



Customer Success Story

Eliminating paperwork to drive strategic decisions for the county

Bonfire & Milwaukee County

Milwaukee County's central procurement office runs RFPs for large ticket purchases across the county's multiple departments, including the zoo, park system, transportation department, and airport. Serving a wide range of stakeholders through an entirely paper-based process led to inconsistency and administrative headache. In support of a broad mandate to improve their process, they implemented Bonfire to manage their procurement in one online platform, giving them control over their process and greater confidence in their decisions.



ORGANIZATION PROFILE



Milwaukee County is the most populous county in the state of Wisconsin, with a population of approximately 950,000.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Paper-based RFP process was an administrative burden
- Limited visibility into evaluator progress
- Lack of structure and consistency between buyers

RESULTS

- 100% digital process from submission to award
- Full transparency and consistency for buyers
- Efficient and seamless evaluation process



Procurement at Milwaukee County before **Bonfire**

Prior to implementing Bonfire, Milwaukee County's competitive bids and RFPs were managed through a paper-based process. Open opportunities were advertised through the County website, and vendors submitted their responses in person at the courthouse.

"It was a very daunting process," explains Lacy Parson, Contract Manager, Milwaukee County.

Not only did the paper-based approach limit their vendor pool, it was also an administrative challenge for the procurement team who had to process and

distribute paper submissions to evaluators and then manage the evaluation process with limited visibility into evaluator progress. It was difficult to keep projects on track and ensure consistency between buyers — both sources of risk for the procurement team.

As part of a broader mandate to streamline and add consistency to their procurement process, Milwaukee County sought a software solution that would support these changes by reducing administrative workload and adding more structure to the evaluation process for greater efficiency and compliance.

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Lacy Parson, Contract Manager, Milwaukee County



Impact of **Bonfire**

Transitioning from paper and Excel to an online process on the Bonfire platform has made life easier for vendors and the procurement team alike. For buyers, it is easy to post and share competitive bid and RFP opportunities via the online portal and invite vendors based on commodity codes, allowing them to reach a wider vendor community.

Choosing **Bonfire**

The Milwaukee County procurement team needed a solution to allow them to:



Easily post and advertise opportunities



Receive and evaluate submissions digitally



Increase transparency across their projects.

Unlike many tools that only offer electronic posting and receiving (leaving the evaluation process to be completed offline), Bonfire allows teams to manage the whole competitive bid and RFP process — from submission to evaluation to award — within the platform. This made Bonfire the right choice to support the County's process improvements.

For vendors, the online portal provides all the information that they need, in one place. They can access bid details and submit their responses online, without leaving their office. This adds convenience, increases confidence in the process, and eliminates the submission costs associated with printing and transporting paper bids.

After submissions are received, Bonfire adds structure and transparency to the evaluation process. Rather than receiving all the documents in one binder or package, buyers can separate documents by relevant evaluation groups. For example, a project can be set up so that a technical team of evaluators reviews the Technical Specifications while the financial team reviews the pricing information. This accelerates the process and ensures that the right stakeholders are involved at the right time.

“It is super helpful to be able to separate documents between evaluators, release evaluation groups at different times, and keep track of the evaluation and scoring progress,” Parson says. “It gives us overall transparency.”

Visibility into the evaluation process means that buyers are better equipped to keep the evaluation on track and facilitate effective consensus meetings — ensuring decisions are made on time. Parson illustrates the value with a recent example: “Our most recent RFP was for phone system for the entire County. Bonfire allowed us to run a project with multiple technical team members from all over the County. They could all go to one place to view the RFP documents and submit their answers, which was just invaluable. It helps that I am able to watch the progress through the system and keep everyone on track. It probably cut down on a week of meetings.”

With less time spent managing paper submissions and administering the process, the Milwaukee County team has been able to invest their time in more strategic activities to ensure their decisions are driving the best value for the organization.

“We’re able to focus more on the meat of the RFP rather than administering the process. We can focus on determining the scope and evaluation factors. Then once the project is posted, Bonfire takes a lot of the administrative work out of it. It adds a whole lot of ease to the process.” ■

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“The biggest benefit is consistency across the board. Before, everyone had their own way of doing things. Now everything goes through Bonfire,” explains Parson. “It gives vendors one place to go, and it gives us one place to go — so the whole process is better organized.”

See **Bonfire** for yourself

Learn how our intuitive, powerful,
and easy-to-use platform can help you
make better, faster sourcing decisions.

[Request a Demo](#)



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