Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

Introduction

When a vendor learns of a bid opportunity with the State of North Carolina via an eVP posting, and that solicitation requires the vendor to provide their response in an Ariba Sourcing Event, the vendor will click an Intends to Participate button at the top of that solicitation in eVP. This will trigger the system to send an email to all Sourcing Contacts on the eVP account, prompting them to log into their Ariba accounts to respond to the solicitation. Once logged into their Ariba Accounts, vendors can respond to the solicitation by accessing the Sourcing Event, an electronic collection of all the requisite details provided by the State Procurement User who created the solicitation, and a template into which the vendor can respond with information and attachments. Vendors must be actively registered for NC eProcurement and listed as a Sourcing Contact in eVP to be able to click the Intends to Participate button and respond to an NCEP Ariba Sourcing Event. Vendors should confirm access to solicitations (e.g., verify account status) early and allow ample time to submit bids.

For more information about finding solicitations, please see the Viewing and Responding to Solicitations job aid. For more information on creating an Ariba Network account, see Accessing the Ariba Network.



Learning **Objectives**

At the end of this job aid, **you will be able to**:

- Find an Ariba Sourcing Event via an Email.
- Ask questions via the Message Board.
- Submit a Bid Response.

Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

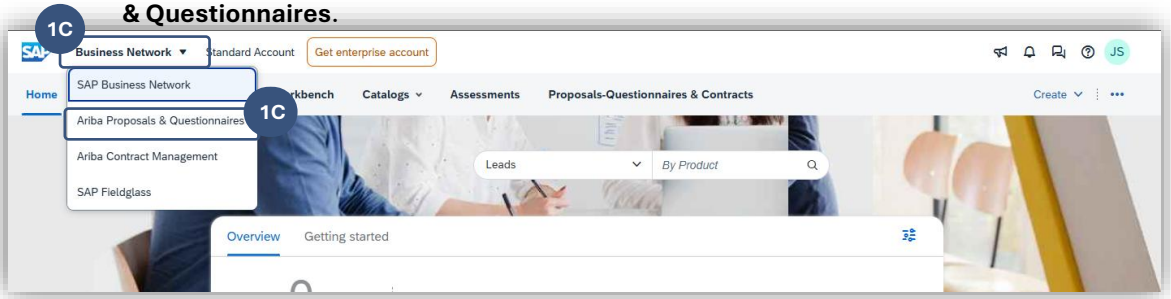
Finding an Ariba Sourcing Event via an Email

1 After a vendor clicks the **Intends to Participate** button on an eVP solicitation, an email will be sent to all Sourcing Contacts on the eVP account. Any Sourcing Contact with an Ariba Network account linked to the email address can respond to the Sourcing Event.

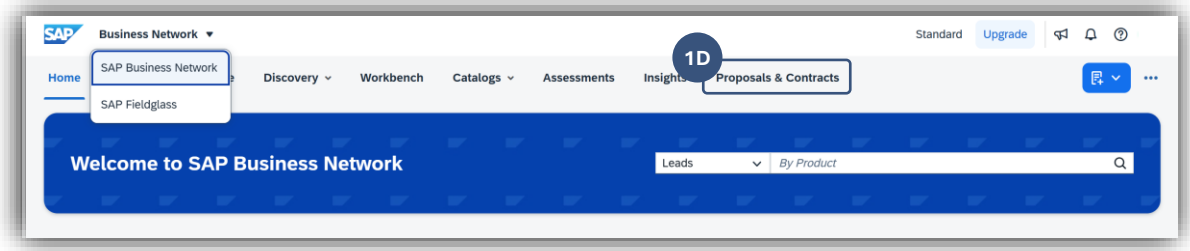
A. After receiving the email, users can follow the "Click Here to access the event" link in the email.

B. If users are not already signed into their Ariba Network account, theyll be asked to log in by entering their User Name and Password. If theyre already logged in on an adjacent tab, they may be taken directly to the Sourcing Event.

C. If a user is not taken directly to the Sourcing Event upon signing in, they can click the dropdown next to the **SAP** logo in the top left of their screen and select **Ariba Proposals & Questionnaires**.

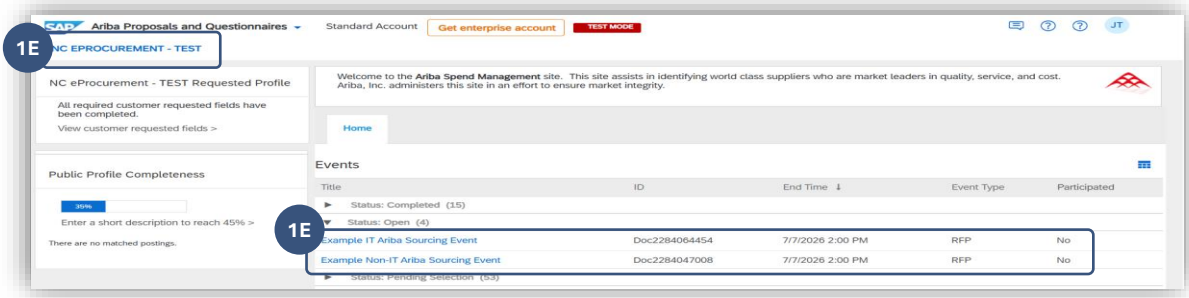


D. If **Ariba Proposals & Questionnaires** does not appear in the dropdown, look for a **Proposals & Contracts** option to click on the right side of the top of the screen.



E. A listing of Sourcing Events to which the vendor is attached will display in the **Events** section. Look in the **Status: Open** section to find the Sourcing Event for which the email was just received.

It is important that NC EPROCUREMENT be selected at the top of the page if the vendor has also responded to Sourcing Events from other organizations. Click the MORE... dropdown to see all options.



Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

The Sourcing Event Overview

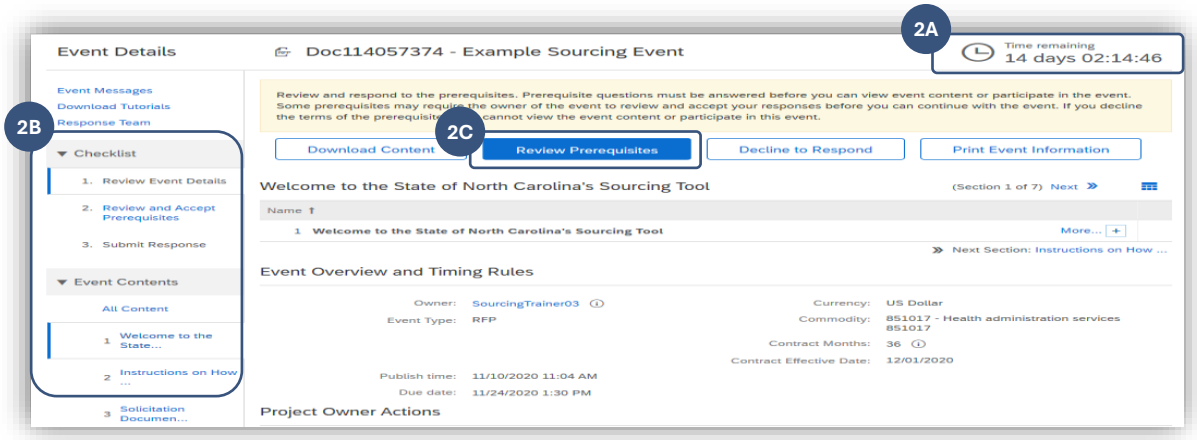
2 When the user first accessed the Sourcing Event, they will be directed to the **Event Details** page where they can review the details of the Solicitation and provide a response to the Procurement User for their consideration.

A. The top of the Sourcing Event will display the event title and a countdown clock of the time remaining for vendors to submit their bid. The timing in the top right will be the official deadline, down to the second.

B. The left side of the screen will provide a **Checklist** of the steps to be taken when responding to this Solicitation. Users can **Review Event Details** by clicking on the numbered **Event Content** sections below to change the view of whats on their screen. A subsequent screen will show all of this information in great detail all together.

