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Decision

Matter of: Salvadorini Consulting, LLC

File: B-423897

Date: January 22, 2026

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H. Todd Whay, Esq., and Ian A. Cronogue, Esq., Baker, Cronogue, Tolle & Werfel, LLP, for IS Healthcare, LLC, the intervenor.

Jared M. Levin, Esq., Department of Veterans Affairs, for the agency.

Paula A. Williams, Esq., and Evan D. Wesser, Esq., Office of the General Counsel, GAO, participated in the preparation of the decision.

DIGEST

Protest challenging the agency's determination that the protester's quotation was nonresponsive is denied where the agency found that the protester omitted required information and otherwise failed to follow the solicitation's instructions.

DECISION

Salvadorini Consulting, LLC (Salvadorini) D/B/A Government Imaging Services, a service-disabled veteran-owned small business (SDVOSB) located in Franklin, Tennessee, protests the exclusion of its quotation from the competition and subsequent award of a contract to IS Healthcare, LLC, an SDVOSB located in Fargo, North Dakota, under request for quotations (RFQ) No. 36C25725Q0664, issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to lease a mobile magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) unit and to provide MRI technologists' services.

Salvadorini's quotation was excluded from the competition based on the agency's determination that the protester failed to submit contractor personnel documentation with its quotation, as required by the solicitation. The protester contends that it submitted its quotation based on the plain language of the solicitation's requirements. Alternatively, the protester asserts that the exclusion of its quotation amounted to a nonresponsibility determination that should have been referred to the Small Business Administration (SBA) under the SBA's certificate of competency (COC) procedures.

We deny the protest.¹

BACKGROUND

On June 18, 2025, the VA issued the RFQ as an SDVOSB set-aside, pursuant to the commercial item and simplified acquisition procedures of Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) parts 12 and 13. Agency Report (AR), Exh. 2, RFQ at 2;² Contracting Officer's Statement (COS) at 1. The RFQ sought quotations for a contractor to provide all necessary personnel, supervision, equipment, transportation, and materials for a mobile MRI unit and qualified technologists to perform the solicited services at the VA's Central Texas Veterans Health Care System (CTVHCS) located in Temple, Texas. AR, Exh. 2, Performance Work Statement (PWS) at 11. The PWS delineated the specification requirements for the MRI unit and the specific qualification requirements for the technologists. *Id.* at 11-27.

The RFQ contemplated award of a single fixed-price delivery order with a base year and four 1-year options to the vendor whose quotation was the most advantageous to the government, considering the factors of technical capabilities, past performance, and price. RFQ at 122. Of relevance here, under the technical capabilities factor, quotations would be evaluated on an acceptable/unacceptable basis.³ *Id.* at 123.

The specific personnel qualification requirements are the sole issue here. For the MRI technologist, the PWS provided as follows:

- The Contractor's Technologist shall possess a current Radiologic Technologist (RT) license. A copy of all applicable operators' license(s) shall be provided with the proposal along with a copy of the updated license immediately upon renewal. The Contractor shall ensure that a copy of the technologist's current license is always provided to the [contracting officer's representative]. . . .

¹ The protester did not meaningfully challenge the selection of IS Healthcare's quotation and we therefore do not address the evaluation of the awardee's quotation or the agency's resulting selection decision.

² The RFQ was amended once. References to the RFQ are to the Adobe PDF page numbers of the conformed solicitation provided by the agency at exhibit 2 of the agency report.

³ The solicitation provided that a quotation would be rated unacceptable if it "fails to meet any of the Government's requirements after the final evaluation [and] shall be ineligible for award regardless of whether it can be corrected without a major rewrite or revision of the proposal (high risk)." RFQ at 126.

b. The Contractor shall be responsible for ensuring that Contractor employees providing work on this contract are fully trained and completely competent to perform the required work. Evidence of the Contractor's Technologist's competency review shall be provided with the proposal. Competency checklists must contain evidence of supervisory review at least annually and must contain the written signature of the supervisory official performing the review. A current copy of the employee's competency checklist shall be maintained in CTVHCS' 6-part folder at all times.

PWS at 15-16.⁴

The RFQ included detailed instructions concerning the preparation and submission of quotations. *See generally*, RFQ at 117-122. The solicitation advised that to demonstrate compliance with the RFQ's qualification requirements, vendors were to include the following documentation with their quotations: (1) the technologist's current RT license; (2) a copy of all applicable operators' license(s); (3) a copy of the updated license immediately upon renewal; and (4) evidence of the technologist's competency review. *Id.* at 120.

