Solicitation Responses Quick Reference Guide

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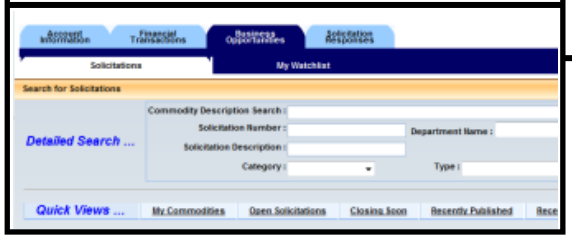
Overview

The Vendor Self Service (VSS) application is a vendor-facing tool which allows vendors to create, search for, modify, and cancel solicitation responses in VSS. This user guide is intended to help vendors use and navigate the application. Once logged in, a vendor will begin at the Business Opportunities tab; from that point, the vendor may begin the solicitation response process from within the Details page of any open solicitation. The following diagram shows the pages and related links required before submitting a solicitation response.

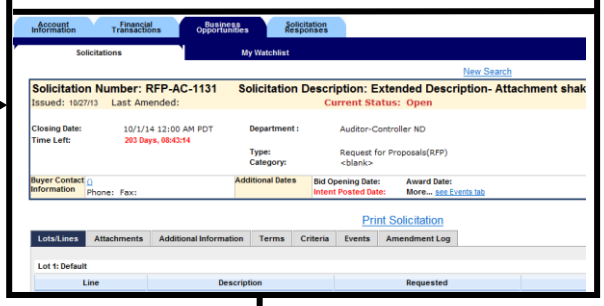
Solicitation Responses Quick Reference Guide

Solicitation Search
Viewing basic information about solicitations



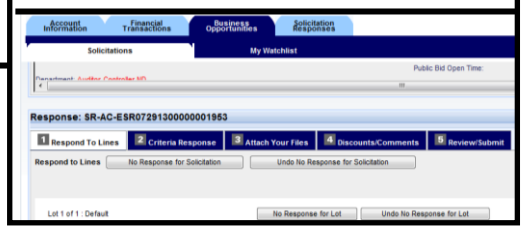
Click Details

Solicitation Details
Viewing detailed information about solicitations

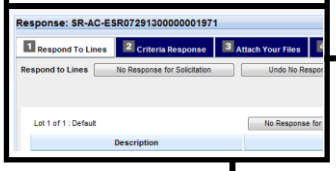


Click "Respond Online"

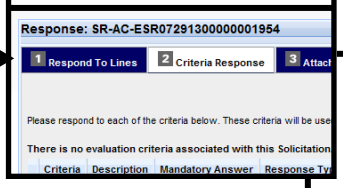
Respond Online
Response page for the selected Solicitation



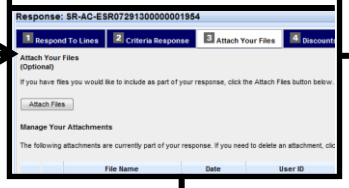
1: Respond to Lines



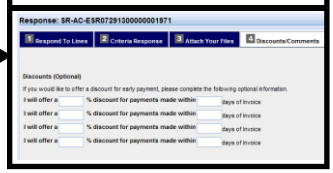
2: Criteria Response



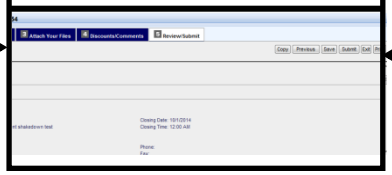
3: Attach Your Files



4: Discount/Comments

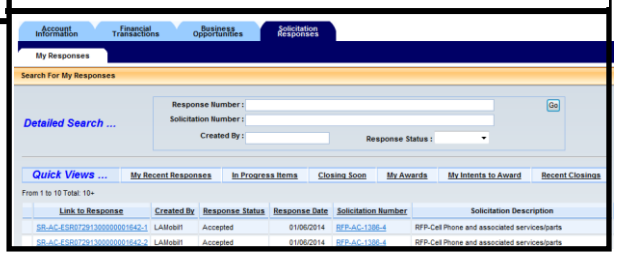


5: Review/Submit



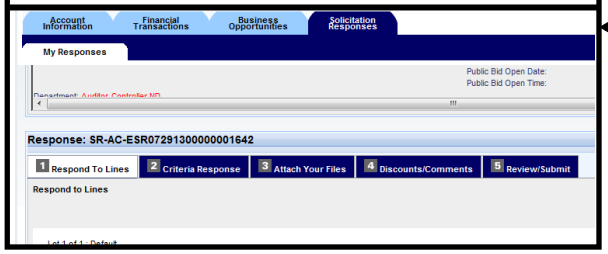
Click "Solicitation Responses" tab

Solicitation Response
Viewing basic information about the solicitation response



Click on the "Link to Response"

Solicitation Response Details
Viewing the solicitation response details



What is the My Online Response Page?

