



A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE VENDOR MEETINGS

DHS Program Managers and Requirements Owners should feel empowered, prepared, and energized to engage with industry early and often!

KEEP IN MIND THESE KEY TIPS

- ✓ Be open-minded and leverage industry to validate that your requirements will get you what is needed to confidently support your work.
- ✓ Even if your incumbent is performing well, you have a responsibility to engage broadly with industry to understand what is going on in the marketplace.
- ✓ Never underestimate the value of building and maintaining relationships with industry, especially those on key contracts. Industry can provide insight on ways to best resolve potential challenges and be prepared for the unforeseen.
- ✓ Enter into vendor meetings prepared with questions that will support your needs. Share your expectations for the meeting including what you hope to accomplish, who should participate, and what information you want or don't want from the company. Be prepared to explain your program's mission and needs.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE VENDOR ENGAGEMENT

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS	WHAT INSIGHT THE QUESTION PROVIDES
<p>Where do you see the marketplace heading?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there any current or future innovations, capabilities, or solutions in the marketplace that we should be considering – whether it's tied to your company or in general?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insights and information that exists about new products or services for existing or new requirements.
<p>Who is your competition, and what sets you apart from them?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insights on how offerings (or services) may differ amongst vendors who can support your requirements.• Additional capabilities the vendor may have that could inform requirements development.
<p>Are you currently supporting DHS?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vendor familiarity with the DHS structure and landscape.• Identification of other DHS programs that can share information about the quality of work performed by potential vendors, or if an existing contract vehicle is already in place that you could leverage to support your requirements.
<p>What contract vehicles are you on (DHS Strategic Sourcing Contract Vehicles, Best-in-Class contract vehicles, GSA Schedule) and what is your company's business size (if small business, what is your socio-economic status?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information on existing contracts where a vendor can be accessed, and helps to determine if the requirement could potentially be competed as a set-aside.
<p>Where do you see the government impeding your ability to innovate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has the government issued past requirements that have created inefficiencies, or missed key pieces of capability?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Things that should be avoided during the process.• Alternative options that should be included when developing requirements.





SUGGESTED QUESTIONS | **WHAT INSIGHT THE QUESTION PROVIDES**

Have you worked with other agencies that have a similar requirement or mission problem to ours?

- If so, how did you support them, or where have you offered this capability in a different context?

- Potential connections with Federal points of contact who can provide government-to-government insights on how they've solved a similar need and any pitfalls to avoid as you develop your requirements.
- Insights into different approaches and solutions that have been tried and tested to solve similar needs.

Are you a newcomer to the Federal government and would you like to share your relevant experience that is outside of the Federal government space? What expertise and innovation do you bring that would benefit the Federal government?

- Insights into different approaches and innovative solutions; allowing new innovative businesses to enter the federal contracting space.
- Insight into potential evaluation criteria for future acquisitions.

How do you ensure your products and services are delivered on time and of the highest quality?

- Do you have any insights on challenges associated with the supply chain that the government should be aware of, or that could impact your requirements?

- Potential supply chain issues that could delay or hinder delivery of a product or service.
- How these issues should be addressed in your requirements.

Do you believe our requirement is more complex than it needs to be?

- What could be driving up the cost?
- What are the trade-offs or alternative approaches that we should weigh and consider?
- What options do we have to drive down costs?

- Reveal any uncertainties or affirm any assumptions about your requirements.



DHS RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT YOU:

DHS and Component Industry Liaisons – [Acquisition Innovations in Motion | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#)

DHS Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization – [Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Staff | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#)

Leverage your Small Business Specialist – [Small Business Specialists | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#)

Procurement Innovation Lab – [Procurement Innovation Lab | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#)

Category Management – [Category Management and Strategic Sourcing Overview | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#)



KEY REFERENCE RESOURCES

[“A Practical Guide for Program Managers/Requirements Owners When Engaging with Industry”](#)

[“Myth-Busting” Memorandum from OMB](#) – The memo contains misconceptions and ways to improve communication with industry.

[“How to do Business with DHS”](#) – Direct vendors to this link if they're interested in learning more about how to do business with DHS.

