Solicitations Quick Reference Guide

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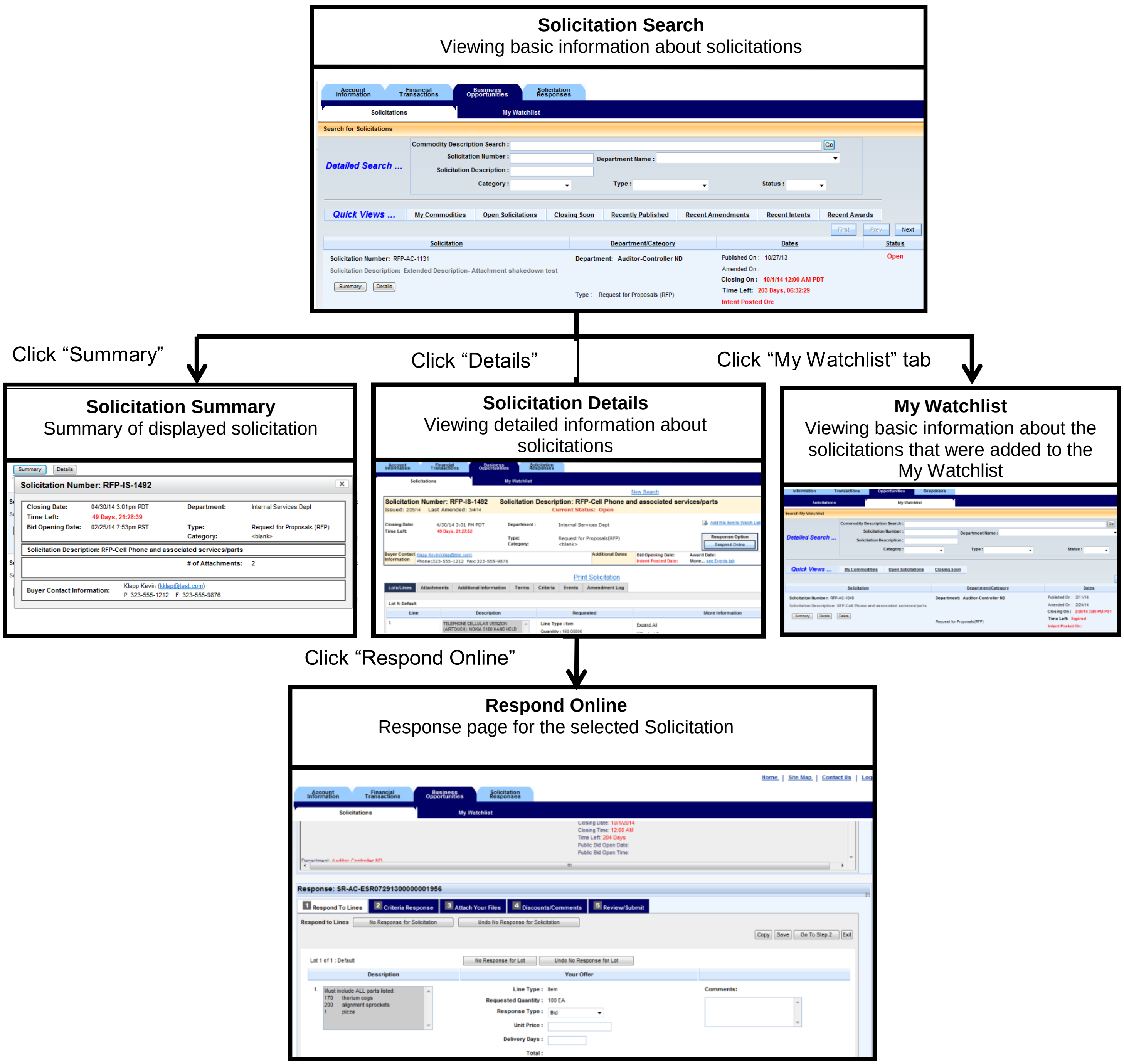
Overview

The Vendor Self Service (VSS) application is a vendor-facing tool which provides various levels of functionality to vendors. This user guide is intended to help inform vendors about the process by which they can search and track a solicitation through VSS search capabilities, as well as specifics regarding the solicitation details which vendors will be able to access. The access to solicitations in VSS starts from the Business Opportunities tab. The following diagram shows the pages and related links available to view solicitation information.



