

# How Agencies Evaluate Bids

Understanding how agencies score and select proposals is critical to bidding strategically. While evaluation criteria vary by solicitation, most government agencies follow a structured, point-based evaluation process designed to assess compliance, capability, risk, and value – not just price.

This guide explains how proposals are evaluated so businesses can align submissions with evaluator priorities, reducing risk and increasing competitiveness.

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## Use This When

Use this guide to understand evaluation criteria before deciding whether to bid and how to allocate proposal effort.

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## Core Evaluation Factors Agencies Use:

### 1. Technical Approach & Understanding

Agencies assess whether your proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of the project requirements and objectives.

Evaluators look for four things: (1) clear responses to the Scope of Work (SOW), (2) a logical project methodology and execution plan, (3) alignment with agency goals and priorities, and (4) feasibility of proposed approach.

**Common pitfall:** Generic language that does not directly address the solicitation's requirements.

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### 2. Past Performance & Experience

Agencies evaluate whether your business has successfully performed similar work.

Their considerations include 1) relevance of prior projects (scope, size, complexity), 2) performance history (timeliness, quality, compliance), 3) client references or CPARS ratings (if applicable), and 4) demonstrated outcomes and results.

Subcontractor or team member experience may be considered if properly documented.

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### **3. Management & Staffing Plan**

This factor measures your ability to manage the project effectively.

Agencies review 1) project management structure, 2) roles and responsibilities, 3) key personnel qualifications, 4) staffing levels and availability, and 5) risk mitigation and contingency planning.

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### **4. Compliance & Responsiveness**

Before scoring, agencies often conduct a compliance review.

Failure to comply can result in elimination regardless of quality.

Compliance includes five factors: (1) required forms and certifications, (2) formatting and page limits, (3) submission instructions, (4) mandatory attachments, and (5) required narratives and representations.

Many bids are disqualified at this stage.

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### **5. Price & Cost Reasonableness**

Price is evaluated on the basis of reasonableness, realism (especially for cost-reimbursement contracts), completeness, and alignment with the technical approach.

Lowest price does not always win, especially in best-value procurements.

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### **6. Risk Assessment**

Agencies assess potential risks related to schedule, staffing, financial stability, technical complexity, and past performance gaps.

Proposals that identify and mitigate risks score higher than those that ignore them.

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#### **Common Evaluation Methods:**

##### **Lowest Price Technically Acceptable (LPTA)**

- Technical requirements must be met
- Lowest compliant price wins
- Common for commoditized goods/services

##### **Best Value Tradeoff**

- Technical merit and price are both weighted
- Higher price may be justified by stronger capability
- Most common for professional services and construction

## **Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS)**

- Used for architecture, engineering, and design services
  - Focuses on qualifications first, price negotiated later
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## **Why This Matters**

Understanding evaluation criteria allows businesses to decide whether to bid, allocate effort strategically, avoid over- or underpricing, tailor narratives to evaluator priorities, and reduce disqualification risk.

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## **How Quin-Z Supports This Process**

We help clients:

- Break down evaluation criteria
- Map proposal sections to scoring factors
- Identify high-impact sections
- Conduct compliance and readiness reviews
- Strengthen past performance narratives
- Prepare pricing strategies aligned with evaluation models