The RFQ further identified additional documents that should be submitted with the vendor's quotation for each employee working under the contract:

(1) credentials and qualifications for the job[.]

(2) a current competency assessment checklist (an assessment of knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors required to perform a job correctly and skillfully; includes age-specific knowledge and skills required to provide care for certain patient populations, as appropriate.)[.]

(3) a listing of relevant continuing education for the last two years.

(4) health examination records of all individuals performing work under this contract. . . .

Id. at 121.

The RFQ stated that under the technical capabilities factor, the agency would evaluate the vendor's documentation to substantiate the extent to which the vendor can meet or

⁴ We note that, notwithstanding that the solicitation at issue was an RFQ and sought quotations, various provisions of the solicitation, including the above-cited provisions, referred to vendors' quotations as "proposals." For the purposes of this decision, while we will refer to vendors' submissions as "quotations," we view references in quotes from the RFQ to "proposals" to similarly refer to vendors' quotations.

exceed the technical specifications set forth in paragraph 3 of the PWS (contractor responsibilities) and the personnel requirements as described in paragraph 6 of the PWS (contractor personnel qualifications/policies). *Id.* at 122-123. For example, under the personnel requirements set forth in paragraph 6 of the PWS, the agency would review the submitted documentation to verify that the MRI technologist has a current RT license and would review and verify evidence of the technologist's competency assessments. *Id.* at 125. The agency also would review the vendor's submitted documentation for each employee working under the contract to verify their credentials, qualifications, competency assessment, continuing education and health examination records. *Id.*; see also, PWS ¶ 6(c) at 16.

The VA received multiple quotations, including from Salvadorini, by the solicitation's closing date. COS at 1. In its quotation, Salvadorini addressed the requirement to submit documentation related to the qualification requirements for technologists by stating:

We shall provide one (1) technologist and one (1) alternate technologist. Technologists shall be credentialed and qualified for the job. We shall at time of award provide competency checklist, health records and vaccine records for our employees. We observe the conformance standards and regulatory adherence, as well provide our own quality assurance manual and MRI safety and procedures manual.^[5]

AR, Exh. 3, Protester's Quotation at 3.

The contracting officer concluded that Salvadorini's quotation was nonresponsive under the technical capabilities' evaluation factor, finding that:

[Salvadorini] did not submit complete documentation for each proposed technician, as required by the solicitation and PWS: B.3. Paragraph 6, active license details, and education history. All required technician documentation must be included in the offer to ensure technical acceptability.

Other: [Salvadorini] did not provide[:] Qualifications, certifications, record of credentials and competencies for each proposed technician, Applicable License(s), including number and expiration date for each proposed technician, Documentation of education and training for each proposed technician and Health Records of each technician in accordance with the solicitation.

AR, Exh. 4, Award Decision Document at 7.

⁵ These statements were located in the transmittal email of Salvadorini's quotation. AR, Exh. 3, Protester's Quotation at 3.

The contracting officer determined that Salvadorini's quotation was nonresponsive and therefore ineligible for further consideration for failing to submit documentation related to the RFQ's personnel requirements at the time quotations were due. *Id.*

On August 29, the contracting officer notified the protester that its quotation was evaluated as nonresponsive, stating that:

Vendor did not submit complete documentation for each proposed technician, as stated on the solicitation and PWS: B.3.Paragraph 6, active license details, and education history. All required technician documentation must be included in the offer to ensure technical acceptability.

Other: Vendor did not provide[:] Qualifications, certifications, record of credentials and competencies for each proposed technician, Applicable License(s), including number and expiration date for each proposed technician, Documentation of education and training for each proposed technician and Health Records of each technician in accordance with solicitation's instructions to offerors.

As a result of the determination, your offer was not further evaluated for past performance and price.

Protest, Exh. A, Unsuccessful Vendor Notification at 16. This protest followed.

