
Vendor Guide

Charleston County School District

Procurement Services

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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to make available to the vendor community the basic information needed to access and participate in the procurement processes of the Charleston County School District (District). Procurement Services serves as the District’s central procurement office for processing the District’s goods and services procurements and District term contracts. Our mission is to provide the products and services essential to our schools and departments. It is our hope that this guide will provide useful, timely information to vendors considering doing business with the Charleston County School District. We welcome you, and invite your comments.

About Charleston School District

Charleston County School District is a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,000 square miles of coastal South Carolina. With approximately 43,700 students, 79 schools and additional programs, and more than 7,000 employees, Charleston County School District is the second largest school system in South Carolina and one of the area’s top employers. The District is in the midst of a building program, which is seeing dramatic facility improvements in schools across the county. The plan includes four new high schools, two new elementary schools, and numerous school renovations and additions, that touch every community the District serves.

About Procurement Services

The District operates a centralized procurement system for the procurement of goods and services. A separate office procures construction services. Procurement Services exists to assist administrators, principals, teachers and staff with the acquisition of goods and services. Its objective is to procure goods and services of the proper quality, at the right time, in the proper quantity at an economical price, and from the right source. Procurement Services is organized into five buying teams which have responsibility for the schools and departments they serve. The five functional areas and telephone numbers for the Procurement Officials serving those areas are:

Functional Area	Telephone Number
Administrative and Food Services Procurements	843-566-8141
Information Technology Procurements	843-566-1809
Facility Services Procurements	843-566-1982
Area A Schools, Districts 1, 2 and 4 schools	843-566-8881
Area B Schools, Districts 3, 9, 10, 20 and 23 schools	843-566-1817
Procurement Services Office	843-566-8138

District Procurement Code

The South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code requires the District to have a Procurement Code that is substantially similar. The District has developed such a Procurement Code that governs the expenditure of all funds regardless of source. Procurement Services adheres to and abides by the District Procurement Code and its implementing regulations. **Where procurement involves the expenditure of federal assistance or contract funds, the District is required to comply with the federal law and authorized regulations which are applicable.**

Direct Contact with Schools and Departments

Direct discussion between vendor representatives and potential users in the schools and departments is acceptable on such subject matter as, availability of specified requirements, technical information, instructional information, requests for literature, etc. unless instructed otherwise in a solicitation notice. **However, it is District practice that all contacts or correspondence pertaining to negotiations affecting purchases or prospective purchases which involve prices, terms, conditions, and delivery shall be carried on by Procurement Services.** Further, all correspondence pertaining to a purchase order which has been placed and which involves prices, terms, conditions, delivery, quantity, substitution, complaint, or anything whatsoever involving the commitment, shall be processed through Procurement Services.

Office Hours and Appointments

Procurement Services is open from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, except on designated District holidays at the Division of Operations Building, 3999 Bridge View Drive, North Charleston, SC 29405. Appointments are required with the Procurement Officials for scheduling purposes. Call 843-566-8138 to schedule an appointment.

Levels of Competition

The following small purchase procedures may be utilized in conducting procurements for the District that are up to fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) in actual or potential value.

Small purchases not exceeding \$2,500. Small purchases not exceeding two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500.) may be accomplished without securing competitive quotations if the prices are considered reasonable. The purchases must be distributed equitably among qualified suppliers. When practical, a quotation must be solicited from other than the previous supplier before placing a repeat order. The administrative cost of verifying the reasonableness of the price of purchase “not in excess of” may more than offset potential savings in detecting instances of overpricing. Action to verify the reasonableness of the price need be taken only when the Procurement Officer suspects

that the price may not be reasonable, e.g., by comparison to previous price paid, or personal knowledge of the item involved.

Purchases over \$2500 to \$10,000. Solicitation of written quotes from a minimum of three (3) qualified sources of supply must be made and documentation of the quotes attached to the purchase requisition for a small purchase over two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) but not in excess of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). The award shall be made to the lowest responsive and responsible sources.

