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Student Transportation **Best Practices for Bidding Transportation Contracts**

1. Start the bidding process at least six months before the current contract expires.
2. Any questions pertaining to the bidding of transportation contracts and application of Idaho Code should be addressed to the district's or charter school's legal counsel.
3. Develop request for proposal (RFP) and model contract. The RFP should include the specific services that are to be provided and the manner in which they are to be provided. Terms and conditions of the model contract must match the RFP, for example contract start and end dates, renewal options, number of routes, etc. Other RFP specifications must not conflict with the model contract or applicable laws and regulations. The RFP may include the methods the district will use to determine "lowest responsible bidder."
4. The draft contract should adhere to the model contract furnished by the Department of Education, but may include other specific items listed in the bid specifications. The district shall send the RFP and draft model contract to the Department of Education for review of compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Include notice publishing and award dates in mailing.
5. After SDE review, send notification of intent to bid to persons listed on the contact list maintained by the Department of Education. Publish notice in accordance with Idaho Codes 33-402(2) and 33-601 which requires two publications, one four weeks before the opening of bids, and one seven days before the opening of bids
6. Send RFP to those expressing interest in bidding.
7. It is recommended that the district provides a pre-bid conference several weeks before the bid opening to allow interested parties to clarify any questions they might have about the RFP.
8. Open bids at the advertised date and time.
9. Evaluate the bids for overall "lowest responsible bidder" which is considered the bidder who fully complied with all of the RFP requirements and whose past performance, reputation and financial capability is deemed acceptable and has offered the most advantageous pricing or cost benefit, based on the criteria stipulated in the bid documents. This may include checking references, calculating total costs, comparing contract expenses of similar districts, and various other objective methods of evaluation which can be done by using score sheets for outlined criteria.
10. Award the bid to the lowest responsible bidder.
11. Negotiate with the successful bidder the final wording of the draft contract. These negotiations cannot change the original RFP or bid amounts.
12. Send complete package consisting of model contract, RFP, and newspaper advertisement to SDE.
13. Send final copy of contract to the Department of Education for review. Also send copies of bids or bid summary sheet. If awarded to other than the lowest cost bidder, send documentation supporting bid award.
14. Both parties must sign the approved contract.

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