DISCUSSION

Salvadorini contends that the agency unreasonably determined that its quotation was nonresponsive for failing to submit documentation pertaining to the MRI technologist that would perform the solicited MRI services. The protester raises two primary arguments: (1) Salvadorini's declination to provide the required documentation with its quotation was consistent with the plain language of the solicitation's requirements because it was not proposing a current employee, but the VA did not evaluate its quotation in accordance with the terms of the solicitation; and (2) the omitted information at issue here was related to the protester's capability to perform the contract *i.e.*, its responsibility; therefore, the VA was required to refer its rejection of Salvadorini's quotation to the SBA for consideration of a COC determination. *See generally*, Protest at 6-10; Comments at 3-10.

The agency responds that the evaluation of the protester's quotation was reasonable and in accordance with the terms of the solicitation. Furthermore, because the quotation was rejected for failing to submit required supporting documentation consistent with the solicitation's instructions and not based on an adverse responsibility determination or a finding of unacceptability based on responsibility-like criteria, no

referral to SBA was necessary. For the reasons that follow, we find no basis on which to sustain the protest.

We first address the protester's claim that the agency's evaluation of its quotation deviated from the terms of the solicitation. According to Salvadorini, the RFQ required vendors to submit specific documentation with its quotation to show that "each employee" working under the contract was fully trained and competent to perform the solicited services. Protest at 7 (*citing* RFQ at 72). The protester therefore "submitted its quote and corresponding information in line with a reasonable, plain language reading of the [s]olicitation's requirements." Protest at 1; see *also* Comments at 4. In this context, the protester maintains that: "[f]ollowing the plain language of the [s]olicitation, [its] quote noted the required technician, who was not an employee of Salvadorini at the time of quote submission, would be provided, alongside the required qualifications and health records, at the time of award (*i.e.*, when the technician was solidified)." Comments at 4 (*citing* AR, Exh. 3, Protester's Quotation at 3).

The protester, therefore, argues the agency's evaluation misapplied the plain language of the solicitation. Specifically, Salvadorini insists that supporting documentation was only required for current employees of the vendor as evidenced by the contracting officer's evaluative assessments that the protester: "did not submit complete documentation for each *proposed technician*, as stated on the solicitation and PWS," and "did not provide; Qualifications, certifications, record of credentials and competencies for each *proposed technician*." Protest at 6 (*citing* Protest exh. A, Unsuccessful Offeror Notice at 16); Comments at 4-7.

The agency responds that its evaluation of the protester's quotation as nonresponsive was reasonable and consistent with the terms of the solicitation. In this regard, the RFQ in multiple places required supporting personnel qualification information to be provided with the vendor's quotation. See, *e.g.*, RFQ at 15, 72 ("The Contractor's Technologist shall possess a current [RT] license. A copy of all applicable operators' license(s) shall be provided with the proposal . . ." and "[e]vidence of the [Contractor's] Technologist's competency review shall be provided with the proposal."). The agency submits that regardless of the terminology utilized, whether "employee" or "contractor's technologist," the agency reasonably evaluated whether the vendor submitted with its quotation the requisite documentation for the MRI technologist that would perform services under the contract if the vendor was awarded the contract. Memorandum of Law at 5.

Where a dispute exists as to a solicitation's requirements, we begin by examining the plain language of the solicitation. *Point Blank Enters., Inc.*, B-411839, B-411839.2, Nov. 4, 2015, 2015 CPD ¶ 345 at 4. We resolve questions of solicitation interpretation by reading the solicitation as a whole and in a manner that gives effect to all provisions; to be reasonable, and therefore valid, an interpretation must be consistent with such a reading. *Desbuild Inc.*, B-413613.2, Jan. 13, 2017, 2017 CPD ¶ 23 at 5. If the solicitation language is unambiguous, our inquiry ceases. See, *e.g.*, *Qwest Gov't Servs., Inc. d/b/a Centurylink QGS*, B-419597, B-419597.2, May 24, 2021, 2021 CPD ¶ 217 at 5; *WingGate Travel, Inc.*, B-412921, July 1, 2016, 2016 CPD ¶ 179 at 7.

Based on the record before us, we find the disputed solicitation terms are clear and unambiguous that vendors were required to provide supporting documentation for their respective proposed technologists with their quotations. As noted, the RFQ clearly and repeatedly advised vendors that the contractor shall be responsible for providing a qualified MRI technologist(s) to perform the solicited services and required the vendor to include, with its quotation, documentation to show that its personnel met the stated RFQ requirements. See, e.g., RFQ at 15-16, 72. Consistent with these requirements, the solicitation stated that the agency would evaluate the submitted documentation under the technical capabilities factor to establish that a licensed, fully trained and competent technologist would perform the solicited services, see, *id.* at 120-121, 125. In this regard, while the protester parses the term “employee” to suggest that it was free to disregard the requirement to produce the required supporting information with its quotation that was the basis for the agency’s evaluation of the technical capabilities factor, we find no support for this cabined interpretation in light of the repeated requirements that the supporting documentation be provided with the quotation.

