



CITY OF ATLANTA

City Auditor's Office
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Performance Audit:

Aviation Fixed Base Operator Solicitation

What We Found

We cannot reconstruct all of the events that occurred in this solicitation because procurement's original support files are missing and three key staff members are no longer with the city. Lack of documentation and questions about the evaluation raise concerns about the fairness of the process.

Although the nature of the work requested and evaluation criteria were largely unchanged between the first and second solicitations, the evaluations yielded much different results. In the first solicitation, 1 point out of a possible 195 points separated the top two proponents, while in the second their scores were separated by 61 points out of a total of 340 possible points.

Specifically, we found:

- The request for proposals did not provide instructions on how to complete the summary of the financial offer.
- The RFP did not describe how all submissions would be evaluated, such as the proposed facility improvements.
- The firms' financial capabilities were evaluated on different criteria than those in the RFP.
- Procurement did not provide guidance or instructions to the evaluators.
- Evaluators may have been swayed by implicit criteria or felt pressured to inflate small differences after the first solicitation failed.

We made recommendations to improve the evaluation process in our March 2006 performance audit, Procurement Solicitation and Evaluation. The chief procurement officer agreed with the recommendations and has taken steps to implement them. This case further illustrates the importance of ensuring that departments understand and follow the new procedures.

Why We Did This Audit

The Chairperson of the City Council's Transportation Committee requested the review of the Fixed Base Operator solicitation (FC-6005007899). The committee had held proposed legislation to award this contract to Signature Flight Support pending additional information and the resolution of a protest from an unsuccessful bidder, Mercury Air Centers, Inc.

What We Recommended

Our recommendations are intended to assist the city in selecting a fixed base operator through a fair and competitive procurement process and strengthen procurement practices where generally applicable.

We recommend the Chief Procurement Officer:

- Clarify procedures for determining proponents' responsibility and responsiveness and ensure they are followed.
- Implement appropriate controls over solicitation files.
- Issue a request for qualifications and solicit a hard bid for a fixed base operator.
- Bid improvements to fixed base operator facilities separately.

For more information regarding this report, please contact Amanda Noble at 404.330.6750 or anoble@atlantaga.gov.