The **My Online Response** page allows you to submit online responses for bid solicitations published by Los Angeles County. You may submit bids for any open solicitation that is visible to you; you may also submit multiple alternate bids (unless specifically disallowed by the system per the County's setup). To access the **My Online Response** page, follow the instructions in the section below.

How Can I Create A Solicitation Response?

To begin creating a response, you must access the **My Online Response** page by clicking the **Respond Online** button in the **Solicitation Details** page of the solicitation you wish to respond to.

> ***TIP: WHAT IF THE SOLICITATION RESPONSE BUTTON IS DISABLED?***
>
> If the **Respond Online** button is greyed out, one of the following is true:
>
> 1. The solicitation is closed. Please ensure that you have selected an open solicitation.
> 2. You do not have the "*Create Solicitation Response*" optional access level (see below).
> 3. Online responses may have been disabled for this solicitation by the County.
>
> Primary account administrators are granted the "*Create Solicitation Response*" access level by default. For all other user accounts, your account administrator will be able to provide this access level to your account if needed. (Account administrators: to modify a user account's access levels, locate that account in the **Users** tab under **Account Information**, then click *View/Modify*.)

The steps below provide a detailed outline of the solicitation response process.

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

Result: The **Business Opportunities** tab is opened. The **Solicitations** page is the default page.

Step 2. Locate the solicitation document in your search results that represents the solicitation document for which a solicitation response will be created. 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.

Step 3. Click the **Respond Online** button located toward the top of the page.

Result: My Online Response page is opened; a blank solicitation response is created, and is ready to be completed.

Step 4. Scroll down to the **Response** section.

Result: The tabs for creating a solicitation document are displayed. There are five steps displayed in five tabs that you have to complete before submitting your solicitation response.

What Is Step 1 (Respond To Lines) Of Creating A Solicitation Response?

Step 1 of creating a solicitation response (Respond To Lines) allows you to review the existing commodity lines of the solicitation and requires you to enter your bid information for each of the commodity lines. You have the option to select the bid type for each commodity line. Available values are:

1. **Bid:** You can select the "Bid" option when you intend to bid on the commodity line of the solicitation or when you intend to bid with submitting the Alternate Specs.

2. **Bid with Condition:** You can select the "Bid with Condition" option when you intend to bid on the commodity line or when you intend to bid with submitting the Alternate Specs, and you also want to put conditions on the bid you are making. When bidding on a commodity line with condition, the filling the **Comments** box is required.

3. **No Bid**: You can select the "No Bid" option when you intend to put no bid on the commodity line of the solicitation.

Depending on the commodity line type, different fields are required to be completed. Below is a list of required fields for each commodity line to be completed:

Line Type	Required fields
Item	- Unit Price - Delivery Date
Service	- Contract Amount
Discount	- Discount Percentage - Catalog - Start Date - End Date
Catalog	- Discount Percentage - Catalog - Start Date - End Date
Cost Plus-Percentage	- Percentage Type - Cost Plus Percentage
Cost Plus-Fixed Amount	- Cost Plus Fixed Amount

The Comments box allows you to insert comments regarding the bid you are making. For the Bid and No Bid response types, the Comments field is optional. However, if you select Bid With Condition as a response type, the Comments field becomes mandatory.

Step 1. Enter **My Online Response** page.

Result: By default, you will be taken to the Respond To Lines tab and all the commodity lines will be displayed.

Step 2. Complete the required fields for each commodity lines.

Step 3. Click on the **Go To Step 2** button.

Result: The Criteria Response tab is displayed.

How can I respond to the entire solicitation with a *No Bid* response?

When responding to a solicitation, in the Response to Lines tab, you have the option to set the responses to all the commodity lines to *No Bid* by clicking on the **No Response for Solicitation** button. Here are the detailed steps to do so:

Step 1. Enter **My Online Response** page.

Result: By default, you will be taken to the Respond To Lines tab and all the commodity lines will be displayed.