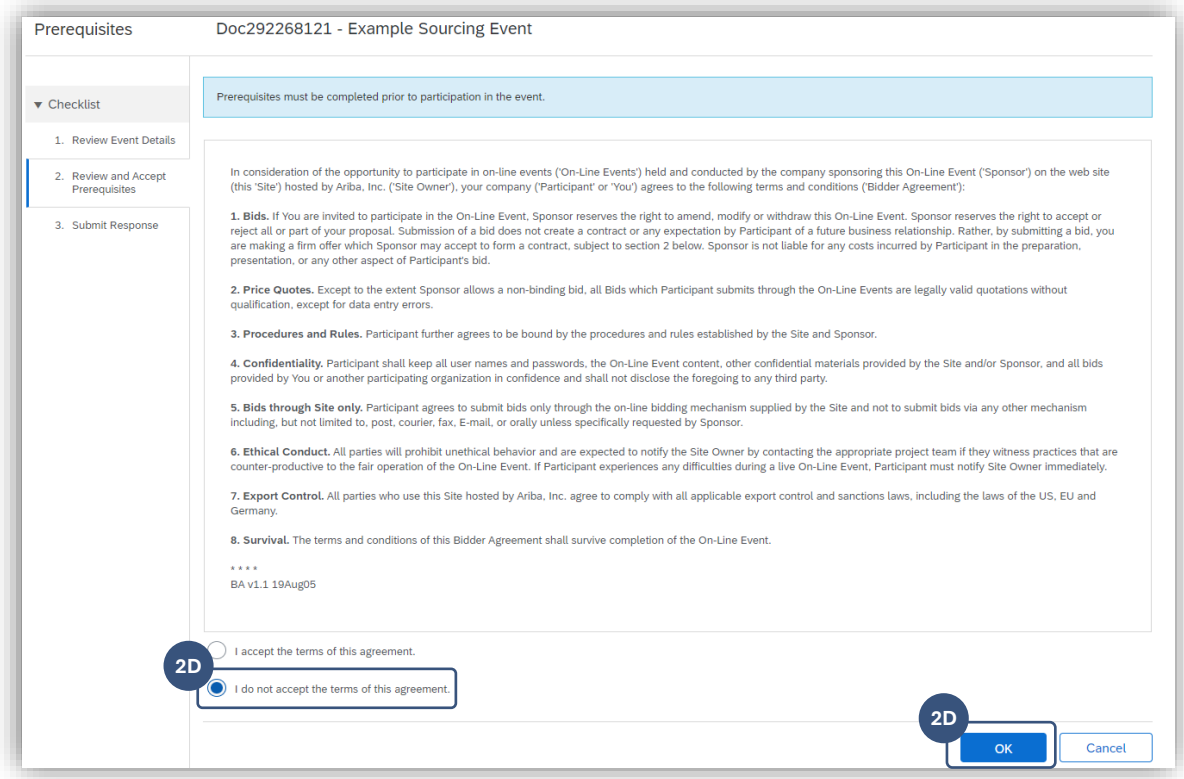
C. Click the **Review and Accept Prerequisites**, which represents the bidder agreement, and acceptance of these is required to submit a bid.

- The **Download Content** button will allow the user to download Event information in a detailed Excel document, as well as download any attachments the Procurement User included.
- Click **Decline to Respond** if not interested in submitting a bid for the Solicitation, but it is desired to let the Procurement User know the posting was reviewed.



Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

D. After clicking **Review Prerequisites**, the bidder agreement is displayed, and the user must accept the terms to move forward with their bid.



E. Once the terms have been accepted, the entirety of the Event content will display. This is where all important information and instructions for vendors to consider when responding will be located.

F. The Sourcing Event content will be broken down into numbered sections, typically as follows:

I. Welcome to the State of North Carolinas Sourcing Tool: A welcome message and outline of the overall process for submitting a bid. No action is required in this section.

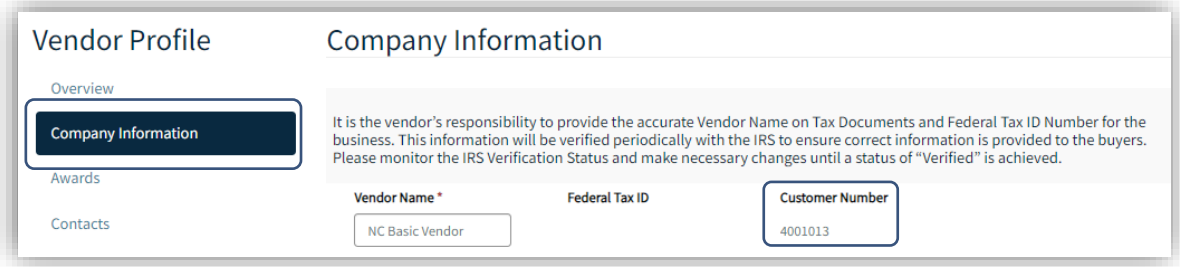
II. Instructions on How to Use the Sourcing Tool: Instructions, tips, and links to resources for help in submitting a bid. No action is required in this section.

Questions or issues related to using the Sourcing Tool can be directed to the North Carolina eProcurement Help Desk at 888-211-7440, Option 2. Help Desk representatives are available Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM ET to 5:00 PM ET.

Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

III. Solicitation Document and Details: In this section vendors will find the **Solicitation Document** that includes the important, specific details about the Solicitation to which they will respond with a bid. They can also find vendor instructions, general terms and conditions, and any **Addenda** to the Solicitation will also be posted here if necessary. This is the first section that will have subsections.

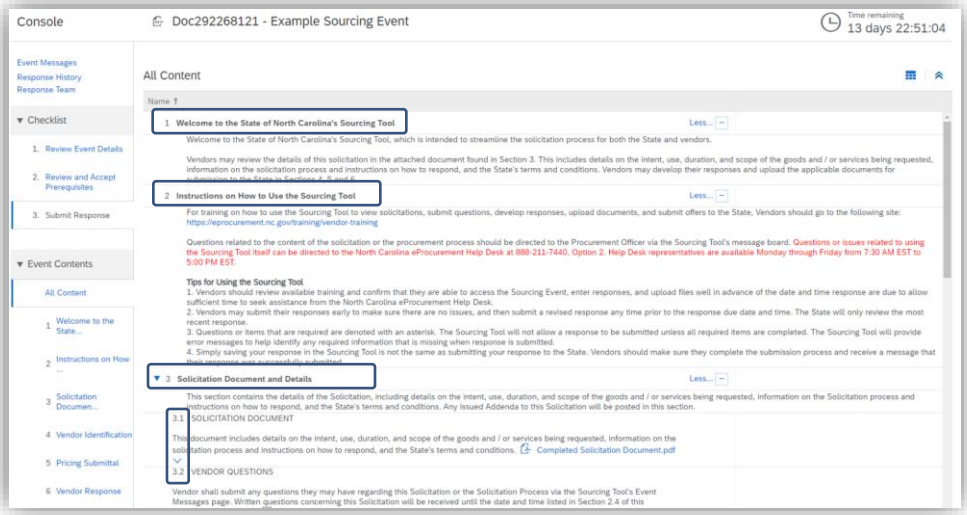
IV. Vendor Information: In this section vendors will provide their NC eVP **Customer Number**. This is found by logging into eVP and going to the **Company Information** section.



V. Pricing Submittal: Vendors can download an attachment, fill it out with their pricing information, and reattach it for the Procurement User to review. Often, this section has been deleted and the vendor is instructed to include their pricing within the overall Solicitation Document the return.

VI. Vendor Response: This section contains several attachments for the vendor to download, complete, and reattach, that the Procurement User will consider when reviewing all responses. Most of these attachments are required to be returned in order to submit the response.

The exact content in each of these sections may differ based on the type of Solicitation posted by the States Procurement User. An **IT Solicitation** (**Vendor Response** is always section 5) will be structured slightly different than a **Non-IT Solicitation**, and the exact structure of a **Solicitation for Goods** (more attachments in Section 6) will differ slightly from that of a **Solicitation for Services**. It is extremely important that vendors responding to Solicitations pay close attention to the exact structure of that specific Sourcing Event, as it could differ slightly from that in a separate Event to which they have previously responded for the State.

