

Best Practices for RFPs

A Request for Proposals (RFP) is a gateway for those seeking graphic design services.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) can be posted publicly or sent to specific design firms you identify as potential candidates for the project. This document may request that respondents sign a non-disclosure agreement, which is standard in the industry.

What is the difference between an RFI and an RFP?

An RFI is a more general call for information from design firms or individual designers, whereas an RFP deals with information relating to the respondent's approach to a specific project. RFPs need to be much more detailed, outlining your specific design needs.

Most RFPs include:

- Overview of organization
- Project background
- Project objectives
- Approximate budget / benefits of partnership
- Scope of work
- Timeline
- Proposal requirements – what you want respondents to submit (i.e. design process, designated design team, deliverables, related experience, client references etc.)
- Evaluation criteria for selection process (i.e. how various components will be weighed in the final decision)
- Contact information / how proposal should be submitted and by what deadline date

RFPs must not include any request for creative work to be done on the project in advance. Make sure to avoid the use of any wording that could be interpreted as a request for speculative creative work. For more information on the harmful effects of spec, refer to [RGD's policy on spec work](#).

If an RFP is being sent to specific design providers, you may provide a list of the other firms/individuals respondents will be competing against. If possible, it is also advisable to schedule a meeting with the target design firms to answer questions, clarify requirements and put a face to the written document. Another option is to collect questions from potential respondents and distribute answers to all who were invited to participate in the RFP process.

If you have additional questions about the process of creating and issuing RFIs and RFPs or if you would like access to sample documents, please email news@rgd.ca.