

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SUPPLIES TO WASHINGTON COUNTY

OBJECTIVE OF COUNTY PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Utilize to the fullest extent possible the centralized procurement of all necessary supplies, capital equipment and services for all departments and agencies of this county. The Purchasing Department is the central point for the county's purchases of materials, supplies, equipment, construction contracts, consulting service agreements, and certain services.

Promote good supplier relationship and an open door policy to all suppliers, current and potential, to enable suppliers to furnish information and assistance on new and improved supplies, materials, equipment, or services which may result in cost-savings for the county.

Establish and maintain a good vendor relationship by treating all vendors fairly.

Performing purchasing activities as to create public goodwill for the county.

Insure that all purchases are in compliance with the rules, regulations, and purchasing guidelines set forth by the County, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Federal Government.

Promote the utilization of American made products and materials.

VENDOR CONTRACTS

Any correspondence vendors initiate or any contacts which vendors desire to make with the various county agencies shall be made through the Purchasing Department. This does not restrict vendors from talking directly to those in the various departments as this is often necessary for the exchange of information. The only limitation is that these contacts be made through the Purchasing Department.

COUNTY CODE

For Goods/Services/Construction between \$2,000.00 to \$12,200.00, whenever possible, telephone price quotations from at least three (3) vendors will be obtained. For Goods/Services/Construction between \$12,200 and \$22,500, that do not have to be bid, that is, are not part of a larger purchase, the county must obtain "written or telephonic price quotations from at least three qualified and responsible contractors". For those items under \$12,200, the purchasing department will consider the cost effectiveness of a competitive price vs. negotiation to determine the appropriate course of action. All contracts or purchases in excess of \$22,500 shall be in form of a formal bid request and shall be made with the lowest responsible bidder meeting the specifications. All bids must be advertised in at least one newspaper of general circulation, published or circulating in the county at least two (2) times at intervals of not less than three (3) days where the daily newspapers of general circulation are employed. The first advertisement shall be published not less than ten (10) days prior to the date of the opening bids.

OBTAINING BIDS & VENDOR REGISTRATION

Bids (RFB), proposal (RFP) and quotes (RFQ) are available for download from our website at www.washingtoncopa.gov. Vendors receiving the RFB, RFI, and RFQ's are responsible for checking for changes at the website, including changes in schedule.

Specifications and proposals blanks may be picked up at the Washington County Purchasing Office, 95 West Beau Street, Suite 430, Washington, PA or by submitting a written request to this address, the website, or by email

Vendors may also go to our website and register for notifications. After the vendor application is approved the vendor will be added to our bid list for notification by email of open bids, proposals and quotes.

PURPOSES OF COMPETITIVE BIDDING

To invite competition and to guard against favoritism, improvidence, extravagance, fraud, and corruption in the awarding of contracts. *Conduit and Foundation Corporation v. City of Philadelphia*, 41 PA. Commonwealth 641, 656, 401 A. 2d 376, 379 (1979)

To give all person's equal right to compete for public contracts, to prevent unjust favoritism, collusion, or fraud in awarding public contracts, and to secure for the Commonwealth the benefits which flow from free and unrestricted competition. See *United States v. Brookridge Farm*, 11 F. 2d 461 (10th Cir. 1940)

DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIFICATIONS & AUTHORIZATION TO BID:

Specifications are developed by the user department in conjunction with the purchasing department. Request for bid is then forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners for approval.

SUBMISSION OF BIDS:

All bids are to be submitted in ink or typewritten. Sealed bids will be received only between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at the Washington County Controller's Office, 100 West Beau Street, Ste 403, Washington PA 15301.

Bidder may withdraw his bid by making a properly authorized and executed written application to the Controller's office prior to the deadline for the submission of bids. Certain bids may be withdrawn after the bid opening if in compliance with the act of January 23, 1974, P.L. 9 No.4 : 73 PS : 1601 et seq.

Sealed bids are opened and read publicly in a meeting at a time and place designated in the Advertisement for Bids. Contracts are awarded to the lowest responsible and responsive bidder meeting the specifications, in the case of RFB's.

Pursuant to Act 142, Effective February 20, 2001 (16 PS Section 1802): The contract shall be awarded, or all bids shall be rejected, within thirty days of the opening of the bids, except for bids subject to 62 Pa.C.S (relating to procurement). Thirty-day extensions of the date for the award may be made by mutual written consent of the commissioners and any bidder who wishes to remain under consideration for award. The commissioners shall excuse from the consideration any bidder not wishing to agree to a request for extension of the date for the award and shall release such bidder from any bid bond or similar bid security furnished under subsection (f).