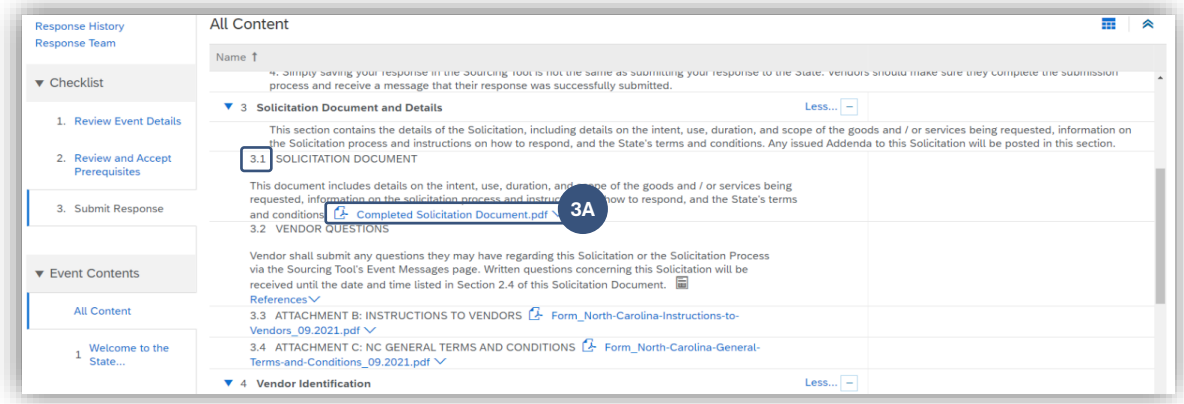


Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

Downloading Attachments

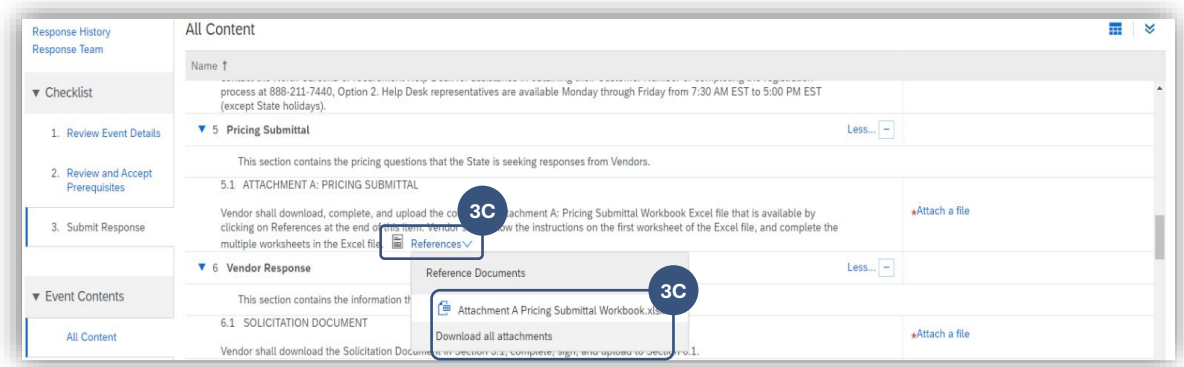
3 It will be important for vendors to download certain documents when composing their bids, the Solicitation Document being the most important of these.

A. Navigate to subsection **3.1** and click on the attached document highlighted by blue text, then click **Download this attachment** in the subsequent popup menu. This should be the **Solicitation Document** that the Procurement User has customized for this specific Solicitation. It will include information and instructions about timing, Agency contacts, and many other important details. Keep this for informational purposes and be sure to read it very carefully for any important instructions for formulating a bid.



B. Other subsections may have a **References** section following their text. Vendors can find important documents to download here, as well. A specific example of this is in subsection **5.1** in the below screenshot which contains the **Pricing Submittal Workbook** for the vendor to download, fill out, and reattach.

C. Click on **References** highlighted in blue text at the end of the subsection and select the specific document to download. If there are multiple documents to download, the user may click **Download all attachments**.



STATE DEPARTMENT STATE BRANCH
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NORTH CAROLINA ePROCUREMENT PURCHASI
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QUOTE PUNCHOUT CATALOG
PURCHASE ORDER
SOURCING
BIDDING
BUY

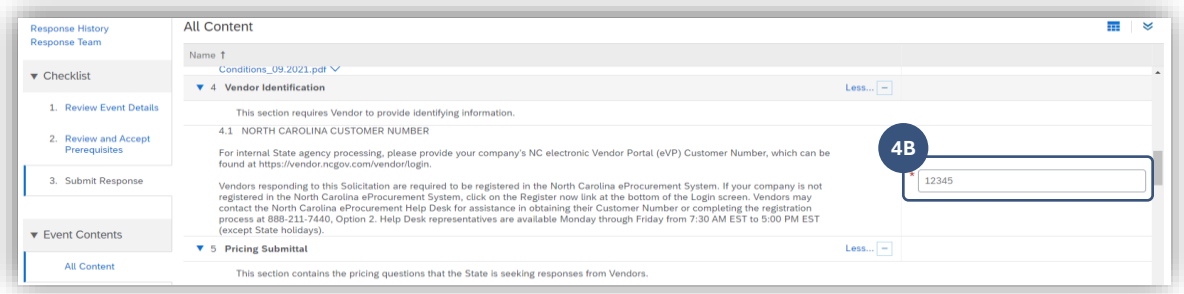
Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

Providing a Bid Response via Answers and Attachments

4 Beginning in Section 4, as the vendor scrolls down the screen, there will be fields into which they can provide answers to questions or upload attachments. Answers in some of those fields will be entered with free-text while the other sections will allow the vendor to upload those attachments. A red asterisk (*) to the left of a field will indicate that an answer or attachment is required. If a vendor attempts to submit a bid without having completed all required fields, the system will display an error message and direct the vendor to the incomplete field(s).

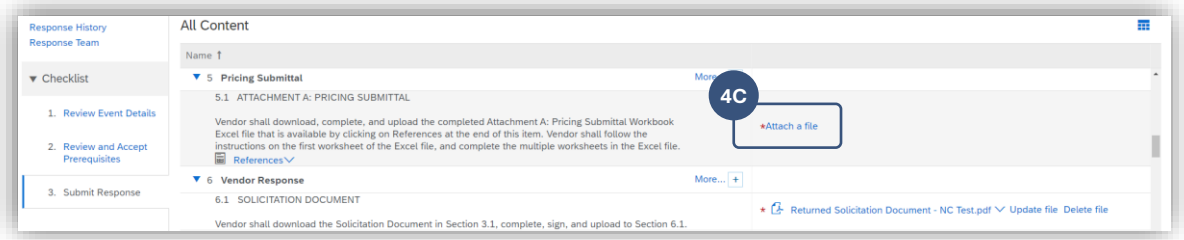
A. Subsection **4.1** is the first field into which an answer can be provided. This is a free-text field and is required, as designated by the red asterisk.

B. The vendor should type their eVP **Customer Number** into this field.



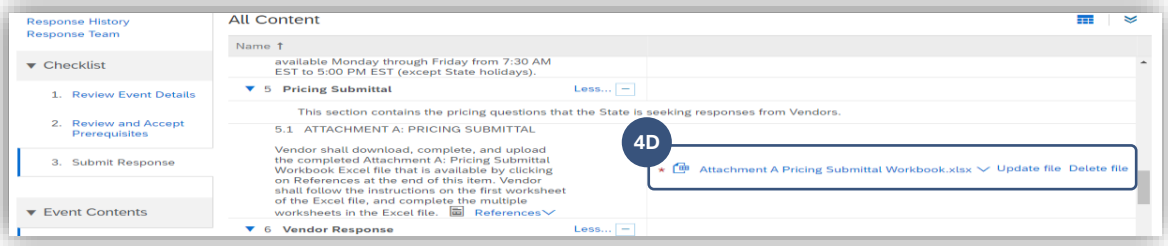
C. Subsection is **5.1** is the next field that may need to be answered. After downloading the Pricing Template per the instructions in Step 3 of the previous section, the vendor should fill it out with their pricing specifics and attach it back to the response by clicking on **Attach a file**. On the subsequent **Add Attachment** screen, browse and select the file to attach from their desktop, then click **OK**.

For IT-related Solicitations this section is NOT included. Pricing Templates are included in the overall solicitation document provided in Section **3.1**. This is sometimes also the case for Non-IT Solicitations, so it is important to pay attention to the specific instructions provided for each solicitation.



