective District.

### **1.3.6 Listing Advertised Projects on the Pre-bid Question and Answer Website**

#### **District Responsibilities**

DCO staff shall ensure that all advertised Central and District Let projects in their District are listed on the Pre-Bid Question and Answer website. DCO staff shall ensure that the Pre-Bid Question and Answer website is capable of receiving questions and/or clarification requests from bidders as of the date the project advertisement appears on the Central and/or District Contracts Administration Office website.

### **1.3.7 Responding to Questions and/or Clarification Requests Submitted to the Pre-bid Question and Answer website**

#### **District Responsibilities**

The Department should not make modifications to questions and/or clarification requests submitted to the Pre-bid Q&A website to the extent that such modifications would change the original intent of the question and/or clarification request as submitted by the bidder. In those situations where inappropriate content (i.e. derogatory comments, personal, proprietary or sensitive information, etc.) is included as part of a legitimate question and/or clarification request submitted to the site, the Department may modify the questions and/or clarification by removing the inappropriate content. Such modifications are not intended to be used to correct spelling, grammar, syntax, etc. errors and should be used in limited circumstances so as to avoid potentially changing the original intent of any question and/or clarification request submitted by the bidder. As pre-bid questions and/or clarification requests are received, DCO staff shall review each question and/or clarification request for the purpose of developing a response and posting the response

to the Pre-Bid Question and Answer website. DCO staff assigned with this responsibility shall be familiar with the project and Contract Administration procedures. DCO staff assigned with this responsibility shall coordinate with Department personnel and/or Consultants involved in project development (i.e. Design Project Manager, Construction Project Manager, Utility Project Manager, Engineer of Record, etc.), when necessary for the purpose of developing a response to the question and/or clarification request.

The District Construction Engineer (DCE), or designee, shall review each question and/or clarification request submitted as well as each proposed response to questions and/or clarification requests and shall approve each response prior to posting the response to the website. In the event a previously posted response is to be revised, the DCE, or designee, shall review and approve each revised response prior to posting the revised response to the website. The DCE may delegate such review and approval authority, in writing, to an individual within the DCO staff, but not to a Consultant or Resident Engineer. Such delegation shall be maintained on file in the DCO. An email from the DCE, or designee, which signifies review and approval of the question and proposed response, will suffice as documentation of review and approval.

For bid openings in the months of January through November, the DCE, or designee, shall respond to all pre-bid questions and/or clarification requests submitted to the Pre-Bid Question and Answer website prior to 5:00 PM (EST) on the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) calendar day prior to the bid opening.

For bid openings in the month of December, the DCE, or designee, shall respond to all pre-bid questions and/or clarification requests submitted to the Pre-Bid Question and Answer website prior to 5:00 PM (EST) on the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) calendar day prior to the bid opening.

Responses cannot be assured to the bidder for questions and/or clarification requests submitted to the website after these deadlines.

Regardless of the bid opening month, the DCE, or designee, shall ensure responses are posted to the website by 8:00 AM (EST) the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) calendar day prior to the bid opening day.

In the event a previously posted response is to be revised, the DCE, or designee, shall ensure the original response (including the date and time the original response was posted to the website) and the revised response (including the date and time the revised response was posted to the website) are posted to the website.

The DCE, or designee, shall ensure that no responses (original and/or revised) are posted to the website and no modifications are made to previously posted responses after 8:00 AM (EST) the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) calendar day prior to the bid opening day.

### **1.3.8 Providing all Questions, Clarification Requests and Responses to the Contracts Administration Office**

#### **District Responsibilities**

After the bid opening, DCO staff shall ensure that all questions and/or clarification requests submitted by bidders and all responses posted by the Department are submitted to the Contracts Administration Office. This submission shall occur no later than 5:00 PM (EST) on the business day immediately following the bid opening. For Central Let projects, this submission shall be made to Central Office Contracts Administration. For District Let projects, this submission shall be made to District Office Contracts Administration.

### **1.3.9 Compliance with this Section**

#### **District Responsibilities**

The District shall identify and maintain a list of the following in the DCO files:

- A. DCO staff responsible for administration of the Pre-Bid Question & Answer website on the District Level;
- B. DCO staff responsible for receiving pre-bid questions and/or clarification requests;
- C. DCO staff responsible for coordinating and developing proposed Department responses;
- D. DCO staff, if other than the DCE, responsible for reviewing and approving all proposed responses and all subsequent revisions to previously posted responses;

#### **Central Office Responsibilities**

The State Construction Office will review a sampling of bid questions, clarification requests and Department developed responses and report significant findings to the DCE as necessary.