Based on the repeated requirement for the submission of the supporting information with the quotation, the protester did not have the option to submit the required documentation at the time of its choosing. As we have explained, a vendor bears the burden of submitting an adequately written quotation that contains all of the information required under a solicitation to allow a meaningful review by the procuring agency. See e.g., *Networks, WLL*, B-422995, Dec. 31, 2024, 2025 CPD ¶ 18 at 4; *Business Integra, Inc.*, B-407273.22, Feb. 27, 2014, 2014 CPD ¶ 88 at 3. A vendor runs the risk that a procuring agency will evaluate its quotation unfavorably where it fails to do so. *Amyx, Inc.*, B-410623, B-410623.2, Jan. 16, 2015, 2015 CPD ¶ 45 at 8. Moreover, the RFQ stated that it was the vendor’s responsibility to ensure all documents were included in the quotation, as required by the solicitation. RFQ at 117. Additionally, the RFQ warned vendors that quotations “shall” be considered nonresponsive if all requested information was not received by the solicitation due date. *Id.* Salvadorini’s disagreement with the agency’s reasonable determination that the quotation failed to provide the requisite supporting information, without more, is insufficient to show that the agency’s evaluation was unreasonable or inconsistent with the terms of the solicitation. Accordingly, this protest ground is denied.

Finally, the protester contends that it had the right to submit this non-comparative evaluation information prior to the time of award as it claims the omitted information pertains to its responsibility and was not a matter of responsiveness. As an SDVOSB, the protester insists that the agency was required to refer the matter to the SBA for a COC determination. Based on this record, we do not agree that the agency’s evaluation involved a nonresponsibility determination requiring referral to the SBA.

Under the SBA’s COC program, agencies must refer to the SBA a determination that a small business is not responsible if that determination would preclude the small business from receiving an award. 15 U.S.C. § 637(b)(7); 13 C.F.R. § 125.5; FAR subpart 19.6. The SBA’s regulations specifically require a contracting officer to refer a

small business concern to the SBA for a COC determination when the contracting officer has refused to consider a small business concern for award of a contract or order “after evaluating the concern’s offer on a non-comparative basis (e.g., pass/fail, go/no go, or acceptable/unacceptable) under one or more responsibility type evaluation factors (such as experience of the company or key personnel or past performance).” 13 C.F.R. § 125.5(a)(2)(ii). However, where an agency rejects a proposal as technically unacceptable on the basis of factors not related to responsibility, including for failing to provide all information or documentation required by the solicitation, referral to the SBA is not required. See, e.g., *RiverNorth, Inc.*, B-423274.2; B-423274.3, Apr. 18, 2025, 2025 CPD ¶ 100 at 9-10.

Here, the record establishes that Salvadorini’s quotation was found nonresponsive based on the fact that the protester failed to submit the specific personnel qualification documentation required by the RFQ. We also find that, contrary to the protester’s assertions, the solicitation’s submission instructions and evaluation criteria provisions made compliance with these provisions a prerequisite to further evaluation under the technical capability factor, and not exclusively as a matter of responsibility. We have explained that an agency’s finding that a proposal is unacceptable based on the failure to provide required information does not constitute a determination that the offeror is not a responsible prospective contractor, such that a referral to SBA for a COC is required. See, e.g., *RiverNorth, Inc.*, *supra*; *EA Engineering, Sci. & Tech. Inc.*, B-417361, B-417361.2, June 13, 2019, 2019 CPD ¶ 218 at 9. Accordingly, we find no merit to Salvadorini’s arguments.

In sum, we conclude that the VA’s decision to reject Salvadorini’s quotation as nonresponsive was reasonable and consistent with the terms of the solicitation. The protester submitted a quotation that failed to include certain required personnel qualification information, and we have no basis to question the agency’s decision. Additionally, because the quotation was rejected based on the vendor’s failure to provide required information, that finding did not constitute a determination that the vendor was not a responsible prospective contractor requiring referral to SBA under that agency’s COC procedures.

The protest is denied.

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