Purchases over \$10,000 to \$50,000. Written solicitation of written quotes, bids, or proposals must be made for a small purchase over ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) but not in excess of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000). The procurement shall be advertised at least once in South Carolina Business Opportunities or a newspaper of general circulation in the District or a means of central electronic advertising approved by the board. A copy of the written solicitation and written quotes must be attached to the purchase requisition. The award must be made to the lowest responsive and responsible source or, when a request for proposal process is used, the highest-ranking Offeror. (SC Code § 11-35-1550(2) (c))

COMPETITIVE SEALED BIDDING. Condition for Use. Contracts greater than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) must be awarded by competitive sealed bidding except as otherwise provided in § 1510 (Methods of Source Selection). (SC Code § 11-35-1520(1))

COMPETITIVE FIXED PRICE BIDDING. Conditions for Use. When the District determines in writing that the use of competitive sealed bidding is either not practicable or not advantageous to the District, a contract may be entered into by competitive fixed price bidding subject to the provisions of Section 1520 (Competitive Sealed Bidding), unless otherwise provided for in this § 1525 (Competitive Fixed Price Bidding). (SC Code § 11-35-1525(1))

COMPETITIVE BEST VALUE BIDDING. Conditions for Use. When the District determines in writing that the use of competitive sealed bidding is either not practicable or not advantageous to the District, a contract may be entered into by competitive best value bidding subject to the provisions of § 1520, unless otherwise provided in this section. (SC Code § 11-35-1528(1))

Best Value Bidding. The purpose of best value bidding is to allow factors other than price to be considered in the determination of award for specific supplies, services or information technology based on pre-determined criteria identified by the District. (SC Code § 11-35-1528(2))

COMPETITIVE ON-LINE BIDDING. Conditions for Use. When the District determines that on-line bidding is more advantageous than other procurement methods provided by this Code, a contract may be entered into by competitive on-line bidding,

subject to the provisions of § 1520 (Competitive Sealed Bidding), unless otherwise provided in this § 1529 (Competitive On-line Bidding). (SC Code § 11-35-1529(1))

COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSALS. Conditions for Use. If the District determines in writing that the use of competitive sealed bidding is either not practicable nor advantageous to the District, a contract may be entered into by competitive sealed proposals, subject to the provisions of § 1520 (Competitive Sealed Bidding), unless otherwise provided for in this § 1530 (Competitive Sealed Proposals). (SC Code § 11-35-1530(2))

Evaluation of Offers

Responses received by Procurement Services are promptly stamped to indicate the date and hour they are received. No envelope marked as a bid response is opened until the designated date and time. The District assumes no responsibility for unmarked or improperly marked envelopes. Responses received after the designated opening date and time **cannot** be considered. Responses shall be evaluated based on the requirements set forth in the solicitation.

How Notification of Award Is Made: Posting and Sending Notice. Unless there is a compelling reason to reject bids as prescribed by this Code, notice of an award or an intended award of a contract to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder(s) whose bid meets the requirements set forth in the invitation for bids must be given by posting such notice at a location specified in the invitation for bids. For contracts with a total or potential value in excess of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) but less than one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000), notice of the award of a contract must be given by posting and must be sent to all bidders responding to the solicitation on the same day that the notice is posted in accordance with this section. For contracts with a total or potential value of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) or greater, notice of intended award of a contract must be given by posting the notice for ten days before entering into a contract and must be sent to all bidders responding to the solicitation on the same day that the notice is posted in accordance with this section. The posting date shall appear on the face of all these notices. Before the posting of the award, the District may negotiate with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder to lower his bid within the scope of the invitation for bids. The invitation for bids and a notice of award or notice of intent to award must contain a statement of a bidder's right to protest pursuant to § 4210 (Protests). When only one response is received, the notice of intent to award and the delay of award may be waived. (SC Code § 11-35-1520(10))

Contracts

A properly executed purchase order constitutes a contract which is binding on the District and the vendor. The Procurement Officials are the only persons authorized to bind the District. Vendors are cautioned not to accept verbal orders without receiving a purchase order number from the person placing the order. The District will not be responsible for orders received without a valid purchase order. Failure to follow these procedures will result in delayed payments or the return of material to the vendor.