Step 2. Scroll down to the **Response** section, and click on the **No Response for Solicitation** button.

Result: A message pops up which informs you that this action will set all lines for the solicitation to No Response and it will ask for confirmation.

Step 3. Click on **Ok**.

Result: All lines for the solicitation will be set to *No Bid*.

What can I do if I change my mind after responding to the entire solicitation with a *No Bid* response?

Once you respond to the entire solicitation with a *No Bid* response, you can revert the action by clicking on the **Undo No Response for Solicitation** button next to the **No Response for Solicitation** button. A message pops up which informs you that this action will remove the *No Bid* response for all lines within the solicitation and it will ask for confirmation. As soon as you click on **Ok**, all lines for the solicitation will be set to *Bid*.

How can I respond to a commodity group with a *No Bid* response?

When responding to a solicitation, in the Response to Lines tab, you have the option to set the responses for all the commodities in a commodity group (Lot) to *No Bid* by clicking on the **No Response for Lot** button. Here are the detailed steps to do so:

Step 1. Enter **My Online Response** page.

Result: By default, you will be taken to the Respond To Lines tab and all the commodity lines will be displayed.

Step 2. Scroll down to the **Response** section, and click on the **No Response for Lot** button.

Result: A message pops up which informs you that this action will set all lines for the lot to No Response and it will ask for confirmation.

Step 3. Click on **Ok**.

Result: All lines for the lot will be set to *No Bid*.

What can I do if I change my mind after responding to the commodity group with a *No Bid* response?

Once you set the responses for a commodity group (lot) with a *No Bid* response, you can revert the action by clicking on **Undo No Response for Lot** button next to the **No Response for Lot** button. A message pops up which informs you that this action will remove the *No Bid* response for all lines within that lot and it will ask for confirmation. As soon as you click on **Ok**, all lines for that line will be set to *Bid*.

How can I offer alternate specifications for a commodity line in the Solicitation?

When responding to the solicitation, in the Respond to Lines tab, you have the option to offer alternate specs by clicking on the “Additional Specs” link at the bottom of each commodity Line. After the link is expanded, you can view the commodity line’s specifications and offer alternates in the fields next to each specification. (Note that if the County has disallowed alternate specifications on a specific commodity line, as shown in the Solicitation Details page, the fields in the Additional Specs link will be greyed out and you will not be allowed to supply alternate specifications.)

What Is Step 2 (Criteria Response) Of Creating A Solicitation Response?

The evaluation criteria are the characteristics upon which your responses will be evaluated. Step 2 (Criteria Response) of creating a solicitation response allows you to view the list of the solicitation's Evaluation Criteria and respond to them accordingly. There are four different response types associated with the evaluation criteria:

1. Text: If the **Response Type Expected** is indicated as Text, this field will be active and you can enter your response here. For all other response types (Date, Yes/No, Number), this field will be greyed out and will not take any input. The maximum length of a text response is 1500 characters.

2. Yes/No: If the **Response Type Expected** is indicated as Yes/No, this field will be active and you can select Yes or No from the dropdown here. For all other response types (Text, Date, Number), this field will be greyed out and will not take any input. ***Note:*** If the Mandatory Answer column of a Yes/No field is marked "YES", then you must answer "Yes" to this criterion in order to submit your response. Attempting to submit a response without doing so will cause the system to display an error and reject your response until you remedy the issue (by returning to the criteria responses and answering "Yes" to each criterion with a Mandatory Answer indicator of "YES").

3. Date: If the **Response Type Expected** is indicated as Date, this field will be active and you can enter a date here (or pick from the calendar tool). For all other response types (Text, Yes/No, Number), this field will be greyed out and will not take any input.

4. Number: If the **Response Type Expected** is indicated as Number, this field will be active and you can enter a numerical value here. For all other response types (Text, Date, Yes/No), this field will be greyed out and will not take any input.

Step 1. Enter **My Online Response** page, complete the Respond To Lines tab, and select **Go To Step 2** button.

Result: The Criteria Response tab is displayed.

Step 2. Respond to the displayed Criteria and select **Go To Step 3** button.

Result: The Attach Your File tab is displayed.

Do I need to answer all of the evaluation criteria presented?

Responses to evaluation criteria are optional within the system (except as indicated above for Yes/No answers with a Mandatory Answer indicator of "YES"). However, attempting to submit a solicitation response without responding to all evaluation criteria will result in a warning, requiring you to repeat the submit to confirm your intention. You should carefully read the terms, conditions, and criteria presented within the solicitation before choosing to forego a response.