What Is the Solicitations Search Page?

The **Solicitations** search page is the starting hub from which vendors and public access users may search for bid solicitations published by Los Angeles County. Multiple selection criteria, as well as predefined Quick View search links, are provided to allow users to filter the list of bid solicitations as desired. The **Solicitations** search page serves as the starting point for vendors intending to review or respond to an existing solicitation. Once the desired solicitation is found and displayed, the user can choose to view either summary information or detailed information regarding the solicitation; from the detailed information page, the user may then choose to print or respond to the solicitation.

How Do I Search For Solicitations?

You may use the Detailed Search fields to narrow down the list of displayed solicitations by your desired criteria; each search field is described below. If no search parameters are provided, all solicitations published by Los Angeles County will be displayed.

Step 1. Log into your Vendor Self Service account and click the **Business Opportunities** tab.

Result: The **Business Opportunities** tab is opened. By default, you will be taken to the **Solicitations** search page and all published solicitations will be displayed.

Step 2. Enter any number of search criteria in the Detailed Search fields, then click **Go**
OR
Click on a Quick View link.

Result: The list of solicitations will be filtered by the search criteria you provided or by the Quick View link you chose.

The table below describes each of the available search criteria in the Detailed Search section.

Search Field	Value Options	Results
Commodity Description	You may enter text describing a commodity, in full or in part.	The result list will show only those solicitations which include a commodity line whose description includes your specified text. (Case is ignored when finding matches.)
Solicitation Number	You may enter a solicitation number, or part of one.	The result list will show only those solicitations whose solicitation number matches or contains your specified text.
Department Name	You may select a County department from the drop-down list.	The result list will show only those solicitations belonging to the chosen department.
Solicitation Description	You may enter text to search for in the solicitation's description, in full or in part.	The result list will show only those solicitations whose description includes your specified text.
Category	You may select a category from the dropdown list.	The result list will show only those solicitations of the category you selected.
Type	You may select one of the following solicitation types from the dropdown list: 1. Request for Bids 2. Request for Information 3. Request for Proposals 4. Request for Quotes	The result list will show only those solicitations of the solicitation type you selected.

Search Field	Value Options	Results
Status	You may select one of the following statuses from the dropdown list: 1. Awarded 2. Closed 3. Open 4. Cancelled	The result list will show only those solicitations which are currently in the status you selected.

The Quick View bar, located below the Detailed Search section, contains a set of several Quick View links. These Quick View links allow you to instantly perform any of a number of predefined searches. Note that when performing a Quick View search, the Detailed Search fields are ignored and cleared. The Quick View links available are described below.

Quick View link	Results
My Commodities	The result list will show only those solicitations which include commodities that your vendor account is registered for.
Open Solicitations	The result list will show only open solicitations.
Closing Soon	The result list will show only those solicitations which will be closing soon. (The number of days defined by “soon” is configured by LA County.)
Recently Published	The result list will show only those solicitations which are recently published. (The number of days defined by “recently” is configured by LA County.)
Recent Amendments	The result list will show only those solicitations which are recently amended. (The number of days defined by “recent” is configured by LA County.)
Recent Intents	The result list will show only those solicitations which entered an Intent to Award period recently. (The number of days defined by “recent” is configured by LA County.)
Recent Awards	The result list will show only those solicitations which are recently awarded. (The number of days defined by “recent” is configured by LA County.)

I don't know the full description of a commodity; can I still search for solicitations containing that commodity?