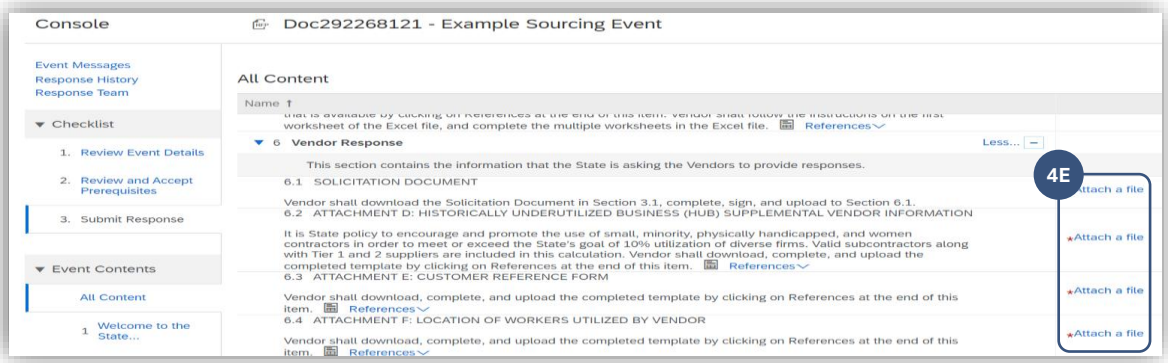
Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

D. Once the file is attached, it will display by name where **Attach a file** used to display. If the wrong file was attached, click **Update a file** to replace it, or click **Delete file** to remove it.



E. Section 6 (or Section 5 for IT Solicitations) provides several other subsections to return completed attachments, most importantly is subsection **6.1**, where the completed Solicitation Document from subsection **3.1** is returned. For most of these subsections, it will be required that an attachment is returned, and solicitations for **Goods** may have more subsections than those for **Services**.

- It is important to verify that all returned attachments contain the correct information and can be opened by the Procurement User. The file size limit is 100MB.
- The last subsection for Non-IT Solicitations is titled “ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION” and provides an optional attachment field to submit any additional relevant documents.



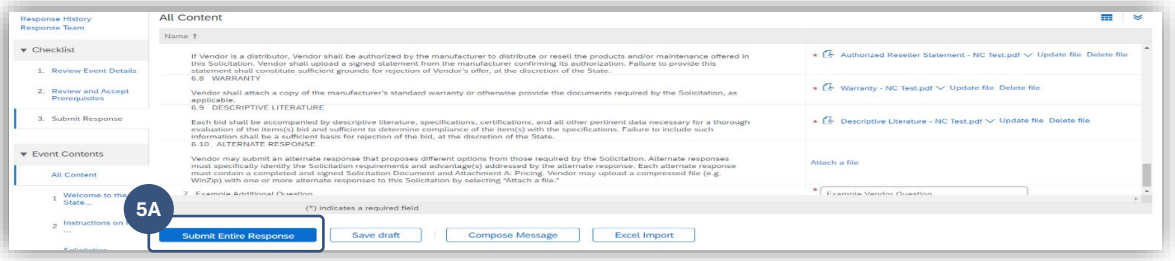
Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

Submitting a Bid Response

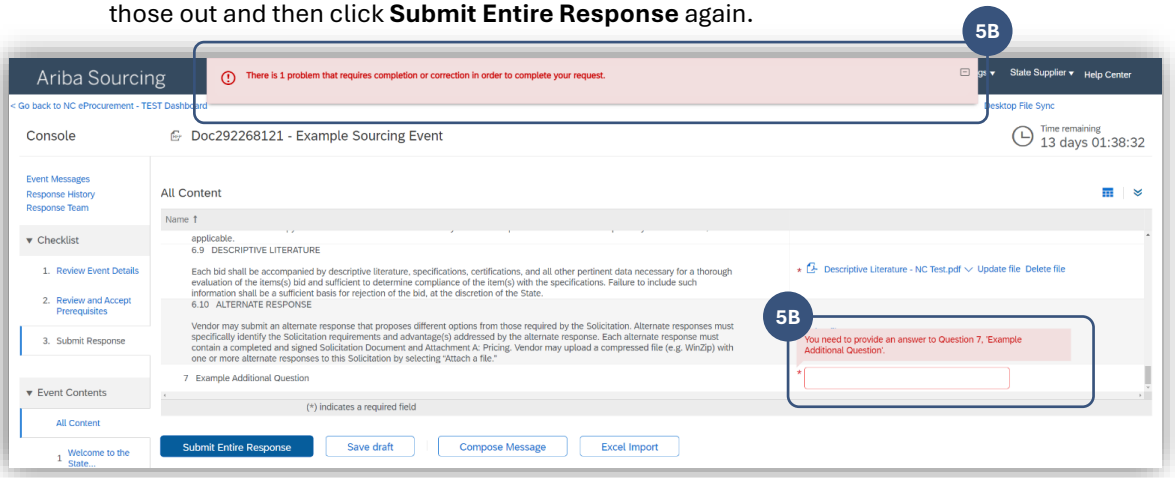
5 Until the user clicks **Submit Entire Response**, the response will not be considered submitted no matter how many documents have been attached.

A. When all questions have been answered and attachments have been uploaded, the vendor should carefully review their answers for accuracy, scroll to the bottom of the screen, and click the **Submit Entire Response** button if they are ready to send their bid to the Procurement User for consideration. If there is still more work to be done and the bid is not ready to be submitted quite yet, the user can click **Save draft** and return to complete the response portion at a later time.

- It is advised that bids responses be submitted 48 hours prior to the bid **Due Date** time, and that vendors open all attachments to check that they are accurate and readable before submitting.
- If a vendor needs to submit separate bid responses to the same Sourcing Event for multiple subsidiaries (NOT alternative bids from the same vendor) to be evaluated separately against each other, they should create separate Ariba Network accounts for each subsidiary. For more information on creating accounts, please see the Accessing the Ariba Network job aid.

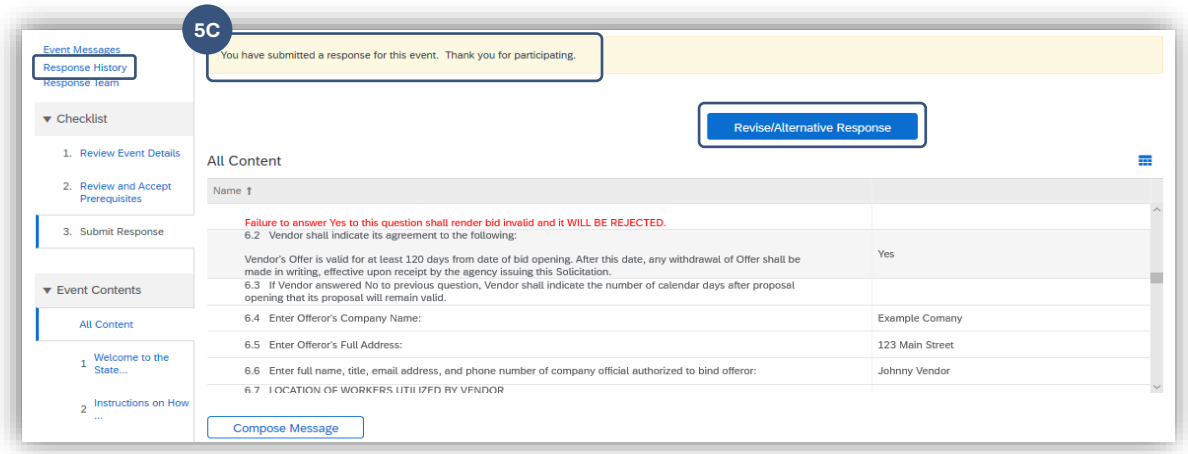


B. If any required information is missing, an error notification will prevent submission and alert the user to the specific issue that needs to be corrected. The vendor should fill those out and then click **Submit Entire Response** again.