Assistance for Small and Minority Vendors

The District fully supports the efforts of the South Carolina Governor and the State Legislature to assist minority-owned businesses to develop as part of the state's policies and programs which are designed to promote balanced economic and community growth. Therefore, the District wishes to ensure that those businesses owned and operated by minorities in the State of South Carolina are afforded the opportunity to participate fully in the overall procurement process that will result in awarding contracts and subcontracts to certified, qualified and responsive minority business firms. The Procurement Services staff is available to answer questions and/or explain the District's opportunities available to Small and Minority Businesses. To become a certified South Carolina Small and Minority Business contact the Governor's Office of Small and Minority Business Assistance at (803) 734-0657.

Protesting Solicitations and Awards

Protest of Solicitation. A prospective bidder, Offeror, contractor, or subcontractor who is aggrieved in connection with the solicitation of a contract shall protest to the Chief Procurement Officer in the manner stated in § 4210.2 below within fifteen (15) days of the date of issuance of the Invitation for Bids or Requests for Proposals or other solicitation documents, whichever is applicable, or any amendment to it, if the amendment is at issue. An Invitation for Bids or Request for Proposals or other solicitation document, not including an amendment to it, is considered to have been issued on the date required notice of the issuance is given in accordance with this Code.

Protest of Intended Award or Award. Any actual bidder, Offeror, contractor, or subcontractor who is aggrieved in connection with the intended award or award of a contract shall protest to the Chief Procurement Officer in the manner stated in subsection 4210.2.2 within ten (10) days of the date award or notification of intent to award, whichever is earlier, is posted in accordance with this Code; except that a matter that could have been raised pursuant to § 4210.1.1 (Protest of Solicitation) as a protest of the solicitation may not be raised as a protest of the award or intended award of a contract.

Vendor Performance

Vendors are expected to perform per the bidding document/contract with an honest, earnest effort. Delivery times when stated in bidding documents and responded to by the vendor become mandatory delivery times. Vendors not meeting performance standards may be removed from bidders' list, found in default or otherwise penalized.

Delivery Conditions

All shipments are to be made F.O.B. destination, freight prepaid, to receiving point at Charleston County School District, 3999 Bridge View Drive, North Charleston, South Carolina 29405, unless otherwise indicated on the purchase order/contract. If other than FOB destination, as indicated on the purchase order/contract, all transportation, insurance, crating and/or packing charges are to be entered as separate items on seller's invoice. Delivery by the vendor to the common carrier does not constitute delivery to the District. Any claim for loss or damage incurred during transport shall be between the vendor and the carriers.

Ethics

Public employment is a public trust. Procurement decisions are made solely on the basis of the District Procurement Code which prohibits accepting, directly or indirectly, any rebate, gift, money or any thing of value, or any promise of future reward or compensation. The District has adopted the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) Code of Ethics.

Taxes

The District is required to pay South Carolina sales taxes. However, sales taxes are not paid on labor services or books used for instructional purposes.

Bidders' List

The District does not maintain a bidders' list. All solicitations over \$10,000 are advertised in the "South Carolina Business Opportunities."

Invoicing:

Forward all invoices for goods and services to: Accounts Payable, 3999 Bridge View Drive, North Charleston, SC 29405. Invoices received without the purchase order number referenced will be returned to the vendor.

Additional Information

Any question regarding the contents of this pamphlet or any other question regarding doing business with the District should be addressed to Contracts and Procurement Services Director, 843-566-7270.

Conclusion

When properly executed, the District's procurement process will benefit both the users within the District community and our vendors while assuring the citizens of South Carolina and District students that their tax moneys and fees are utilized to the best possible advantage.

Disclaimer: This purchasing guide is informational only. It is not an attempt to address all of the purchasing procedures of the Charleston County School District, or to serve as a replacement of the District Procurement Code and Regulations. Purchasing policies and procedures may change from time to time and this guide will be updated periodically.