

Proposal Compliance Matrix

Track every solicitation requirement and map it to your proposal response. A single missed requirement can disqualify an otherwise winning proposal.

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1 How to Use This Matrix

A compliance matrix maps every requirement in the solicitation to your proposal response. It is your insurance policy against missing a requirement buried in an attachment or amendment.

Start by "shredding the RFP": read every section of the solicitation and extract every discrete requirement. Each "shall," "must," "will," and "required" statement becomes a line item in your matrix. Then track where in your proposal you address each one.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The average solicitation contains 50 to 200 discrete requirements. Missing even one can mean non-compliance. Evaluators use compliance matrices to score proposals. Build yours before you write a single paragraph of your proposal.

2 Shred the RFP (Extract Requirements)

- Read Section L (Instructions to Offerors): list every submission requirement
Page limits, format requirements, volume structure, required forms.
- Read Section M (Evaluation Criteria): list every factor and subfactor
These determine your score. Weight your writing effort proportionally.
- Read Section C (SOW/PWS): highlight every shall, must, and will
Every 'shall' statement is a binding requirement you must address.
- Read Section H (Special Requirements): certifications, clearances, insurance
These are often pass/fail. Missing one is disqualifying.
- Read Section B (CLINs): note every line item requiring pricing
Your pricing must match this structure exactly. No reformatting.
- Check all amendments for changed or added requirements
Amendments supersede the original. A single missed amendment can invalidate your bid.
- Review all attachments for required forms and templates
Attachments often contain mandatory forms buried at the end.

EVALUATION WEIGHT TIP

If past performance is weighted at 40%, your past performance section should be your strongest writing. If technical approach is 50%, spend 50% of your page budget on technical. Never treat all sections as equal unless the solicitation says they are.

5 Pre-Submission Compliance Review

- Every Section L requirement has a corresponding proposal section
- Every Section M evaluation factor is addressed with specific evidence
- Every SOW 'shall' statement has a response describing HOW you comply
Not just 'we will comply' but 'we will do X using Y method.'
- Page limits are met for each volume
Pages beyond the limit may be removed without being read.
- Required forms are completed, signed, and dated
- Pricing format matches Section B CLIN structure exactly
- All amendments are acknowledged
Missing an amendment acknowledgment can disqualify your proposal.
- File names follow any specified naming convention
- No requirements have 'N' (non-compliant) status remaining
Every N must be resolved or your proposal is non-responsive.
- A second person has reviewed the matrix against the solicitation
Fresh eyes catch what the writer misses. Always.
- Cross-reference check: proposal page numbers match matrix page numbers

6 Common Compliance Failures

TOP REASONS PROPOSALS ARE RATED NON-RESPONSIVE

Missing a requirement buried in an attachment or amendment | Addressing a requirement in the wrong volume (technical content in cost volume) | Exceeding page limits (excess pages removed without reading) | Wrong font, margins, or format | Not responding to evaluation subfactors individually | Failing to acknowledge all amendments | Treating 'should' as optional (in government contracting, 'should' often means 'shall')

Quick Reference: Key Solicitation Sections

Section	Contains	Why It Matters
B	CLINs / Pricing Schedule	Your pricing must match this format
C	SOW / PWS (Statement of Work)	What you must do. Every 'shall' is a requirement.
H	Special Contract Requirements	Certifications, clearances, insurance. Often pass/fail.
J	Attachments and Exhibits	Required forms and templates. Check every one.
L	Instructions to Offerors	How to format, organize, and submit your proposal.
M	Evaluation Criteria	How your proposal will be scored. Read this first.

Your GovCon Advanced Toolkit:

- 6. DCAA Pre-Audit Readiness Checklist
- >>> **7. Proposal Compliance Matrix (you are here)**
- 8. Teaming Agreement Checklist
- 9. Subcontractor Search Cheat Sheet

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