What is the maximum length of a text response?

The maximum length of a text response that you can enter is 1500 characters.

What Is Step 3 (Attach Your Files) Of Creating A Solicitation Response?

Step 3 (Attach Your Files) of creating a solicitation response allows you to upload any supporting documents that you wish to submit with your solicitation response. You are not required to add any attachments to your solicitation response. This is an optional step. You can include one or more (up to 50) attachments. By clicking the scissors icon located left to the attachment link, you can delete the attached file. The attachment ***Type*** available for solicitation responses is *Standard.*

Step 1. Enter **My Online Response** page, complete the Respond To Lines tab, and the Criteria Response tab, and select **Go To Step 3** button.

Result: The Attach Your File tab is displayed.

Step 2. If there is any attachment that required to be attached, click the **Attach Files** button.

Result: The Add files page will display.

Step 3. Click the **Browse** button and navigate to the document to be attached. Double click on the document name.

Result: The link appears in the File 1 panel.

Step 4. Click the **Attach Files** button.

Result: The Attach Your File tab is displayed.

Note: You can include one or more attachments.

Step 5. Click the **Go To Step 4** button.

Result: The Discounts/Comments tab is displayed.

How many attachments can I attach to my solicitation response?

You can attach up to 50 attachments to your solicitation response.

What are the different file formats (extensions) that I can attach to my solicitation response?

The attachment file format can have file extensions that include txt, htm, doc, pdf, xml, tiff, pdf, xls, zip, TIFF, PDF, DOC, XLS, ZIP, docx, and xlsx.

How can I delete an attachment from my solicitation response?

By clicking the scissors icon located left to the attachment link, you can delete the attached file.

What Is Step 4 (Discounts/Comments) Of Creating A Solicitation Response?

Step 4 (Discount/Comments) of creating a solicitation response allows you to establish a discount schedule, consisting of sets of Discount Percentages and Numbers of Days, to be applied to the relevant invoice when paid within the specified schedule. Establishment of a discount schedule is optional. Also you may use the optional Overall Response Comment box to provide any additional comments relevant to the established discount schedule.

Step 1. Enter **My Online Response** page, complete the Respond To Lines tab, the Criteria Response tab, the Attach Files tab, and select **Go To Step 4** button.

Result: The Discount/Comment tab is displayed.

Step 2. If you would like to offer a discount for early payment, insert the discount offers.

Step 3. Click the **Go To Step 5** button.

Result: The Review/Submit tab is displayed.

What Is Step 5 (Review/Submit) Of Creating A Solicitation Response?

Step 5 (Review/Submit) of creating a solicitation response allows you to review all information that was entered throughout each step of the solicitation response creation process, ensuring that all information is correct prior to submitting the solicitation response.

How do I change information displayed on the Review/Submit tab?

You can select the tab name or the **Previous** button until you reach the tab that contains the incorrect information.

How do I submit a solicitation response?

You can submit the solicitation response by clicking the **Submit** button on the Review/Submit tab once all required fields have been populated.

Step 1. Enter **My Online Response** page, complete the Respond To Lines tab, the Criteria Response tab, the Attach Files tab, the Discount/Comment tab, and select **Go To Step 4** button.

Result: The Review/Submit tab is displayed.

Step 2. Click the **Submit** button.

Result: A message appears asking for confirmation on submitting the solicitation response.

Step 3. Click the **Ok** button.

Result: The Thank You page is displayed.

Note: This page verifies that your solicitation response has been submitted to VSS.

How Do I Navigate Between The Tabs Of Creating A Solicitation Response?

You can click on the tab names, or you can use the **Go to Step X** (X is the step number) button. However, you must complete all required fields before you can navigate to the next tab. You can also select the **Previous** button to return to a previous tab.

Which Tabs Contain Required Fields On A Solicitation Response?

The Respond to Lines tab contains required fields. The Criteria Response tab may contain required fields if the Mandatory Answer column is "Yes" for any one of the Criteria listed. The Attach Your Files and Discount/Comments tab are optional and the Review/Submit tab displays a summary of the information you have entered for your review prior to submitting the solicitation response.

What Is The My Responses Page?

The **My Responses** page allows a vendor user to view a list of all the solicitation responses that were created by all vendor users on that vendor account. Multiple selection criteria, as well as predefined Quick View search links, are provided to allow vendors to search for previous solicitation responses as desired. Once the desired solicitation response is found and displayed, the vendor can choose to view either the solicitation response details or detailed information regarding the reference solicitation as well as edit, copy, or withdraw the solicitation response.

