



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 123:5-1-12 The reverse auction process.

Effective: [March 9, 2020](#)

(A) At a minimum, the invitation to bid by reverse auction ("ITB") will contain the following information:

- (1) Instructions and information to bidders concerning the submission of qualifications summaries, including the name and address of the agency, office, institution, board or commission requesting to purchase supplies and/or services;
- (2) Instructions governing communications, including but not limited to instructions for submitting questions and posting answers electronically;
- (3) A description of products, supplies and/or services to be purchased;
- (4) Complete and detailed specifications pertaining to the products, supplies and/or services to be purchased which may include, among others, the quantity to be purchased, submission of samples, descriptive literature, technical data, or other material deemed necessary to properly evaluate the bid response.
- (5) The factors and criteria to be used in evaluating qualification summaries and a description of the evaluation procedures to be followed for award of a contract;
- (6) The contract terms and conditions including any requirement for acceptable financial assurances;
- (7) The date, time and place for delivery of the qualifications summaries;
- (8) The date and time of the reverse auction.

(B) The department shall post all invitations to bid by reverse auction on the department's website or eProcurement solution. All invitations to bid by reverse auction shall state the date and time by



which bidder qualifications summaries must be received by the department, and the date and time the summaries will be opened.

(C) Amendments to the ITB shall reference the portions of the ITB it changes and shall be posted on the department's website or eProcurement solution. Amendments shall be posted within a reasonable time to allow prospective bidders to prepare bid responses. Amendments may extend the time and date that qualification summaries will be opened.

(D) The department shall consider the following upon receipt of a qualifications summary response:

(1) Upon receipt, each qualifications summary response shall be time and date stamped but not opened and shall be stored in a secure place until the time and date set for the opening of qualifications summaries.

(2) Qualifications summary responses shall be opened so as to avoid disclosure of contents to competing offerors. In order to ensure fair and impartial evaluation, qualifications summaries and related documents submitted in response to a reverse auction invitation to bid are not available for public inspection under section 149.43 of the Revised Code until after the award of the contract.

(3) All timely submitted qualifications summary responses shall be opened by the department at the time, date, and place designated in the ITB.

(4) To the extent the bidder designates trade secrets to be confidential, material so designated shall accompany the qualifications summary response and shall be readily separable from the qualifications summary response to facilitate public inspection of the non-confidential portion of the qualifications summary response. Any requests by a bidder for nondisclosure of trade secrets or assertions by the bidder that information in its qualifications summary is a trade secret shall be examined by the department to determine the validity of the request or assertion. Bidder requests or assertions must be in writing. If the department and bidder do not agree upon the information identified or asserted as a trade secret, the bidder shall be informed in writing by the department regarding what portions of the qualifications summary shall be disclosed. The bidder may withdraw its qualifications summary at any time prior to the completion of the auction event. The qualifications summary, shall be open to public inspection, excluding trade secrets agreed upon by



the department and bidder, upon award of a contract.

(5) The signature of the bidder on the qualifications summary shall serve as the signature for the entire bid response. The qualifications summary shall include the names and contact information of the persons who will serve as the authorized representatives of the bidder during the auction event.

(E) Any qualifications summary response or modification received after the time and date set for receipt of responses is late, unless permitted or requested by the department. When deemed as late, a qualifications summary, response, or modification shall be marked as "late", remain sealed and shall be retained in the bid file.

(F) Mistakes in invitations to bid by reverse auction.

(1) Correction or withdrawal of a bid response may be permitted due to an inadvertent mistake. If the mistake is attributable to an error in judgment, the bid response may not be corrected. Bid correction or withdrawal by reason of an inadvertent mistake is permissible but only if it does not affect the amount of the bid response or otherwise gives the bidder a competitive advantage.

(2) A bidder may correct mistakes discovered before the time and date set for the qualifications summary opening by withdrawing or correcting the qualifications summary.

(G) The department will use information from the qualifications summaries to register bidders for the auction event. The state reserves the right to exclude bidders who are deemed not responsive or not responsible.

(H) The department shall provide written notice to each bidder through electronic means regarding the bidder's inclusion or exclusion from the qualified bidders list.

(I) The department or its agent shall work with the qualified bidders to prepare for the auction event. Preparation may include, but is not limited to: configuration of the auction computer system, testing of the bidder interface, delivery of the event documentation, and training.

(J) Auction event



- (1) Only those bidders on the qualified bidders list will be allowed to participate in the auction event.
- (2) The department or its agent will provide the necessary administrative support to ensure that the integrity of the auction event is not compromised.
- (3) The department or its agent will keep an event record, which will include the prices offered by the bidders. The event record will become part of the contract documents and a public record at the conclusion of the event.
- (4) The bidder interface will be configured such that a bidder will not know the identity of competing bidders until the event is complete.
- (5) Bidders may submit multiple prices during the event. The lowest price offered will become the price portion of the bid response.
- (6) Bids must be submitted by, or under the direction of, an authorized representative of the bidder as designated in the qualifications summary.
- (7) The auction event will have a scheduled stop time. The event may be extended if bids are received within a predetermined amount of time prior to the scheduled stop time. Specific procedures on time extension shall be contained in the event qualification summary. The event will conclude at either the scheduled stop time or the time at which all extensions are completed, whichever is later.
- (8) When the department knows or has reason to conclude that a bid is unreasonably lower than others that have been submitted, the department will ask the bidder to confirm the bid response.
- (K) After the conclusion of the auction event, the state will award to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.
- (L) The department reserves the right to reject any and all qualifications summaries in whole or in part, cancel, and/or reissue the ITB when:



- (1) Products, supplies, or services are not in compliance with the requirements, specifications, and terms and conditions set forth in the ITB; or
 - (2) Pricing offered is determined to be excessive in comparison with existing market conditions, or exceeds the available funds of the procuring entity; or
 - (3) It is determined that awarding of any or all items will not be in the best interest of the state.
- (M) Notice of award shall be provided to the successful bidder. An apparent low bidder found not to be responsive and responsible shall be notified of that finding and the reasons for it pursuant to section 9.312 of the Revised Code. Notice of award shall be posted on the department's website or eProcurement solution.