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Pursuant to Act 142, Effective February 20, 2001 (16 PS Section 1802): The Commissioners may require that any bids advertised be accompanied by cash, by a certified check, cashiers check, bank good faith check or other irrevocable letter of credit in a reasonable amount drawn upon a bank authorized to do business in this Commonwealth, or by a bond with corporate surety in a reasonable amount. Whenever it is required that a bid be accompanied by cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank good faith check or other irrevocable letter of credit or bond, no bid shall be considered unless so accompanied.

EVALUATION OF BIDS

Bids are tabulated by the purchasing department and forwarded to the user department for review and evaluation. After reviewing the bids the user department sends their recommendation to the purchasing department or provides justification if not recommending award to the low bidder. The purchasing department reviews the specifications with the department to determine if they concur with the departments recommendations.

Bids shall be evaluated taking into consideration the total cost of bid proposals to the county. Price alone may not be the sole determining factor of lowest cost. The objective is to determine the bid which shall result in the lowest total cost to the county which adheres to all of the requirements.

The Director of Purchasing and the County Solicitor may waive insubstantial errors in the bid proposal and specification.

The county reserves the right to reject all bids, if it determines that such rejection is in the best interests of the County.

AWARDING OF CONTRACTS

As stated above, the lowest responsible and responsive bidder meeting specifications shall be awarded a contract for bids. There are, however, situations in which the lowest bidder may not win an award. These include but are not limited to the following:

1. The lowest bid does not meet the requirements of the specification.
2. When a bid error causes the bid to be withdrawn by the bidder.
3. Past Performance
4. RFP, RFQ Competitive Negotiating

In cases where bids are awarded to other than the lowest bidder, justification shall be furnished to the Board of Commissioners when recommendations of award are submitted.

EQUAL LOW BIDS

When tie bids occur, awards may be made on the following basis.

- A. Past Performance
- B. Local supplier (firm within Washington County)
- C. Splitting awards

“OR EQUAL” SPECIFICATION COMPLIANCE

The words “or equal” in a specification mean that the bidder is given the opportunity to substitute an item in place of the referenced manufacturer’s product named in invitation to bid.

Any substituted item must, however, in the opinion of the Purchasing Department be equal to the referenced item in terms of quality and performance. Vendor must provide documentation and/ or sample that alternate brand meets specifications.

REVIEW OF BIDS BY VENDORS

Bid results are available for review by all vendors upon request. Appointments to review the bids are encouraged. Due to the time involved and the volume of bids processed bid tabulations are not mailed or read over the phone. The bid tabulation sheets are posted on the Washington County web site for not less than 30 days following the bid opening. . Website: www.washingtoncopa.gov

PURCHASING UNDER STATE CONTRACTS

Any items purchased under State Contracts need not be submitted for either the county’s informal bidding process or the formal advertised bidding process. The purchasing department does not assume that the prices listed on the state contracts are the lowest which may be received from suppliers.

COOPERATIVE PURCHASING

When stated specifically in the solicitation, the County Director of Purchasing may solicit bids and award contracts on behalf of other public bodies for the purpose of combining requirements to increase efficiency, effect cost savings, or reduce administrative expenses. Jurisdictions participating in such solicitations shall be identified in the solicitation.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION

The Department of Purchasing hold membership in the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing, Inc. a non-profit educational and technical organization that includes among its goals and objectives the study, discussion, and recommendation of improvements in governmental purchasing and the interchange of ideas and experiences on local state, and national governmental purchasing problems.

OVER AND UNDER SHIPMENTS

For printed matters a 10% variance from the order quantity is permitted. For items measured individually, i.e., each, dozen, case, gross, a variance from the order quantity is not permitted. In any instance where the supplier shall ship quantities in excess of these guidelines, Washington County reserves the right to return, at the suppliers’ expense, either the entire shipment or the excess over the order quantity.

VENDORS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

The purchasing department has the responsibility if communicating the country’s needs for supplies, materials, equipment, constructions projects, and services to the business community All current and potential suppliers shall be treated fairly and with courtesy to promote goodwill.

All sales representatives are encouraged to make an appointment.

Purchasing\common\wp\forms\suppliers manual

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DEVELOPED & PUBLISHED BY:

Washington County Purchasing Department

430 Crossroads Building

Washington PA 15031

