



# SUPPLIER HANDBOOK



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## **PURCHASING POLICY**

In accordance with the Rockland County Charter, the Purchasing Department is authorized to administer all purchasing activities regarding materials, supplies, services, and equipment. Purchasing's primary function is to ensure that the County of Rockland receives the best possible products and services at the lowest possible cost.

The County of Rockland will not be responsible for purchases made without prior authorization from the Purchasing Division. Goods or services should not be shipped or performed without obtaining a purchase order number or a signed contract.

Rules governing purchasing and contract procedures were established under the concept of open competitive bidding. Under this system, purchase awards are made to the lowest responsible supplier who meets the County's specifications and conditions, and has the capacity to deliver the service or product. These specifications and conditions are outlined in bid packages that are available to all interested suppliers.

The County of Rockland encourages all segments of the business community to participate in its purchasing program. Minority and women owned businesses are asked to contact the Director of Purchasing for more information or assistance in participating in the County's procurement program.

The Purchasing Department coordinates supplier contracts and supervises the procurement process to ensure compliance with purchasing policies and procedures. Office hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Suppliers may call on the Purchasing Division without an appointment on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Appointments are required for all other days and times.

Our website maintains a listing of our Buyers and the commodities and services for which they are responsible.

## **THE PURCHASING PROCESS**

Rockland County along with other local governments in New York have joined forces in creating the Empire State Purchasing Group to establish a **Statewide Bid Notification Service and E- Procurement System** to alert and notify businesses within the New York State of municipal contracting opportunities. Participation in the Statewide Bid Notification Service is open to all municipalities, school districts and other government agencies within the Hudson Valley and New York State.

Businesses now only have to visit a single web site to search for and download municipal bidding opportunities from throughout New York State. The system provides instant access to Bids, RFP's, Quotes and Amendments online.

Businesses will realize the following benefits from registering on the Statewide Bid Notification System:

- Single Point of Contact - Businesses will now have a single point of contact to register, search for, and receive bids from all the participating municipalities in the Hudson Valley Municipal Purchasing Group.
- Easy Registration - Businesses can go to any of the participating municipalities' website to register for the new system.
- Free Access to Bid Notices - Registered businesses will have free access to the Hudson Valley Municipal Purchasing Group website to search for bidding opportunities from all the participating municipalities. One website to search for the entire Hudson Valley for municipal contracting opportunities.
- Optional Paid Service for Automatic Notification - Businesses that do not want to search the Regional Bid Notification site on a regular basis themselves can register for a paid service that will automatically notify them via e-mail or fax, when a Bid, RFP, or RFQ is issued that matches their supplier profile. The Optional Paid service will also enable businesses to respond to RFQ's (Items under the Bid Limit) electronically through the system.

The Statewide Bid Notification System is managed by BidNet, of Albany, NY. The use of this system will save municipalities thousands of dollars each in postage and printing expenses annually. The system will also save businesses time by providing a single point to register and search for contracting opportunities.

Businesses may register on the Statewide Bid Notification System at [www.rcpurchasing.com](http://www.rcpurchasing.com)

## **METHODS OF PURCHASE**

The following purchasing methods are used by the County to acquire products, services, and equipment:

### **A. INFORMAL QUOTES AND BIDS (\$5,000-\$19,999)**

The Purchasing Division solicits a minimum of three electronic or written quotes from selected suppliers. Suppliers should take care when quoting prices to assure accuracy. Electronic quotes should be provided within 48

hours, if possible. The Purchasing Division selects the bidder offering the best value to the County and issues a purchase order. Buyers review quotes and select the lowest quote meeting County requirements and specifications.

**B. FORMAL SEALED BIDS (over \$20,000)**

All purchases exceeding \$20,000, whether a ONE-TIME PURCHASE or a TERM CONTRACT or BLANKET PURCHASE, are acquired through this process.

Legal notices are published in local newspapers informing the public of the products or services being bid. All BID, RFP, RFQ and RFI documents are posted to the Empire State Purchasing Group's website and the New York State Contract Reporter's website.