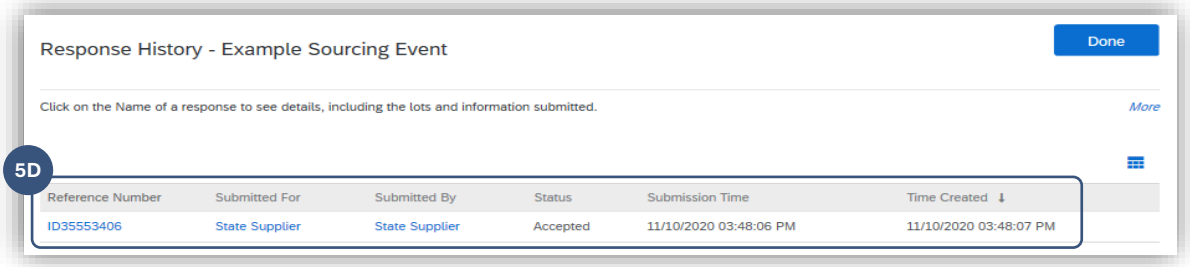


Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

C. Once a bid has been successfully submitted, a note at the top will read "You have submitted a response for this event. Thank you for participating." That and a visible **Revise/Alternative Response** button will confirm that your bid has been submitted. As well, users can click on **Response History** in the top left of the screen to see the exact timing of when bids were submitted and accepted.



D. The **Response History** page will display if the vendor clicks **Response History**.



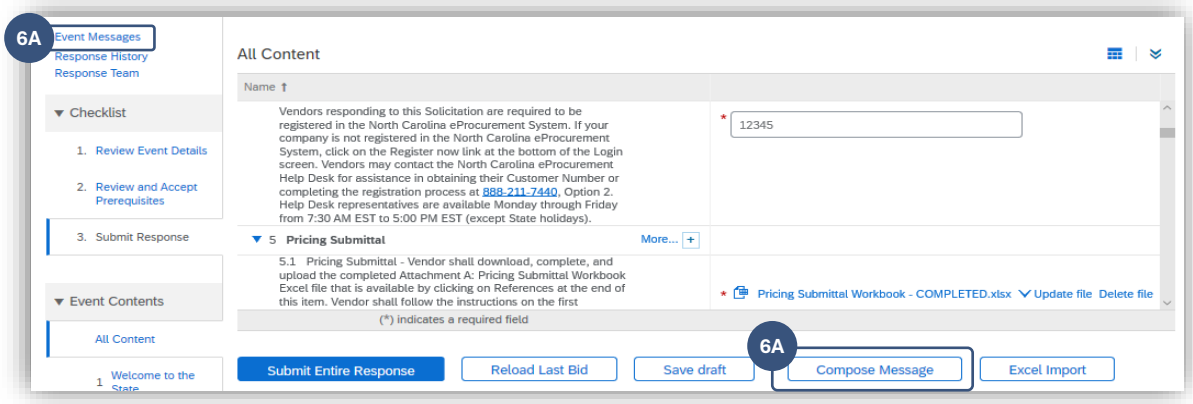
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ELECTRONIC VENDOR PORTAL HUB CERTIFIED
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PURCHASE ORDER
SOURCING
BIDDING
BUY

Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

Asking Questions via the Message Board

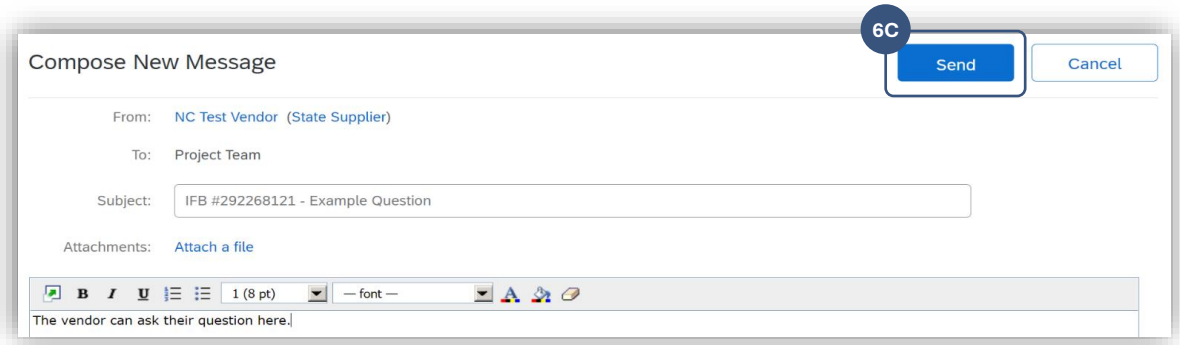
6 Vendors may ask questions to the Procurement User up until the deadline listed for a question-and-answer period in the Solicitation Document. Per subsection 3.2 for Non-IT Solicitations, vendors are instructed to submit questions regarding the Solicitation or Solicitation Process via the Sourcing Tools **Event Messages** page. For IT Solicitations, vendors will download the **Vendor Question Submission Template** in this subsection, but follow the instructions as laid out in the Solicitation Document as to how to submit the questions.

A. To submit a question to a Non-IT Procurement User, click the **Event Messages** link in the top left of the screen or click the **Compose Message** button at the bottom of the screen.



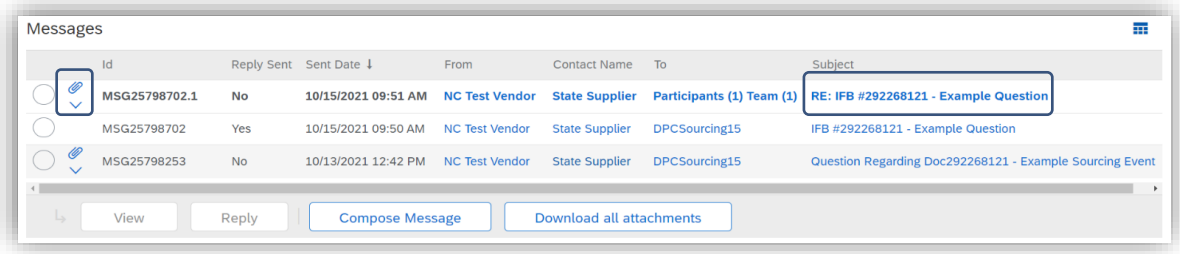
B. The **Event Messages** page will display all outgoing and incoming messages relating to the Sourcing Event. Some messages will be solely between the Procurement User and the vendor, while other messages from the Procurement User will have gone to all vendors who have responded to the Event. Click on **Back to Console** to return to the Event overview or click **Compose Message** to create and submit a question to the Procurement User.

C. The **Compose New Message** page will display. The vendor must enter a descriptive **Subject** (see instructions provided in the Solicitation Document) and include a message to the Procurement User. There is also an option to click on **Attach a file** and upload the any necessary files, then click **Send**.