How Do I Search For A Solicitation Response?

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

Step 1. Log into your Vendor Self Service account and click the **Solicitation Responses** tab.

Result: The **Solicitation Responses** tab is opened.

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 solicitation responses 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
Response Number	You may enter a solicitation response number, or part of one.	The result list will show only those solicitation responses whose solicitation response number matches or contains your specified text.
Solicitation Number	You may enter a solicitation number, or part of one.	The result list will show only those solicitation responses whose the referenced solicitation number matches or contains your specified text.
Created By	You may enter user login ID, in full or in part.	The result list will show those solicitation responses which were created by a vendor user whose name matches or contains your specified text. **Note:** Only solicitation responses belonging to the user's vendor account will be shown.
Respond Status	You may select one of the following statuses from the dropdown list: 1. Draft 2. Rejected 3. Accepted 4. WithDrawn 5. Old Version	The result list will show only those solicitation responses 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	Result
My Recent Responses	The result list will show only those solicitation responses which are recently created. (The number of days defined by "recent" is configured by LA County.)
In Progress Items	Only solicitation responses with a status of Draft and which reference an open solicitation are displayed.
Closing Soon	The result list will show only those solicitation responses which reference a solicitation that will be closing soon. (The number of days defined by "soon" is configured by LA County.)
My Awards	Only solicitation responses which correlate to a finalized award are displayed.
My Intents to Award	Only solicitation responses which correlate to an award in the Intent to Award state (i.e., in draft) are displayed.
Recent Closings	The result list will show only those solicitation responses which reference a solicitation which closed "recently". (The number of days defined by "recent" is configured by LA County.)

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

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

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

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

What are different solicitation response statuses?

Different solicitation response statuses are as follows:

1. **Draft:** Solicitation responses which have been saved but not submitted, and which do not have unresolved errors associated with them, are kept in Draft status. Note that solicitation responses do not need to be manually saved to be kept in Draft status – VSS will automatically save and validate the response while navigating between response steps.

2. **Rejected:** Solicitation responses which have been saved but not submitted, and which have unresolved errors open, are kept in Rejected status.

3. **Accepted:** Solicitation responses which have been filled out and submitted successfully are kept in Accepted status.

4. **Withdrawn**: Solicitation responses in Accepted status can be withdrawn by the vendor as long as the associated solicitation is still open. In these cases, the solicitation response is reverted to Withdrawn status and can no longer be edited.

5. **Old Version:** Solicitation responses that have been archived in the County's financial system are displayed with the status of Old Version.

How Can I View The Solicitation Response Details?

You can access comprehensive details about a specific solicitation response through **My Online Response** page. You may enter the **My Online Response** detail page by navigating to **Solicitation Response** page and clicking on the **Link to response** link of a specific solicitation response in the Solicitation responses list**.** Here are the detailed steps to do so:

Step 1. Log into your Vendor Self Service account and click the **Solicitation Responses** tab.

Result: The **Solicitation Responses** tab is opened. By default, you will be taken to the **My Responses** search page and all published solicitation responses will be displayed.

Step 2. Locate your desired solicitation response using the search criteria in the Detailed Search fields or the Quick View links.

Result: The desired **Solicitation Response** is listed.

Step 3. Click on **Link to Response**.

Result: The solicitation response details will be displayed in five tabs as **Respond to Lines**, **Criteria Response, Attach Your File**, **Discounts/Comments**, and **Review/Submit**.

From this point depending on the solicitation response status, you can view, edit, copy, withdraw, or submit your responses. You can also navigate between different tabs by clicking on the tab or using the **Go to Step X** (X is the step number) button. However, you must complete all required fields before you can navigate to the next tab. You can also select the **Previous** button to return to a previous tab.

How Can I View The Reference Solicitation Details?

You can access comprehensive details about a solicitation that a specific solicitation response references through **My Online Response** page. You may enter the reference **Solicitation Details** detail page by navigating to **Solicitation Response** page and clicking on the **Solicitation Number** link of a specific solicitation response in the Solicitation responses list**.** Here are the detailed steps to do so:

Step 1. Log into your Vendor Self Service account and click the **Solicitation Responses** tab.

Result: The **Solicitation Responses** tab is opened. By default, you will be taken to the **My Responses** search page and all published solicitation responses will be displayed.

