

How to Do



Business with Douglas County, Georgia Purchasing Department

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Introduction

The Purchasing Department should be your first point of contact with the County. Our role is to bring together users and suppliers to ensure that the County receives the best value for the services, materials, supplies and equipment needed to effectively and efficiently operate the County. We are here to help you understand how best to do business with Douglas County. As can be expected, there are rules to follow and we will do our best to inform you of these rules.

Vendor List

Vendors wishing to be placed on Douglas County's vendor list and receive automatic notification of Bids and RFP's are encouraged to submit a vendor application. The vendor application can be downloaded from our website.

Purchasing Thresholds

The Purchasing Department has the responsibility of conducting County business in a professional manner.

The County's operating funds come from local taxpayers, State and Federal governments, various fees, grants, special activities, etc. Therefore, all purchases no matter how large or small must be made in accordance with the County's Purchasing Policy. The County's Purchasing Policy dictates the method of procurement that must be used for each type of purchase:

1. **Required Quotation Procedures:**

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. | \$0 to \$1,000 | One (1) quote acceptable |
| b. | \$1,001 to \$1,500 | Three (3) Telephone or written quotes |
| c. | \$1,501 to \$25,000 | Three (3) written quotes required |
| d. | \$25,001 to \$50,000 | Three (3) written quotes responding to County's scope of work |
| d. | \$50,001 and over | Sealed Bids/Proposals |

2. **Sealed Bid/Proposal Process:**

Once approved in the departmental budget or approved to advertise for bids by the Board of Commissioners, a description of the items/services required is advertised in the legal organ, Douglas County Sentinel, generally two (2) weeks prior to the Bid Opening. All Bid Openings are open to the Public and all vendors are encouraged to attend.

It is against the County's Procurement Policy to split a purchase into two or more orders to avoid the \$50,000 limit and related requirement for the Bid or RFP process.

Competitive Solutions

In general, price competition is the best way to make money go further. The process we go through also designates who the chosen vendor should be in a fair and equitable manner. That is why we advocate competition "wherever practicable" in an effort to promote fairness and better pricing.

Formal Solicitation

Formal Solicitation is required when the purchase is anticipated to exceed \$50,000. There are two basic types of formal solicitations:

1. Invitation to Bid (BID)
2. Request for Proposal (RFP)

Both the Bid and RFP require advertisement in the local newspaper and may also be advertised in other area newspapers and professional trade journals. The intent with these solicitations is to generate as much involvement as possible with qualified suppliers. There are some significant differences between the Bid and RFP. The primary difference is award criteria. Generally, the Bid is awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. In other words, the bidder who submits a bid that meets all of the requirements and specifications of the Bid at the lowest overall cost. On the other hand, the RFP is typically awarded to the responsive and responsible respondent receiving the highest overall ranking, as decided by an Evaluation Panel. During the RFP evaluation process, the top ranked respondents may be asked to give a formal presentation to the panel. Additionally, the price and other terms of agreement may be negotiated with the firm receiving the highest overall ranking by the panel.

Brand Name and Substitute Items

The County is always seeking the best value for the money. Occasionally, a brand name is used in specifications to establish a standard grade or quality and will generally be followed by the words

"or equal". The County will consider any substitute item(s) that meet or exceed all the requirements of the specifications. It is the supplier's responsibility to provide all the information on any substitute item(s) they use in their bid. The County reserves the right to review and either accept or reject any substitute item(s).

Questions on Specifications

Questions pertaining to a Bid or RFP should be directed to the Purchasing Director at (770) 920-7390. The County will frequently hold a public "pre-bid" or "pre-proposal" meeting to review the specifications and answer any questions prior to the Bid or RFP opening date. When appropriate, a site visit may be conducted following the "pre-bid" or "pre-proposal" meeting. We strongly encourage all prospective bidders or respondents to attend these meetings. A pre-bid/proposal meeting is usually not "MANDATORY". The meetings are sometimes mandatory if Douglas County wants the vendors to actually SEE something.

When revisions or clarifications to the Bid or RFP are necessary, the County will issue an addendum. An addendum is a written document that modifies the Bid or RFP and becomes part of the Bid or RFP documents. Sometimes it is necessary to issue more than one addendum. Each bidder on the list of bidders (or plan holders list) will receive a copy of each addendum; however, ultimately it is the vendor's responsibility to ensure they have received any addenda.

Insurance Requirements

The Douglas County Board of Commissioners generally requires anyone who is performing any work on County owned property to provide the following forms of insurance:

- General Liability
- Automobile Liability
- Workers Compensation

The amount of the coverage for each of these forms of insurance depends on the total dollar value of the contract. Please read the Bid or RFP specifications and check with your insurance agent to make sure that you comply with all of the County's insurance requirements before submitting your quote, bid or proposal.