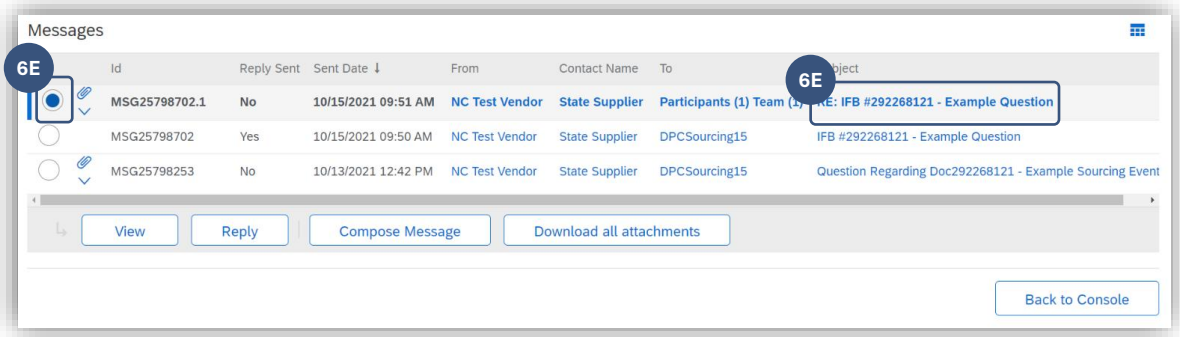


Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

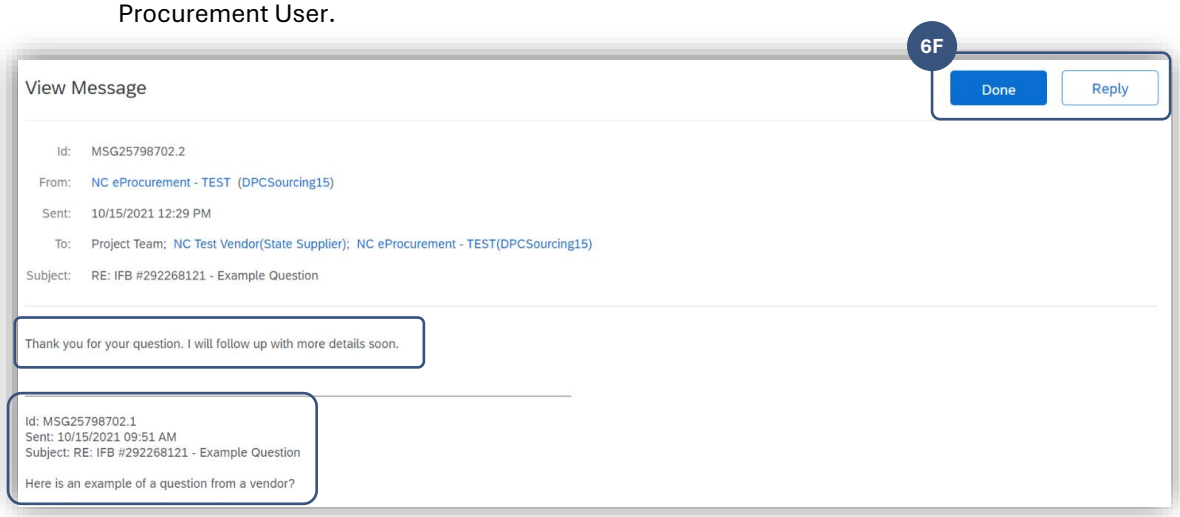
D. The outgoing message will display on the **Event Messages** page with details including a time stamp.



E. If the Procurement User replies, the message will display at the top of the **Event Messages** page. Clicking the radio button to the left of the message will reveal the **View** and **Reply** buttons. Clicking **View** or clicking on the messages **Subject** will display the message details.



F. Message details include the previous message to which the Procurement User replied. Click **Done** to go back to the **Event Messages** page, or **Reply** to respond to the Procurement User.



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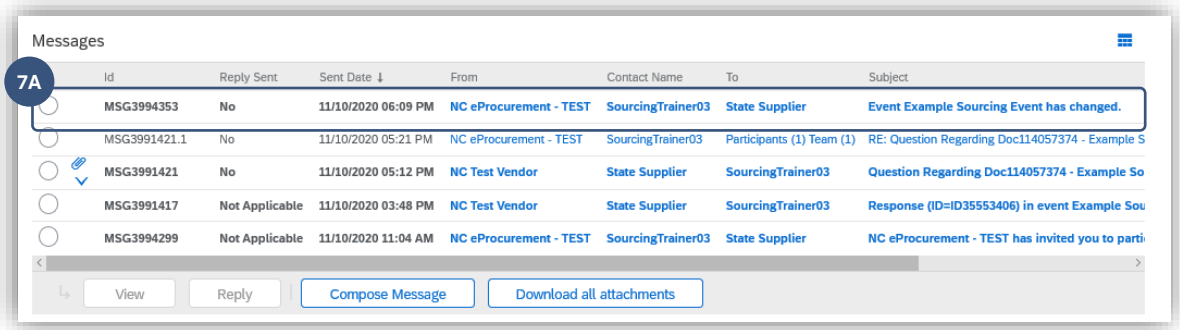
Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

Finding and Responding to an Addendum

7 If a Procurement User needs to issue an Addendum to the original Sourcing Event, whether responding to vendor questions or for any other reason, they will fill out a document detailing the changes and post that document into Section 3 of the Sourcing Event. They are also encouraged to provide detailed descriptions of the changes included in the addendum being issued (in addition to the automated summary email each vendor with the same commodity codes listed as the solicitation will receive) to any vendors who have already accepted the prerequisites, and these details should come via an **Event Message** as well as an email to the address on file for the responding vendor account.

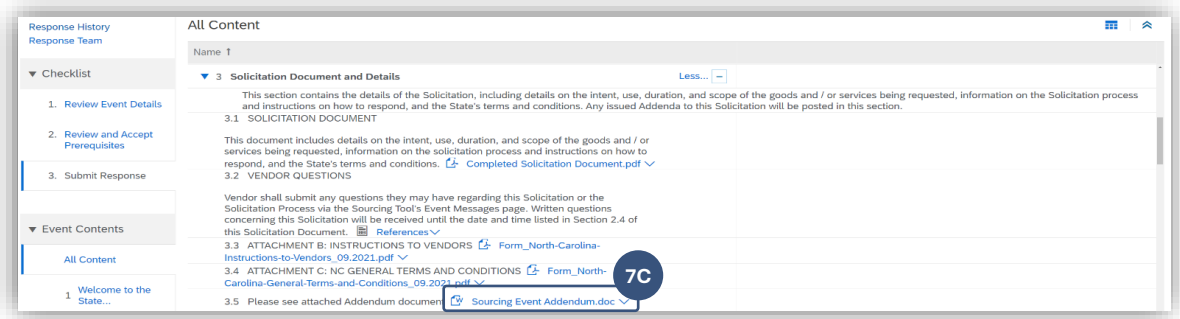
If a vendor has not yet responded with a bid by the time an Addendum is posted, they should just take the addendum into account when submitting their initial bid. If they have already responded and wish to revise their bid based on new information, they can initiate an update by clicking the **Revise/Alternative Response** button.

A. Vendors who have submitted a response should be notified anytime the Sourcing Event is updated via the **Event Messages** page. The message subject should indicate that the **Sourcing Event has changed**. Vendors should also receive this message via email.



B. Clicking **View** or on the messages **Subject** will provide more details about the change, in this case indicating that a change has been made to the Sourcing Event. If viewing via email, the vendor can click a hyperlink that will take them directly from the email to the Sourcing Event (Note: theyll be directed to a log in page first).

C. Procurement Users are advised to add an Addendum directly to Section 3. In most cases this should result in an Addendum being attached to subsection **3.5** for Non-IT solicitations (**3.3** for IT solicitations) and continuing for every subsequent addendum (**3.6**, **3.7**, etc). Vendors should locate the Addendum, download and read the attachment by clicking on the blue text, and respond accordingly.

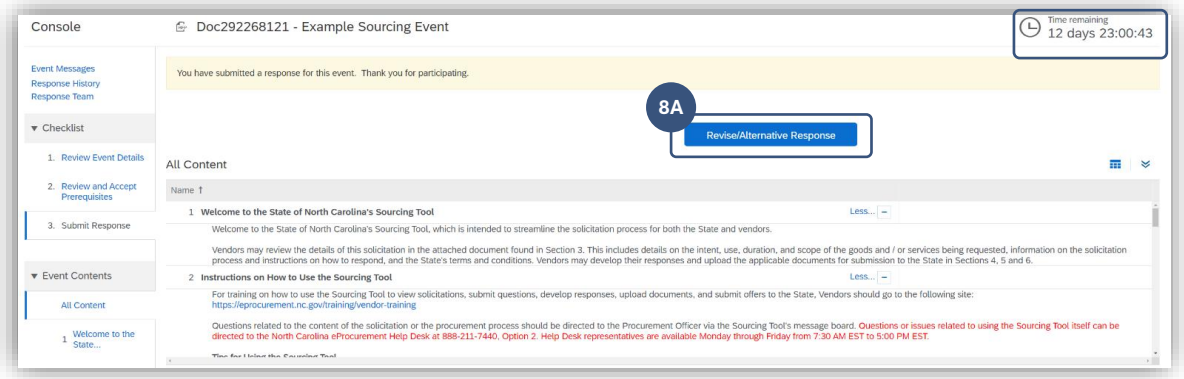


Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

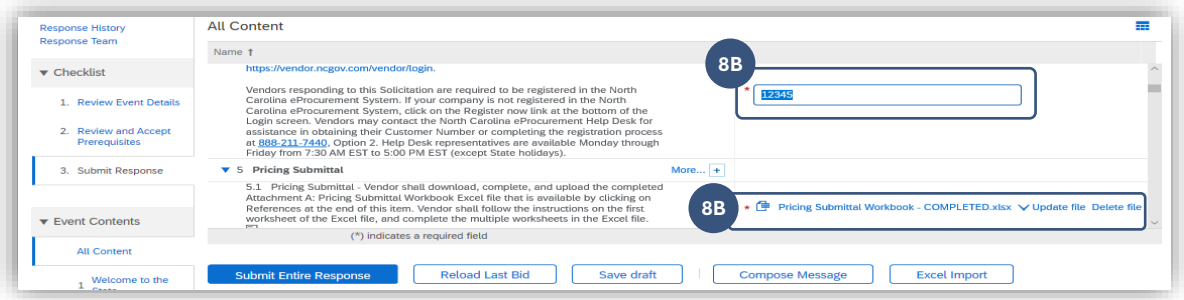
Revising a Submitted Bid Response

8 Vendors can revise their submitted bid response as many times as necessary until the Events deadline for accepting responses as indicated by the countdown clock in the top right of the screen.

