



1. Why did MRSC decide to offer electronic bidding through Bonfire?

MRSC has heard from many of our customers about the need for an electronic bidding solution. However, MRSC recognizes that software development is not its core competency. With our customer needs in mind, we have found a well-respected partner in Bonfire and worked to craft a unique solution that brings the best combination of features and pricing to Washington State.

2. If my agency is not currently using MRSC Rosters, does my agency need to sign up both MRSC Rosters and the Electronic Bidding Service to access the Electronic Bidding Service?

The electronic bidding annual subscription is separate from our current MRSC Rosters subscription and agencies can sign up for the Electronic Bidding Service only, even if they do not currently use MRSC Rosters.

3. What is the definition of a "seat?" For example, I am the Contracts/Grants Administrator, but we have Project Managers that are in and out of our projects. Would they need seats?

Seats are only required by users that need to publish a bid/solicitation and edit an active solicitation. Secondary users (Draft Editors, Advisors and Observers) don't require a paid seat and are unlimited. Here are two helpful support articles where you can learn more about [Project Advisors](#) and [Project Observers](#).

4. Will the electronic bidding annual subscription be separate from our current MRSC rosters subscription - will they have separate expiration/renewal dates?

During the first year of electronic bidding enrollment your MRSC Roster subscription will be pro-rated to create a new enrollment date. Thereafter, you will have one singular renewal date.

5. Would this be intended for larger public works projects or just small works?

The electronic bidding solution is intended for both large public works projects and small works.

6. Is electronic bidding allowed under state law?

MRSC has not found any state law that would prohibit the use of electronic bidding. It is every agency's responsibility to determine whether it can use electronic bidding. We strongly advise that you consult with your agency's attorney to confirm you can use this. MRSC will soon be providing a reference for specific agencies on the legality of electronic bidding.

7. Do bidders need a Bonfire login or MRSC registration before bidding?

Vendors must register to submit a bid to agencies that are using the electronic bidding system. The process is very quick and only requires an email, organization name, and password.

8. Is this system for only MRSC Rosters-registered vendors or can your request for proposals (RFP's) be sent to other suppliers?

Any vendor can register and submit proposals. However, if you're using a Rosters process, it's important to reach out to vendors that are specifically on your Roster.

9. If a city uses MRSC's Electronic Bidding service, can it still allow bidders to submit a paper bid?

Yes, agencies can accept paper copies, but will need to upload a scanned copy into the MRSC Electronic Bidding portal. The upload can be done after the bid opening.

10. Have any of the users seen an increase in the number of bidders submitting bids since going to electronic bidding?

Agencies typically see an increase in bid submissions after migrating to electronic bidding - especially when the platform is free for vendors, as this offering is.

11. How and when are bids made public? If so, who is the public? Only registered bidders, or only registered bonfire users, or all the public?

Bids can be made public by posting the bid tabulation into a Public Notice. Public Notices are visible to any member of the public with the portal link (mrsccrosters.bonfirehub.com), but the Public Notice will only trigger an email notification to the bidders that were invited, submitted and/or downloaded bid documents.

12. How does this fulfill the public bid opening requirement for public works contracts?

The Electronic Bidding portal allows agencies to unseal documents which will result in a date and time stamp for when the document was unsealed. Most agencies using the Electronic Bidding portal will share their screen via Zoom/Teams or on a projector and show the unsealing live during a public bid opening for public works jobs.

13. Are we required to use the pricing tables? For my request for proposals (RFP's) and requests for qualifications (RFQ's), can I do those manually and add the final evaluation and in award later?

Yes, instead of the "Pricing Sheet" feature, you can accept pricing tables/schedules as Excel or PDF document slots and manually input the calculations in Bonfire for award.

14. How do you address sales tax?

In the Pricing Sheet, this can be added as an additional column, or it can be communicated to the vendors that the sales tax should be included in the Unit Price.

15. Can this handle multiple schedules with different taxes applied? Also, when building the bid, if you have a bid tab with a large amount of line items, can you upload a word doc to auto populate the fields.

In the MRSC Electronic Bidding offering, only one Pricing Sheet can be created. However, multiple Excel, Word or PDF documents can be requested from the vendor for each pricing schedule. Bonfire's full solution (Bonfire eSourcing) does allow multiple bid schedules and multiple calculated columns to accommodate different taxation in one pricing sheet (called a BidTable in Bonfire eSourcing). MRSC may add this feature at the end of the pilot program.

16. How flexible is the evaluation framework? Can one modify the parameters for text narrative input?

Only Pass/Fail criteria is included in this offering. There is a text box for people evaluating these pass/fail criteria for a comment or narrative input.

17. Can this electronic bidding portion integrate with Bonfire's contract management solution? Do the two solutions talk to each other/integrate?

For the MRSC Electronic Bidding offering, the Bonfire Contract Management module is not an option. For those interested in the contract management solution, you may want to consider utilizing the full Bonfire platform.

18. Is there a plan to use this for Request for proposals (RFP's) or Requests for qualifications (RFQ's) solicitations in the future?

Agencies can collect e-submissions and communicate with vendors for RFPs and RFQs solicitations with this offering. However, evaluation of these proposals and RFQs would take place outside of the program.

19. How does the system deal with vendors who want to contest contract awards?

Using the Vendor Discussions feature, agencies can allow vendors to submit their contest/protests through Bonfire, so it is captured in the audit trail of the bid.

20. What if we subscribed for one year then cancelled. Would we lose our data?

If an agency were to leave the MRSC Electronic Bidding offering, Bonfire would download all data and documents (vendor submissions, bid tabulations, etc.) and provide this data in a format of the agency's choosing.

21. What happens if after the bidding window is closed, it turns out that the vendor attached the wrong documentation - does it still count?

Just like your current bid process, the agency would want to have language in the bid document that would reserve the right to reject a bid if it shows omissions or irregularities of any kind. The agency can also include language in the bid document that reserves the right to waive minor irregularities in the bid.

22. How are bid bond forms or cashier checks handled on formal bids?

Bid guarantees in the form of a surety bond, postal money order, cash, cashier's check, or certified check must be submitted in-person by the bid submittal deadline. Copies are not sufficient. For bids submitted before the bid deadline, an agency could include an option to submit a PDF of check or bond certificate as secondary confirmation (with the original delivered to agency offices by the bid deadline).

It may be possible to allow for electronic submittal of copies of bonds so long as the bond number is included, and the bond doesn't require a seal to be considered valid. Check with bond company/agency legal counsel to confirm.

23. Public works bids require a bid security with the bids. Typically, we see bid bonds that could be scanned and uploaded. What is the solution for bidders that still submit a check for the bid security when the bids are submitted online?

Generally, bid guarantees in the form of a surety bond, postal money order, cash, cashier's check, or certified check must be submitted in-person by the bid submittal deadline. Copies are not sufficient as with a check, you would not have the actual bid security.