Submitting Your Bid or RFP

Be sure to read the entire Bid / RFP package and complete all the required documents. Check the figures to make sure that the unit prices and the extended amounts agree. In the event there is a discrepancy between the unit price and the extended amount, the unit price will prevail. Likewise, if there is a discrepancy between the amount shown in numbers and the amount shown in written words, the written words will prevail. Be sure to SIGN YOUR BID OR PROPOSAL BEFORE YOU SUBMIT IT. Bid and RFP opening times are strictly adhered to. Any bids or proposals submitted after the time specified in the Bid or RFP, or in an addendum, will not be accepted and will remain unopened. Faxed or other electronically submitted bids or proposals are NOT ACCEPTABLE unless stated otherwise in the bid documents. All bids or proposals need to be delivered to the County as specified in the bid or proposal specifications.

Mistakes

If you realize that you have made a mistake in your bid or proposal prior to the opening date and time, you may take your package back and correct it and resubmit it before the opening date and time, or you may submit a sealed statement clarifying the error before the opening date and time. Last minute cost modifications written on the outside of an envelope are not valid.

Bids and proposals **CAN NOT** be corrected or withdrawn after the bid opening date and time.

What is “Piggybacking?”

In short, "piggybacking" refers to using competitive Bid's / RFP's obtained by other governmental entities or requested earlier by Douglas County. The County may utilize a competitive Bid / RFP solicited by any other municipal, county, state, federal governmental agency, any combination of such agencies or any other competitive Bid / RFP deemed to be in the best interest of the County. By piggybacking other Bid's / RFP's the County can avoid the time consuming process of soliciting bids for the same commodity or service. Generally, we piggyback Bid's / RFP's that are less than one year "old" and where the pricing is still being honored by the vendor.

We also purchase directly off the State Term contract, which, as the name implies, are bids solicited and awarded by the State of Georgia. The State of Georgia offers State negotiated agreements, which permits, but does not obligate, us to purchase supplies and services without soliciting bids or quotes. Please advise us of any Term contracts or agreement you have been awarded by the State of Georgia, or of contracts that have been awarded to you by other governmental entities.

Award

Once quotes, bids, or proposals are received, the Purchasing Department and the department requesting the purchase will be involved in evaluating the results. For purchases valued \$50,000 and up, the Purchasing Director and the Evaluation Team can make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners who, in turn, will vote on the award at a scheduled County Commission Meeting.

Once an award is made, a purchase order and/or a written contract is prepared with all the supporting documentation (i.e. insurance certificates, payment and performance bonds) attached. The appropriate parties then sign the purchase order or written contract document, and the order is placed.

Payment

Payments are made from approved invoices. To avoid delays, submit a complete invoice that includes: the purchase order number, if applicable, a description of the item(s) or service, who received the item(s) or service, and the quantity, unit price, delivery charges and total price, along with any discount terms that may apply. The County will make payments in accordance with the County's Financial Policy. The County usually makes payments within 30-45 days after receipt of an approved invoice.

Submit Invoices To:

Douglas County Board of Commissioners
Finance Department, Accounts Payable
8700 Hospital Drive
Douglasville, Georgia 30134

Most Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How can I view Douglas County's Bids On-Line?

A: Douglas County has available on our website a tool that administrates all Bids and RFPs with free access at www.celebratedouglascounty.com .

Q: How can I be added to your vendor list?

A: Please visit our website at www.celebratedouglascounty.com and download a vendor application that will be submitted to the Purchasing Department once complete.

Q: How do I know when a bid has been advertised?

A: You can look on our website at www.celebratedouglascounty.com located under the Purchasing Department tab.

Q: Where can I direct questions about a BID or RFP that is posted on the website?

A: By contacting the Purchasing Department at (770)-920-7579, or by email at dcpurchasing@co.douglas.ga.us .

Q: Where can I obtain Specifications/Requirements for a BID/RFP?

A: 1) Call the Purchasing Department at (770) 920-7579 2) Email a request to dcpurchasing@co.douglas.ga.us .

Q: Where will proposals be received?

A: At the Douglas County Board of Commissioners Purchasing Department at 8700 Hospital Drive Douglasville, Georgia 30134.

Q: What if I have objections about a bid?

A: The Board reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. Any objections to the specifications/requirements as set forth should be filed in writing prior to the proposal deadline. Please contact the Purchasing Department with your concerns at (770) 920-7579.

Q: How can I obtain the results of a bid?

A: You can call the Purchasing Department at (770) 920-7579, or look under the Bid Awards section on our website for the evaluation/tabulation.

Q: What is the difference between a BID and an RFP?

A: A **Bid** typically refers to product(s) and is based on a defined set of specifications where the lowest price is the deciding factor. (Ex. Vehicle purchase)

An **RFP** (Request For Proposal) generally refers to services, and is not based on a defined set of specifications. Vendors are requested to submit a proposal that best meets a general set of objectives. The vendor with the best value in regard to price and services is awarded the contract. (Ex. Program Management Services)