PURCHASING FAQ

Find the Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Questions About our Purchasing Policy

Q: What is a Request for Bid (RFB)?

A: The RFB process requires detailed specifications solicited by the District for firm bids. Bids are currently delivered electronically via PlanetBids. The RFB process is rigid: bids are due on or before the published date and time specified in the RFB. Bids received after the exact time set for opening will not be accepted. Negotiations are not allowed. Suppliers must ask for clarification prior to bid opening if they have questions. Contract award is based on the lowest price received from a responsive and responsible bidder. Bids that take exception to the bid package may be rejected by Purchasing.

Q: What is a Request for Proposal (RFP)?

A: The RFP is used when the importance of technical considerations requires that contract award be based on cost and other factors. These "other factors" are expressed in the RFP as Evaluation Criteria. Unlike an RFB, which contains detailed specifications, an RFP generally describes the requirement in terms of performance or outcomes. Technical evaluations and price evaluations are completed. Negotiations may be conducted to ensure full understanding and accurate pricing. Contract award is based on the District's "best value" determination, which may or may not be the lowest price.

Q: What is a Request for Quotation (RFQ)?

A: This is a simplified process that reduces paperwork and administrative time. Purchase orders are issued based on the best price received from a responsible supplier; discussions may be held to clarify or ensure responses meet District requirements. RFQ requirements and include a firm price and the required delivery date. The RFQ is a flexible and expeditious method for acquiring goods and services.

Q: I am processing a REQ. How do I know what Department to select and route to?

A: The Requisition should be tied to the Department that the goods and services are for.

Q: How do I know which GL account to use for my REQ?

A: The GL account should be tied to your Department budget and the services budgeted for. You can request an updated GL account List from Accounting.

Q: I need to submit a REQ for services that are under a contract, but I don't know where the contract is located. How can I find the contract?

A: The GL account should be tied to your Department budget and the services budgeted for. You can request an updated GL account List from Accounting.

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Q: I have an agreement for on-call services as needed. How do I enter a REQ?

A: Review the on-call agreement with Purchasing to verify how Purchase Orders are to be awarded based on the agreement terms.

Q: I have 2 quotes for services, and the lowest vendor is $2,500.00. What do I do next?

A: Verify the lowest vendor is in Tyler. If the vendor does not have an ID in Tyler, work with Purchasing and Accounting to set up the vendor. Review the onboarding process.

Q: I need to issue a PO for facilities repair. I received one quote and the price is $1,500.00. What requirements should the vendor have before I enter a REQ?

A: First obtain a second quote, then ensure both contractors are registered with the Department of Industrial Relations and have an appropriate license under the California State License Board.

Q: My REQ is completed. Who will approve my REQ?

A: When you select the Department routing, the designated Manager/Director in that Department will review and approve in accordance with the approval level authority.

Q: How do I make changes to an already submitted REQ?

A: You may go back into Tyler and edit the REQ. Note: when you do this, it will restart the approval process.

Q: I have a quote for promotional items, and my quoted price is $980.00, but it does not include sales tax. Do I need a REQ?

A: Yes, because the invoice will include sales tax at 7.75%, which will take the invoice amount over $1,000.00. All invoices over $1,000.00 inclusive of all sales taxes and all other applicable fees require a PO.

Q: I have a PO for a contract amount. I need to do a change order to increase my PO. What should I do?

A: Review the on-call agreement with Purchasing to verify how Purchase Orders are to be awarded based on the agreement terms.

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Q: I have an on-call agreement with a vendor, and I need them to come out and inspect a site well. Can I call the vendor and have them come out without a PO since I have an agreement?

A: This is dependent on the Agreement Terms and Conditions. However, if repairs are needed immediately, the requestor should use their best judgment to complete the necessary work and then follow up with Purchasing on the next business day to review and proceed accordingly.

Q:I have an agreement and the vendor needs a PO for a job over $25,000.00. The vendor has not submitted the payment and performance bonds. Can I have them begin the work since the agreement is executed?

A: No. The vendor must submit the payment and performance bonds to ensure the work is completed. In the event they cannot complete the work, the payment and performance bonds are used to pay subcontractors or provide other remedies.

Q: I have a quote for services in the amount of $2,500.00. Does the vendor require a Certificate of Insurance on file?

A: Yes, all services, regardless of thresholds, require an approved Certificate of Insurance.

Q: I have 2 quotes for printing services but based on the quote I want to go with the higher vendor because the lower vendor cannot meet the lead time for the requested delivery. Can I still move forward with the higher vendor?

A: Yes. Vendor number one is technically unresponsive since they cannot meet the required deadline. Document the reason for selecting the higher vendor and work with Purchasing to properly document the decision-making process via REQ notes.

Q: I have a vendor who wants to bid on an HVAC repair. The work is estimated to be $3,000.00, but the vendor confirmed they do not have DIR (Department of Industrial Relations) registration. Can the contractor still bid on the project and be awarded the contract?

A: The contractor may bid on the project; however, they will be deemed unresponsive and cannot be awarded the PO. All Public Works project contractors must be appropriately licensed and registered with the DIR and follow California state regulations as applicable.

Q: I have to pay an invoice for a lease agreement. Do I need a PO?

A: No. Review the Purchasing Exceptions policy to confirm services exempted from the competitive procurement process.

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Q: I need to purchase several vehicles. The estimated purchase is $200,000.00. Do I need to issue a formal bid, or what options do I have?

A: You may issue a formal bid; however, there are other options such as using a cooperative contract, where the procurement is facilitated by another leading agency and other government agencies are allowed to utilize the awarded goods, services, and pricing. Work with Purchasing to identify options and exceptions that may be applicable.

Q: I need to submit a REQ, and there is only one vendor who can perform the work or supply the required part. Do I still need to get a second quote?

A: No. If the vendor is the sole qualified resource authorized to service the item, the only approved distributor for the part, or the exclusive provider due to proprietary components, then a second quote is not required. In these cases, please check with Purchasing to confirm whether we have a current sole source letter on file. If not, and the vendor is new, we will need to either request a letter from the vendor on company letterhead or complete a Sole Source Form documenting why they are the only available vendor. Refer to the Sole Source Form on the intranet.