Step 2. Locate your desired solicitation response using the search criteria in the Detailed Search fields or the Quick View links.

Result: The desired **Solicitation Response** is listed.

Step 3. Click on **Solicitation Number** link.

Result: The reference solicitation details will be displayed.

How Can I Save A Solicitation Response I Am Currently Working On?

The **Save** button located on the upper right hand side of each tab allows you to save your response in different tabs. You can search for your saved solicitation response any time after saving.

How Can I Edit A Solicitation Response I Previously Saved?

You may edit your saved solicitation response as long as it is not withdrawn and the reference solicitation is still open. You may do so by navigating to **Solicitation Response** page and opening your saved solicitation response**.** Here are the detailed steps to do so:

Step 1. Log into your Vendor Self Service account and click the **Solicitation Responses** tab.

Result: The **Solicitation Responses** tab is opened. By default, you will be taken to the **My Responses** search page and all published solicitation responses will be displayed.

Step 2. Locate your desired solicitation response using the search criteria in the Detailed Search fields or the Quick View links.

Result: The desired **Solicitation Response** is listed.

Note: A solicitation cannot be edited if it has been withdrawn, or if it references a solicitation which is closed.

Step 3. Click on **Link to Response**.

Result: The solicitation response detail is displayed.

Step 4. Select the **Edit** button.

Result: You are transferred to the editable view of the solicitation response.

Step 5. Modify any applicable field.

Step 6. Click the **Save** button.

Result: The page refreshes, and the new information has been saved. In order to edit the information on different tabs, you can click on the tab names, or you can use the **Go to Step X** (X is the step number) button. However, you must complete all required fields before you can navigate to the next tab. You can also select the **Previous** button to return to a previous tab.

Can I edit all types of solicitation responses?

No, a solicitation cannot be edited if it has been withdrawn, or if it references a solicitation which is closed.

How Can I Withdraw A Solicitation Response?

You may withdraw your accepted solicitation response by navigating to **Solicitation Response** page and opening the solicitation response that was submitted successfully**.** Here are the detailed steps to do so:

Step 1. Log into your Vendor Self Service account and click the **Solicitation Responses** tab.

Result: The **Solicitation Responses** tab is opened. By default, you will be taken to the **My Responses** search page and all published solicitation responses will be displayed.

Step 2. Locate your desired solicitation response using the search criteria in the Detailed Search fields or the Quick View links.

Result: The desired **Solicitation Response** is listed.

Note: In order to withdraw a solicitation response, the solicitation response must be in Accepted status. In addition, you are not allowed to withdraw a solicitation response which references a solicitation that has closed.

Step 3. Click on **Link to Response**.

Result: The solicitation response detail is displayed.

Step 4. Select the **Withdraw** button.

Result: The solicitation response is withdrawn and you are transferred to **My Response** page.

Note: Once a solicitation response is withdrawn, it can no longer be edited.

Can I withdraw all types of solicitation responses?

No, you are not able to withdraw a solicitation response if the solicitation response is not Accepted, or the reference solicitation is already closed.

How Can I Copy A Solicitation Response?

You may copy your solicitation responses by navigating to **Solicitation Response** page and opening the solicitation response that you want to copy**.** Here are the detailed steps to do so:

Step 1. Log into your Vendor Self Service account and click the **Solicitation Responses** tab.

Result: The **Solicitation Responses** tab is opened. By default, you will be taken to the **My Responses** search page and all published solicitation responses will be displayed.

Step 2. Locate your desired solicitation response using the search criteria in the Detailed Search fields or the Quick View links.

Result: The desired **Solicitation Response** is listed.

Note: You can copy any solicitation response as long it is not **Withdrawn** and the referenced solicitation is still open.

Step 3. Click on **Link to Response**.

Result: The solicitation response detail is displayed.

Step 4. Select the **Copy** button.

Result: The vendor is transferred to **Copy Document** page, and is informed that they are about to copy a response, and that the attachments will not be copied to the new response.

Step 5. Select the **Copy Document** link.

Result: A newly created copy of the solicitation response is opened and is ready for completion.

Can I copy all types of solicitation responses?

No, you are not able to copy a solicitation response if the solicitation response is Withdrawn, or the reference solicitation is already closed.

Who Can I Contact If I have Further Questions?

You can contact the eCAPS Help Desk at EDL-ePROC_FUNC@isd.lacounty.gov.