Yes – if you don’t know the full description of a commodity, you can still enter a partial description in the Commodity Description search field and then click the **Go** button. Any solicitation which contains at least one commodity line whose description contains your partial text will be shown. Try to keep your text as short as possible while still being descriptive – for example, “*cell phones*” might not be a good search string, as it would not match a commodity line for “*cellular phone equipment*”. In that case, you might want to start with just “*phone*” as your search string.

Can I search for a specific solicitation without needing to know or type the entire solicitation number?

Yes – you can type just part of the solicitation number in the Solicitation Number search field and then click the **Go** button. Each solicitation with a solicitation number that contains the text you entered, even in part, will be displayed.

What do these codes in the Solicitation Number of a bid solicitation mean?

In the Vendor Self-Service application, County solicitation numbers are displayed in a three part format separated by dashes: Type – Department – ID Number (for example, "*RFP-IS-142302000123*"):

1. **Solicitation Type**: This code represents the type of solicitation represented. Los Angeles County commonly uses the following codes: RFB (Request for Bids), RFI (Request for Information), RFP (Request for Proposals), and RFQ (Request for Quotes).
2. **Department:** This is a short departmental code, as seen in the Department field drop-down.
3. **ID Number:** This is a numerical identifier which, along with Type and Department, uniquely identifies the solicitation.

What do the different Solicitation Types mean?

The various solicitation types are described below.

Document Name	Description
Request for Bids	An RFB solicitation is a request for bidders to provide a service for the County as defined on the solicitation.
Request for Information	An RFI solicitation is issued in order to gather preliminary information from vendors.
Request for Proposals	An RFP solicitation requires vendors to describe, in detail, how they propose to meet the County's needs or desired results.
Request for Quotes	An RFQ solicitation is issued when the County needs to establish a pool of pre-qualified contractors who meet a set of County-defined minimum qualifications, and are available to perform work on an as-needed basis.

What Information Can I See In The Solicitation List?

The Solicitations list displays all solicitations which match the criteria you specified in the Detailed Search fields (or by selecting a Quick View link). You can navigate through the pages by clicking on the **Next** and **Prev** buttons. Each entry in the Solicitations list includes information related to that solicitation, divided into four sections: Solicitation, Department/Category, Dates, and Status.

<u>Solicitation:</u> The Solicitation Number and Solicitation Description are displayed here, along with a pair of buttons (**Summary** and **Detail**) which can be used to access further information about the solicitation.

<u>Department/Category:</u> The department name and code, solicitation category, and solicitation type are displayed in this section.

<u>Dates:</u> This section contains several significant dates relating to the solicitation's procurement cycle:

1. **Published On:** This is the date on which the solicitation was published by Los Angeles County.
2. **Amended On:** This is the most recent date on which a change was made to the solicitation.
3. **Closing On:** This is the date and time at which the solicitation will become closed to responses.
4. **Time Left:** This is the time left until the solicitation becomes closed to responses.
5. **Intent Posted On:** This is the most recent date on which the solicitation entered an Intent to Award period.

<u>Status:</u> This area displays the solicitation's current status.

How can I view a summary of a given solicitation, and what information is included?

In the Solicitation list, you can view a summary of any solicitation by clicking on the **Summary** button in that solicitation's entry. The resulting pop-up will summarize the various pieces of information that appear in the Solicitation list itself, along with some additional information such as number of attachments and detailed contact information for the buyer.

What Is The Solicitation Details Page?

The **Solicitation Details** page allows for access to comprehensive information about a single solicitation. In addition, it serves as the point from which vendors may respond to solicitations online, via the **Respond Online** button in the upper right portion of the page; vendors may also print the solicitation for their own records. The **Solicitation Details** page includes basic information about the solicitation in the top section, as well as detailed information about various aspects of the solicitation accessible via the tabs in the bottom section.

How Can I View The Solicitation Details Page?

You can access the **Solicitation Details** page whenever you want to view comprehensive details about a specific solicitation. From this page, you will be able to print the solicitation for your records; additionally, if you wish to submit an online response, you will begin the process from this page.