Bid packages are prepared with detailed specifications and conditions including items bid, units and total quantity desired, instructions for bidding, delivery information, and any special requirements for bidding. In some instances, the supplier may be required to submit samples with the bid. Assigned dates for advertising and for bid openings are also included.

Bids arriving after bid opening may be rejected and returned to bidder.

Bid notices are sent electronically via the Empire State Purchasing Group's Bid Notification System to those suppliers who have chosen the optional paid service. Courtesy notices may be mailed to registered free suppliers on the Empire State Purchasing Group Supplier Bid List for the specific commodity. All bid packages are available to be downloaded from the Empire State Purchasing Group website.

In accordance with New York State Law, sealed bids are publicly opened and read at the time and place designated in the bid documents and legal notices. Request for Proposals are not publicly opened; however, copies of all proposals are available after a contract has been finalized. All information regarding the opening of a bid will be detailed within the bid specifications.

Bid tabulations or notices of awards are available for public inspection during regular business hours at the Purchasing Division and are also posted on the Empire State Purchasing Group's website. Copies of bid results are available at the Purchasing Department at a cost of \$.25 per page. Detailed bid results will not be given over the telephone.

Purchase orders and/or contracts are awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder (s) meeting County specifications.

The County reserves the right to reject all bids or parts of bids when such rejection is in the best interest of the County. The County reserves the right

to award all bids on an item-by-item or aggregate basis, whichever is deemed in the best interest of the County.

These rights apply to all purchases regardless of dollar value. Bid results shall be made available for public inspection after all bids have been tabulated. To arrange for inspection of bid results, contact the Purchasing Division.

### **C. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

Request for Proposals are traditionally used as a means of obtaining all types of professional services. A request for proposal and evaluation of proposals may consider price plus other factors such as experience, staffing and professional reputation.

The RFP involves making a request for services from various firms or professionals and then evaluating the proposals received. The County Attorney will review all contracts to be executed with the firm selected.

### **BID PRICES SUBMITTED**

The bid prices submitted shall be exclusive of Federal and State taxes and must not include any tax for which the bidder may claim exemption because of doing business with the County.

### **BID SECURITY**

If security is required, the bid invitation will indicate the kind and amount of security needed. Submitted bid packages will not be considered by the County if the specified security is not enclosed.

The County uses two types of security:

#### **A. BID DEPOSIT:** (Certified Check or Bid Bond)

The Deposit must be for the amount specified in the bid invitation. The Deposit will be forfeited to the County should the successful bidder fail to enter a contract or to accept a purchase order. Bid Deposits are returned to the unsuccessful bidders within ten (10) days after the execution of a contract or purchase order between a successful bidder and the County. Bid Deposits are returned to successful bidders upon completion of contract.

#### **B. PERFORMANCE BOND:**

A Performance Bond may be required from a successful bidder on certain bids. The County will notify the successful bidder of Performance Bond requirements. The County holds performance Bonds until all contract

obligations are satisfactorily met. The Performance Bond will be forfeited to the County should the successful bidder fail to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the specifications and the award. Performance Bonds are to be made payable to the "County of Rockland".

### **AWARD OF CONTRACT**

Award of contracts from Informal Quotes and Bids (\$5000 - \$19,999) will be made to the supplier offering the **Best Value** to the County of Rockland. Determination of supplier offering Best Value shall be in accordance with the County of Rockland Purchasing Policy.

Award of contracts that are publicly bid will be made to the lowest responsive and responsible qualified bidder whose proposal shall comply with all the provisions required to render it formal. The County reserves the right to waive any informality or to reject any or all proposals and advertise for new proposals, if in its opinion, the best interests of the County will be served. The County may require any or all bidders to present evidence of experience, ability and financial standing as well as a list of equipment that they will have available for the execution of the contract. The County reserves the right to award all contracts either on an item-by-item basis or as a total award of all items in combination.

The County's acceptance of the bidder's offer constitutes a binding contract between the supplier and the County of Rockland. Suppliers must perform in accordance with the contract or be liable to the County for damages caused by their breach.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM**

All suppliers submitting bids agree to participate in the County of Rockland's Quality Assurance Program. This program is designed to ensure that the County of Rockland receives goods and services as specified in the bid proposals.