A. As long as the Procurement User is still accepting responses to their Solicitation in the Sourcing Event, vendors can unlock a previously submitted bid response for revision by clicking the **Revise/Alternative Response** button at the top of the screen.

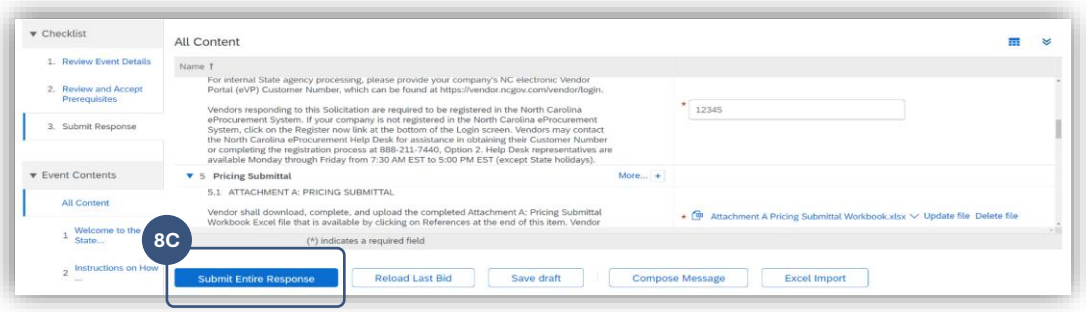


B. Answer fields will be open for overwriting, and new attachments can be added.



C. When all necessary changes have been made, click **Submit Entire Response** to finalize and send the updated bid response to the Procurement User, or click **Reload Last Bid** to erase any changes and revert to the version on file before the edits were initiated.

- If a revision is initiated but never resubmitted, or time expires before the vendor is able to resubmit, the last bid response on file will be the version evaluated by the Procurement User.
- The revised submittal will be recorded on the **Event Messages** and **Response History** pages, and the **Revise/Alternative Response** button will once again be visible.



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BIDDING
BUY

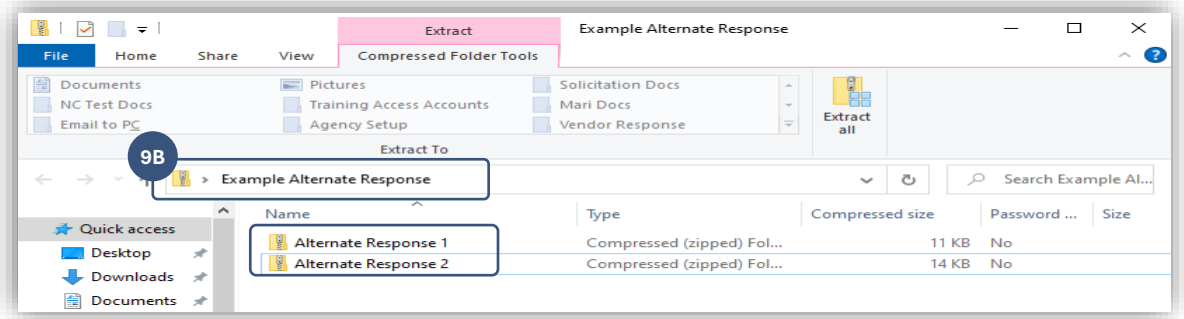
Submitting Alternate Responses

9 Vendors can submit as many Alternate Responses as necessary. For example, maybe the pricing for a set of items in one color is different than the pricing for those same items in another color, and they want the Procurement User to consider both bid responses. The vendor will submit a bid response for the first set of items in the normal fashion, and then they will attach all bid response information for the second set of items in a compressed file to the bottom of the same Sourcing Event. If a vendor needs to submit multiple Alternate Responses for the same Sourcing Event (i.e., a minimum of three total responses), they will create subfolders for each Alternate Response in one compressed file and submit them all together.

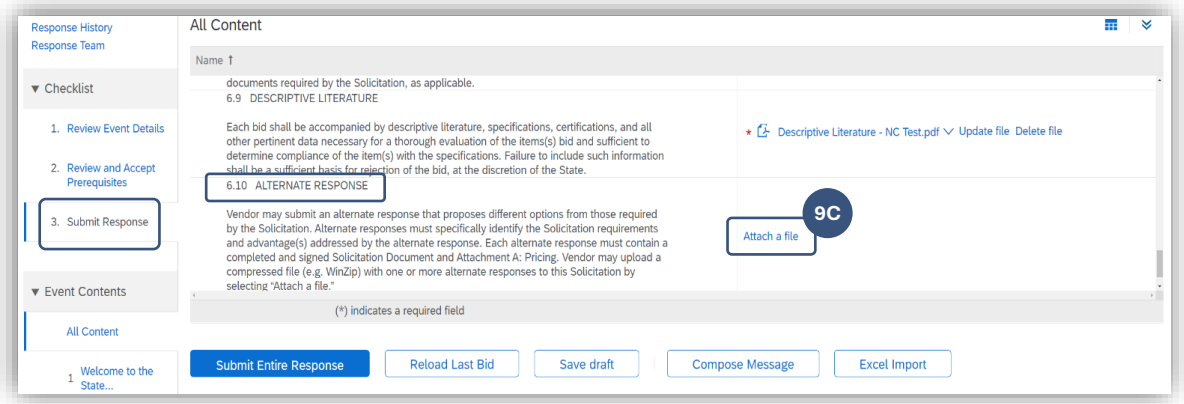
A. Vendors will find the **Alternate Response** subsection at the end of Section 6 (the exact subsection differs based on the type of Solicitation to which they are responding). It is important that all portions of their primary response have been entered into the tool before proceeding.

B. Save the Alternate Response files, including a separate completed and signed Solicitation Document and Pricing File for each Alternate Response, in a Compressed Folder. Be sure to name each file in the folder so it can be clearly identified by the Procurement User, and give the overall Compressed Folder a name that indicates it contains documents pertaining to an Alternate Response.

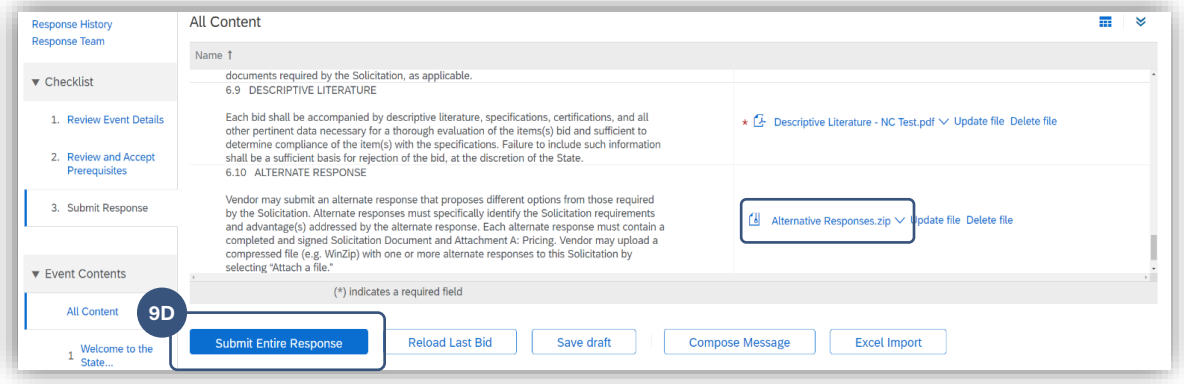
- For most MS Windows users, a quick way to save a document into a Compressed Folder is to right-click on the document(s) needing to go into the folder, move the cursor down to **Send to**, and select the option for **Compressed (zipped) folder**, at which point other documents can be added, and the folder can be renamed.
- If a vendor is submitting multiple Alternate Responses, the documents respective to each Alternate Response should be saved in separate, clearly-named subfolders within the same Compressed folder.
- The zip file is not necessary for IT Solicitation, where it is permissible to submit multiple attachments in that response section.



