

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR MAXIMIZING THE VALUE OF APFS



WHAT'S APFS?

[The Acquisition Planning Forecast System \(APFS\)](#) is the Department's portal for vendors to view anticipated contract actions above the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (SAT), currently at \$250,000. APFS provides industry with a preview of the procurements DHS is planning and helps industry identify points of contact for early collaboration on the requirement.

Why does APFS really matter to you?

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) APFS assists vendors in doing business with DHS by helping firms identify resources and information about upcoming requirements. The Department's goal is to improve communication with industry, especially the small business community, so that they may be better prepared to not only respond to our solicitations, but also prepared to propose optimal solutions to support our needs. Annual forecasts of our requirements in APFS are required by [Public Law](#) and [HSAM Subchapter 3007.172](#) for all acquisitions over the SAT except as identified in [HSAM Appendix H](#).

An APFS record must be created when a requirement is known, even if the requirement has not been funded. As a Requirements Owner, check the APFS acquisition alert for updates and deadlines for entering future fiscal year requirements.

APFS is a planning tool and not indicative of final acquisition strategy. However, here are the Top 6 fields in APFS that really matter to industry and how you can make it work to your advantage!

HOW VENDORS USE THIS INFORMATION

HOW IT WORKS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE!

Business Size

- Specifying business size enables vendors to determine if they can compete on their own or if they need to form teams to fulfill work requirements.
- Entering "TBD" indicates to industry they have an opportunity to influence the Government's decision on what business size can most successfully satisfy requirements.

- Indicating the business size attracts companies that are more likely to be able to provide the support you need.
- Vendor inquiries can help inform your market research and may introduce you to additional capabilities that can support your requirements.

Contract Vehicle

- Vendors check this field to see if the requirement is new, a re-compete, or if a certain contract vehicle is being contemplated for use.

- Specifying the contemplated contract vehicle (and track or functional category, if applicable) enables vendors to assess whether they can compete, reducing unnecessary inquiries from unqualified vendors while attracting qualified vendors and giving them time to team with specialized subcontractors, if necessary.

Dollar Range

- The dollar range provides vendors with insights into the estimated effort required. Dollar range provides companies with visibility into their ability to perform and resource at scale.

- Vendors have limited resources and may want to partner with another vendor or pass on the opportunity based on the requirement's magnitude. You benefit from having conversations with solution providers on track to perform and deliver your work successfully.

Work Description

- Vendors review requirements to understand if they have the experience, process, tools, and capability to perform the work; be specific when describing what is needed.
- Clearly and accurately describing your requirements can make a significant difference in the amount and types of inquiries you receive; vendors get advance notice of your requirements and can begin developing solutions to meet your needs.

- You will benefit from:
 - Attracting an appropriate vendor pool capable of supporting your requirements.
 - Increased competition among qualified companies which usually yields cost savings and improved solutions.
 - Collecting vendor feedback to help you better define your requirements.



Release Date

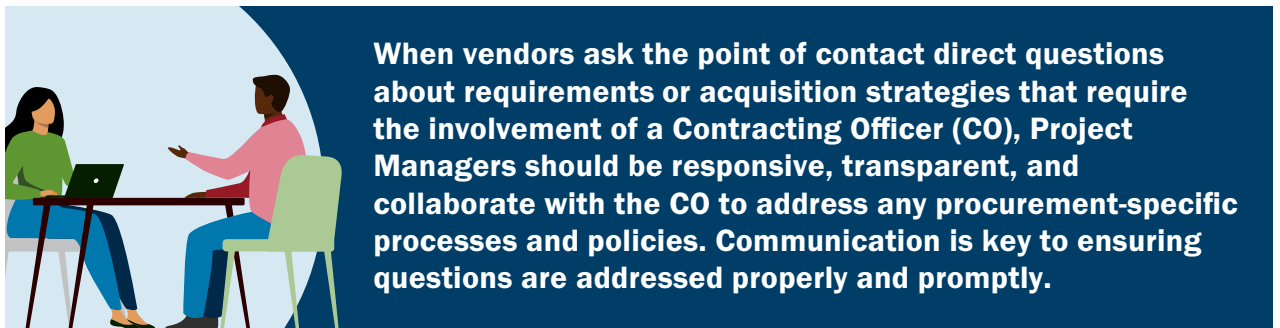
- Vendors appreciate a reasonable amount of time to respond to a solicitation and time to solidify the resources they may need.
- The solicitation's estimated release and due dates help them determine if it's a procurement they want to track and respond to when released.

- Vendors will be prepared and confident in providing you with well-thought-out quality and timely solutions.
- Not posting deadlines suggests a lack of openness to competition; being open about release dates gets you more qualified bidders.

Point of Contact

- Vendors like having someone to speak with about forecasted requirements, program challenges, and other relevant topics, so it's important to let them know they have someone they can reach.
- Vendors often reach out directly after reading your requirements description to suggest new and different solutions, capabilities, skills, and innovations in the works, along with potential changes to regulations that may impact your requirements.

- You will benefit from:
 - Not putting a solution in place that will be obsolete soon after your agreement, contract, or order is awarded.
 - Reducing the number of questions and clarifications needed during the procurement process.
 - Gaining insights from potential vendors that help you strengthen your requirements and evaluation criteria.



KEY TAKEAWAY:

Offering an early forecast of your upcoming requirements enables vendors to prepare more effectively to respond to your solicitation and also to suggest potential solutions the government hasn't considered.