You may enter the **Solicitation Details** page by clicking on the **Details** button of a specific solicitation in the Solicitation list**.** Here are the detailed steps to do so:

Step 1. Log into your Vendor Self Service account and click the **Business Opportunities** tab.

Result: The **Business Opportunities** tab is opened. By default, you will be taken to the **Solicitations** search page and all published solicitations will be displayed.

Step 2. Locate your desired solicitation using the search criteria in the Detailed Search fields or the Quick View links. Once you have found your desired solicitation, click on the **Details** button in the Solicitation section of the results list.

Result: The **Solicitation Details** page is opened.

What information is available in the solicitation details page?

The **Solicitation Details** page is divided into two sections: a header section at the top of the page where you will find basic information about the solicitation, and a number of tabs along the bottom section which will allow you to access comprehensive information regarding various aspects of the solicitation.

The basic information displayed in the top header section includes:

Field Label	Description
Solicitation Number	The Solicitation Number appears bold and in large font at the upper left corner of the header. As is the case throughout the Vendor Self Service application, the Solicitation Number is displayed here in Type – Department – ID Number format.
Solicitation Description	The Solicitation Description appears bold and in large font to the right of the Solicitation Number.
Issued	The Issued section displays the date on which the solicitation was published.
Last Amended	The Last Amended section displays the most recent date on which the solicitation was modified.
Current Status	The solicitation's Current Status is displayed in a bold red font.
Closing Date	The Closing Date section shows the date on which the solicitation will become closed to responses.
Time Left	The Time Left section displays the amount of time left until the solicitation becomes closed to responses.
Department	The Department section displays the name of the Los Angeles County department which the solicitation belongs to.
Type	The Type section displays the type of the solicitation.
Category	The Category section displays the category which the solicitation belongs to.
Buyer Contact Information	The Buyer Contact Information section contains detailed contact information for the solicitation's buyer if such information is available, including email address, phone number, and fax number.
Additional Dates	The Additional Dates section contains a number of additional dates relevant to the solicitation's procurement cycle, including: - ***Bid Opening Date:*** This section displays the date that the bid will be open to the public for viewing. Note that this generally applies to auction types which Los Angeles County does not use. - ***Intent Posted Date***: This section displays the most recent date upon which the solicitation entered the Intent to Award period. - ***Award Date***: This section displays the date of the most recent finalized award against this solicitation. - ***More:*** Clicking on the ***see Events tab*** link in this section will take you to the Events tab of the solicitation, where any additional important dates you need to know about will be described.

A number of tabs will be displayed along the bottom of the **Solicitation Details** page. Clicking on each of these tabs will show you specific information regarding that component of the solicitation. The specific tabs you see will depend upon the status and specifics of the solicitation; the possible tabs include:

1. **Lots/Line:** Displays further details regarding the commodities on the solicitation.
2. **Attachments:** Allows you to view, open, and download documents attached to the solicitation.
3. **Additional Information:** Displays any miscellaneous information attached to the solicitation.
4. **Terms:** Displays the Terms and Conditions associated with the solicitation.
5. **Criteria:** Displays any Evaluation Criteria, which are prompts which you will be asked to answer when responding to the solicitation.
6. **Events:** Displays any additional important dates related to the solicitation.

7. **Amendment Log:** Displays an automated system-generated log of changes made to the solicitation after publishing.
8. **Pre-Qualified Vendors:** If a solicitation is restricted such that only certain vendors can view or respond to it, and Los Angeles County chooses to publish this information, you will be able to view this list of vendors on this tab.
9. **Intent to Award:** You can view the details regarding any commodities on this solicitation which are in the Intent to Award period, including the vendor to whom the intent to award was granted.
10. **Notice of Award:** Any commodities on this solicitation which were awarded will be listed here, along with detailed information including the vendor who was granted the award.

What information can I access from the Lots/Lines tab on the Solicitation Details page?

