

USACE NWK Survey on Procurement Methods and Federal Engineering Market - RESULTS -

1. How many full-time employees does your company have?

2 1-10
6 11-50
4 51-100
5 101-500
3 501-1500
4 >1500

2. Have you or your company ever participated in competition for contracts with US Army Corps of Engineers – Kansas City District (USACE NWK)?

17 YES
7 NO

Comments:

- Scopes that appear to align with our firm capabilities (remediation planning, implementation and/or compliance work) also tend to be overly broad or will often include one or two requirements that wouldn't normally be part of such work. We wish to submit proposals that fully address the scope and requirements, so we won't when odd things (usually staff position requirements) are in the scope that we would not normally apply to a project.
- Hard to track - not sure who to talk to - scope of work often unclear.
- I'm not sure what has prevented us. I'm not familiar with requirements for federal work so it may have been that or we just simply weren't technically qualified to do the work.
- Not aware of request for proposals.

3. I find contract announcements from USACE NWK to be clear on scope requirements.

0 Strongly Disagree
4 Disagree
8 Neutral
11 Agree
0 Strongly Agree
1 Not Applicable

Comments:

- IDIQs are general in scope and require a wide variety of project types. The KC District does a good job of outlining the broad variety of project types that could be needed over the typical 5-year contract period.
- Some are, some aren't.
- There is always some redundancy or ambiguity in the scope requirements that requires clarification.
- I can't remember if I've ever reviewed a scope of work from USACE NWK.

- In general, the contract solicitations are clear. The SOW for a task order is often not clear and/or is not applicable to the level of effort for the size of the project.
- Sometimes seems there are requirements listed for work that is almost exclusively done in house by USACE which makes it difficult to respond to.

4. I find USACE NWK's selection criteria scoring to be clear.

 0 Strongly Disagree
 6 Disagree
 7 Neutral
 9 Agree
 1 Strongly Agree
 1 Not Applicable

Comments:

- Scoring is usually not clear on what the District considers the main criteria, some sections conflict with priorities in different sections.
- I am not clear on the actual scoring but as far as understanding the key criteria being evaluated, we understand it most of the time.
- I understand what will be evaluated, but not relative importance of those items.

5. I understand how USACE NWK uses their selection criteria scoring to grade proposals.

 0 Strongly Disagree
 9 Disagree
 7 Neutral
 5 Agree
 2 Strongly Agree
 1 Not Applicable

Comments:

- This information is not widely shared. In our debriefs, we learn a little more each time.
- I understand what will be evaluated, but not relative importance of those items.

6. I prefer the following debrief method from a selection committee representative.

 16 Face-to-face
 6 Telephone
 1 Written
 1 Not Applicable

Comments:

- We prefer face-to-face debriefs so we can understand and have follow-up questions have an open dialogue with you and understand areas where there is an opportunity for improvement. The best option would be to lead with written correspondence and then allow for a face-to-face, but we are sensitive to the level of effort that would be for the Corps.
- Candid comments are better, only way to improve is knowing what needs improvement.
- Telephone or face-to-face so it can be an active conversation to gain feedback from.

7. I find debrief methods (phone interview with selection committee representative) and information from USACE NWK are provided in a timely manner.

0 Strongly Disagree

1 Disagree

8 Neutral

8 Agree

2 Strongly Agree

5 Not Applicable

Comments:

- Once awards are announced, debriefs have been scheduled in a timely manner.
- Sometime takes months for selection.

8. What suggestions do you have for USACE NWK to improve their procurement process?

- When the District limits scopes and creates multiple solicitations, firms are required to submit SF330s for each one. This is a huge increase in cost and burden on the AE as well as the Government. AEs are spending from \$25 to 100K+ for each IDIQ (with some firms spending much more.)
- My ratings are based on a single experience that happened approximately 5 years ago. Therefore, my experience with USACE NWK is limited.
- Do not use big project tactics for small projects.
- Just keep the wording more "civilian" than "government". Less amendments with compiling several small items into one amendment. That will save a lot of time when researching solicitations.
- Face to face debriefs.
- Streamline the process to reduce the amount of effort for selection committee, hopefully this would speed up the process.
- If it isn't already, the criteria and selection needs to be qualifications-based as opposed to cost based. We do not pursue work if it is cost based.
- The process takes too long. It is 6 or more months from SF330 submittal to selection and then a couple more months for contract award. I do not know enough about the internal process to suggest any improvements. However from the A-E contractor perspective, it could be more efficient. At the task order level, there are similar challenges with length of contract award from initial RFP. SOW, often, is generic and does not reflect the size of the specific project- small or large.
- Communicate with firms about requests.
- Break up procurements to allow for smaller businesses to perform as Prime.
- I've long been confused by the sources sought advertisements. I also believe that the SF330 format is very limiting. My perception is that relevant qualifications that were not performed for a federal agency have no merit. The procurement process is generally so confusing and mysterious that only firms that have a dedicated and experienced federal-focused group will ever succeed in getting work with USACE. A simplified non-SF330 process that utilizes expertise local to the project location would be advantageous to all involved.
- Break IDC contracts clearly between Milcon and Civil Works. Narrow up the scopes for IDC contracts. There are a lot of A/E man-hours devoured by the kitchen sink scopes.
- The NGA West project doesn't seem to have very many avenues for small businesses to be selected for engineering assignments. The one for CM could be used as an example for many more.....
- Be mindful of scoring criteria that could give unfair advantage to incumbent firms.
- Provide at least one contract in IDC's reserved for firms that are highly qualified, but with little USACE experience. Lack of USACE portfolio is a barrier to entry for good firms.