The Purchasing Division will survey user departments on a regular basis as to the quality of goods and services specified on a bid. Suppliers who receive unsatisfactory ratings on the goods and services they are supplying will be required to meet with the Director of Purchasing to detail what corrective actions will be taken.

Failure to correct unsatisfactory performance will result in the repeal of bid awards. Supplier will remain responsible to the County of Rockland for any additional costs incurred by the County due to Supplier's non-performance.

## **DELIVERIES**

Deliveries are to be **completed** between the hours of 9:00 AM-12: 00 PM and 1:00PM- 4:00 PM unless otherwise specified on the purchase order. All deliveries shall be considered "inside deliveries" unless stated differently on the purchase order.

All Bills of Lading are to include complete "ship to" address and purchase order numbers as they appear on the purchase order received.

Most County facilities do not have loading docks.

## **INVOICING AND PAYMENT**

To ensure prompt payment of a purchase order, invoices containing the proper information must be submitted to the "Bill to" address indicated on the purchase order.

Invoices must contain the Purchase Order number, proper quantities, and unit and total prices as stated on the purchase order. Authorized County representatives will issue no payments prior to receipt and acceptance of commodities and services.

Rockland County is exempt from paying all Sales Tax and Compensating Use Taxes imposed by the State pursuant to NYS Tax Law 1116(A) (1) as stated on each purchase order issued. Upon request, a letter attesting to this fact will be executed and signed by the Director of Purchasing.

## **SALE OF SURPLUS AND OBSOLETE MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT**

There are occasions when the County becomes the seller and actively seeks buyers. This happens when surplus materials, obsolete equipment, etc. become available through the various County Departments.

County policy makes the Purchasing Division responsible for classifying and choosing the proper method for disposal of such material.

To assist potential bidders of County surplus, a listing of persons or firms is prepared by the Purchasing Division. Persons on the listing receive notice of such sales. To be placed on the list, those interested should contact the Purchasing Division and give name, address, telephone number and the commodity of interest.

## **GIFTS AND GRATUITIES**

County policy prohibits acceptance of gifts at any time, other than advertising novelties.

Employees must not become obligated to any supplier and shall not participate in any County transaction from which they will benefit directly or indirectly.

## **IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS**

**BID:** The offer of a Bidder to provide specific goods and/or services in accordance with all specifications, terms and conditions indicated in the solicitation.

**BRAND NAME OR EQUAL:** A reference used to convey the general style, type, character and/or quality of the goods desired.

**RFB = INVITATION FOR BID:** A document used to solicit competitive unsealed or sealed bids from prospective suppliers for specific goods and/or services. Resulting bids are final and non-negotiable.

**RFP = REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL:** A document used to solicit competitive proposals from prospective offerors to accomplish a specified scope of work. Negotiations are conducted after evaluation of offers.

**RFQ = REQUEST FOR QUOTATION:** A document used to solicit offers from suppliers for items or services under the statutory bid limits.

**RFI = REQUEST FOR INFORMATION:** A document used to identify potential suppliers for a future RFP or RFP, or to confirm a Sole Source determination.

**RESPONSIBLE BIDDER OR OFFEROR:** A person or supplier who has the capability and capacity in all respects to fully satisfy and perform the contractual requirements, and who has the moral, business integrity and reliability which will assure good faith performance.

**RESPONSIVE BIDDER OR OFFEROR:** A person or supplier who has submitted a bid or proposal response to an IFB or RFP which conforms in all material respects to that specified in the solicitation.



## **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

The County of Rockland Purchasing Division is an active member in the following professional associations:

- **National Institute of Governmental Purchasing**
- **New York State Association of Municipal Purchasing Officials**

## **IN CONCLUSION**

Doing business with a County Government can be complicated, but basic rules and procedures are necessary to protect the taxpayer. This publication is an attempt to ensure that the experience of doing business with the County of Rockland is a positive experience. Communication between the buyer and seller will invariably develop the understanding necessary to avoid confusion and inconvenience.

No single publication can answer all questions nor solve all problems occurring in even the simplest business transaction. It is hoped, however, that this effort will provide all parties with sufficient information to avoid the more common pitfalls.

For more information, please contact:

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