The **Lots/Lines** tab displays further details regarding commodities on the solicitation. The table on this page is divided into four columns: Line, Description, Requested, and More Information. The Line and Description columns contain the line number and description of each respective commodity; specific information is outlined in the remaining two columns, depending on the line type of the requested commodity:

Line Type	Requested	More Information
Item	- **Quantity:** The quantity of the commodity requested. - **Unit:** The unit of measure for the commodity. - **Requested Delivery Date:** The requested date of delivery.	Displays product specifications, shipping/billing information, shipping specs, and any terms and conditions which apply specifically to that commodity.
Service	- **Service Start:** The requested start date of the service. - **Service End:** The requested end date of the service.	Contains the commodity code and any terms and conditions which apply specifically to that commodity.
Discount	- **Catalog:** The name of the requested catalog. - **Effective From:** The date the requested catalog becomes effective. - **Effective To:** The date the requested catalog expires.	Contains the commodity code and any terms and conditions which apply specifically to that commodity.
Catalog	- **Catalog:** The name of the requested catalog. - **Effective From:** The date the requested catalog becomes effective. **Effective To:** The date the requested catalog expires.	Contains the commodity code and any terms and conditions which apply specifically to that commodity.
Cost-Plus	- **Cost-Plus Type:** The type of cost-plus transaction being requested (percentage or fixed amount). - **Quantity:** The quantity of the commodity requested. - **Unit:** The unit of measure for the commodity. - **Requested Delivery Date:** The requested date of delivery.	Displays product specifications, shipping/billing information, shipping specs, and any terms and conditions which apply specifically to that commodity.

What information can I access from the Attachments tab on the Solicitation Details page?

The Attachments tab contains important documents which are attached to this solicitation. This may information such as diagrams or additional specifications regarding the solicitation. From the Attachments tab, you can view, open, or download these documents.

What information can I access from the Additional Information tab on the Solicitation Details page?

If Los Angeles County has provided any miscellaneous information regarding the solicitation, it will be displayed on the Additional Information tab.

What information can I access from the Terms tab on the Solicitation Details page?

The terms and conditions associated with this solicitation are described in the Terms tab. This may include general terms and conditions which apply to the solicitation as a whole, as well as commodity-specific terms and conditions.

What information can I access from the Criteria tab on the Solicitation Details page?

The Criteria tab contains any evaluation criteria which have been specified for this solicitation. Evaluation criteria are prompts which you will be asked to respond to when you submit a response to this solicitation; the type of response which you will need to provide (text, date, yes/no, or numeric) is described in the Response Type Expected column.

What is the Mandatory Answer column in the Criteria tab?

The Mandatory Answer column only applies to evaluation criteria which require a Yes/No response (the value in this column will be *No* for all other response types). If the criterion requires a Yes/No response and the Mandatory Answer column reads *Yes*, you will be required to answer "Yes" to that criterion in order for your response to be accepted.

What information can I access from the Events tab on the Solicitation Details page?

The Events tab will display any important scheduled dates that are associated with this solicitation.

What information can I access from the Amendment Log tab on the Solicitation Details page?

The Amendment Log tab contains an automated, system-generated log of each change made to this solicitation. This automated log exists solely for informational purposes – Los Angeles County will generally add any amendments to a solicitation to an appropriate entry in the solicitation's Terms and Conditions.

What information can I access from the Pre-Qualified Vendors tab on the Solicitation Details page?

Certain solicitations may be restricted such that only a predefined list of vendors may view and respond to that solicitation. If a solicitation is restricted in this way, Los Angeles County has the option of publishing the list of vendors who are qualified to view and respond. In this case, the list of pre-qualified vendors will be displayed on this tab.

What information can I access from the Intent to Award tab on the Solicitation Details page?

Whenever a solicitation enters the Intent to Award period for any of its commodities, those commodities will be displayed on this tab along with other relevant information, including the name of the vendor who was granted the Intent to Award. The commodity will be moved to the Notice of Award tab once the Intent period expires and the award is finalized.