C. Navigate back to the **Alternate Response** subsection in Section 6 (in the screenshot below, its subsection **6.10**, but this may differ based on the type of Solicitation to which the vendor is responding) and click the **Attach a file** link. Select the Compressed Folder with the Alternate Response attachments from the desktop and click **OK**.



D. The Compressed Folder will now show as attached. If no other changes are necessary and all content has been reviewed for accuracy, click the **Submit Entire Response** button. Once the bidding **Due Date** arrives, the Procurement User will be able to view the primary bid or proposal response along with any Alternate Responses.

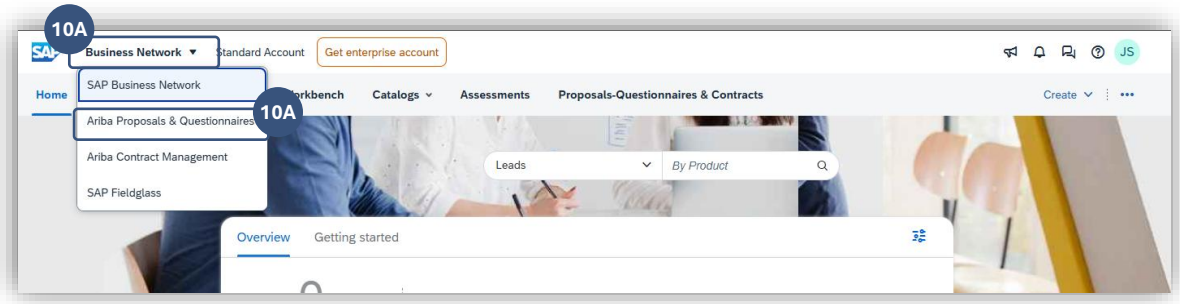


Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

Managing Past Sourcing Events

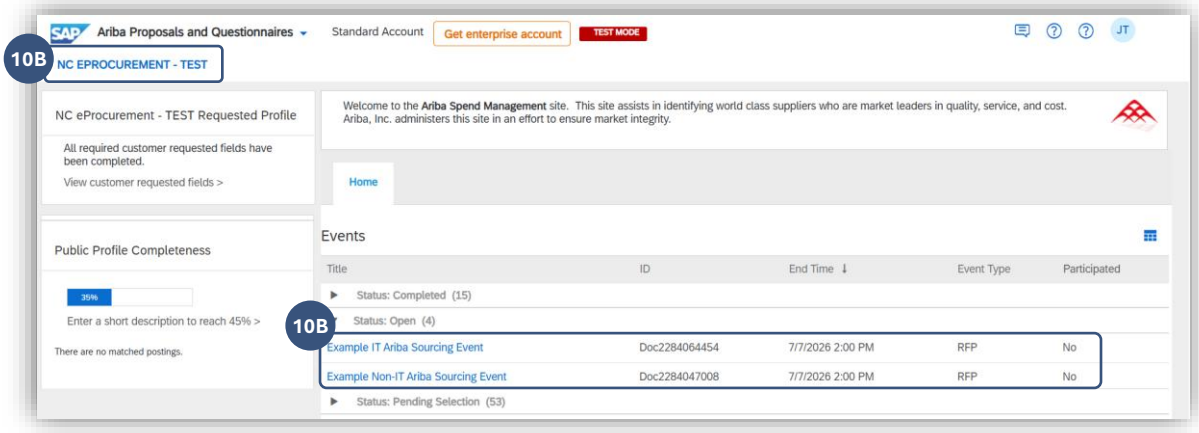
10 Vendors can view a list of Sourcing Events to which they are attached by accessing the **Ariba Proposals And Questionnaires** page when signed into the Ariba Network.

A. Click the dropdown next to the **SAP** logo in the top left of their screen and select **Ariba Proposals & Questionnaires** or click the **Proposals & Contracts** option.



B. A listing of Sourcing Events to which the vendor is attached will display in the **Events** section.

It is important that **NC EPROCUREMENT** be selected at the top of the page if the vendor has also responded to Sourcing Events from other organizations. Click the **MORE...** dropdown to see all options.



C. The Events listed will be organized in three categories:

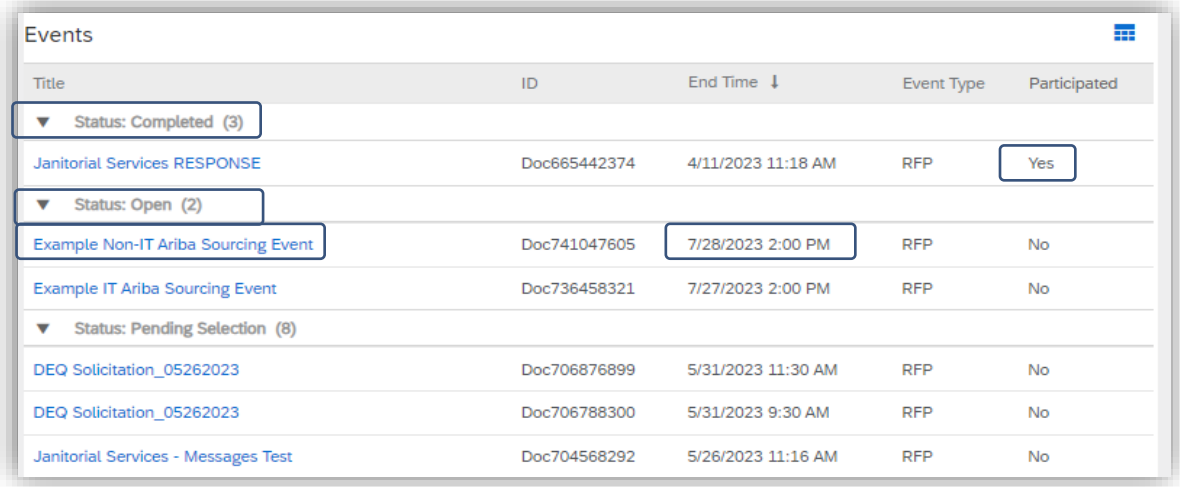
I. Open: Sourcing Events for which the bidding **End Time** has not expired. Vendors can still submit or revise their responses on these Events.

II. Pending Selection: Sourcing Events for which the bidding **End Time** has passed and the Procurement User is in the bid evaluation stage.

III. Completed: Sourcing Events that are over and the Procurement User has awarded a contract.

Responding to an Ariba Sourcing Event

D. The columns will provide information such as the **Title** of the Sourcing Event, the **End Time**, which tells the vendor by when all responses must be submitted, and whether or not the vendor has **Participated** in the solicitation by responding. Clicking on the **Title** will return the vendor to the Sourcing Event where they can review their completed responses or revise any responses that are still in an **Open** status.



Events

Title	ID	End Time	Event Type	Participated
Status: Completed (3)				
Janitorial Services RESPONSE	Doc665442374	4/11/2023 11:18 AM	RFP	Yes
Status: Open (2)				
Example Non-IT Ariba Sourcing Event	Doc741047605	7/28/2023 2:00 PM	RFP	No
Example IT Ariba Sourcing Event	Doc736458321	7/27/2023 2:00 PM	RFP	No
Status: Pending Selection (8)				
DEQ Solicitation_05262023	Doc706876899	5/31/2023 11:30 AM	RFP	No
DEQ Solicitation_05262023	Doc706788300	5/31/2023 9:30 AM	RFP	No
Janitorial Services - Messages Test	Doc704568292	5/26/2023 11:16 AM	RFP	No