What information can I access from the Notice of Award tab on the Solicitation Details page?

Commodities on a solicitation which have been finalized and awarded to a vendor will be displayed on this tab along with other relevant information, including the name of the awarded vendor.

How Can I Print A Solicitation?

Solicitations may be printed from the **Solicitation Details** page, via the **Print Solicitation** link in the middle of the page. The **Print Solicitation** link will print the solicitation for your records in a format designed to neatly display all relevant information.

What Is The My Watchlist Page?

The **My Watchlist** page allows you to track solicitations for future reference by adding them to your watchlist. You may filter through the list of solicitations you are tracking as you wish, and remove them from the watchlist at any time. From the watchlist, you can also access each solicitation's **Summary** or **Details** page, just as you would in the **Solicitation Search** screen.

How Do I Use My Watchlist?

To begin using your watchlist, locate a solicitation which you wish to track via the **Solicitation Search** screen, and then view that solicitation's **Details** screen. In the upper right corner, above the **Respond Online** button, you will see a link that reads **Add this item to Watch List**. Simply click on that link to begin tracking the solicitation.

How do I view the solicitations in my watchlist?

Select the **Business Opportunities** tab at the top of any Vendor Self Service screen; you will be taken to the **Solicitations** search page by default. Click on the **My Watchlist** sub-tab, which is located just to the right of the **Solicitations** sub-tab, below the **Business Opportunities** tab.

What can I do within my watchlist?

You can use the Detailed Search or Quick Views section to browse through and filter the solicitations which you are tracking. The table below describes each of the Detailed Search criteria options:

Search Field	Value Options	Results
Commodity Description	You may enter text describing a commodity, in full or in part.	The result list will show only those solicitations on your watchlist which include a commodity line whose description includes your specified text. (Case is ignored when finding matches.)
Solicitation Number	You may enter a solicitation number, or part of one.	The result list will show only those solicitations on your watchlist whose solicitation number matches or contains your specified text.
Department Name	You may select a County department from the drop-down list.	The result list will show only those solicitations on your watchlist belonging to the chosen department.
Solicitation Description	You may enter text to search for in the solicitation's description, in full or in part.	The result list will show only those solicitations on your watchlist whose description includes your specified text.
Category	You may select a category from the dropdown list.	The result list will show only those solicitations on your watchlist of the category you selected.

Search Field	Value Options	Results
Type	You may select one of the following solicitation types from the dropdown list: 1. Request for Bids 2. Request for Information 3. Request for Proposals 4. Request for Quotes	The result list will show only those solicitations on your watchlist of the solicitation type you selected.
Status	You may select one of the following statuses from the dropdown list: 1. Awarded 2. Closed 3. Open 4. Cancelled	The result list will show only those solicitations on your watchlist which are currently in the status you selected.

The Quick View bar, located below the Detailed Search section, contains a set of several Quick View links. These Quick View links allow you to instantly perform any of a number of predefined searches within your watchlist. Note that when performing a Quick View search, the Detailed Search fields are ignored and cleared. The Quick View links available on the My Watchlist page are described below.

Quick View link	Results
My Commodities	The result list will show only those solicitations on your watchlist which include commodities that your vendor account is registered for.
Open Solicitations	The result list will show only open solicitations on your watchlist.
Closing Soon	The result list will show only those solicitations on your watchlist which will be closing in the next 7 days.

How do I remove a solicitation from my watchlist?

There are two ways to remove a solicitation from your watchlist. In the **Solicitation Details** page, the **Add this item to Watch List** link changes into a **Remove this item from Watch List** link if the solicitation is already on your watchlist; you may click that link to remove it. Additionally, within the **My Watchlist** screen, there is a **Delete** button on each solicitation in the search results list that can be used to remove it from your watchlist.

Who Can I Contact If I Have Further Questions?

You can contact the eCAPS Procurement Help Desk at 323-267-2729.