

# City of Tuskegee

## *Suppliers and Vendors Information*



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## OFFICE HOURS

The Purchasing Coordinator office and contact information is as follows:

City of Tuskegee  
Finance Department  
P.O. Box 830687  
101 Fonville Street  
Phone: (334-720-0547)  
Fax: (334-720-0551)

The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., except on holidays.

## SCHEDULED VISITS

Visits to the Purchasing Coordinator by sales representatives are welcomed and encouraged. It is recommended that your sales visits with City Purchasing Coordinator be scheduled in advance.

## BID LIST FILE

The Purchasing Coordinator maintains a Bid List file of prospective firms who have registered to be sent City bid/proposal solicitations for specific products and/or services. Interested firms are asked to limit their registration to only those products and/or services for which they are experienced and capable of providing in a quality and timely manner. Bids are posted on the City's web site at: <http://www.tuskegeealabama.gov>

## PROCUREMENT METHODS

There are five categories of purchasing used by the City of Tuskegee:

- Blanket Purchases
- Emergency Purchases
- Purchases from Petty Cash (these are small cost items)
- Formal Quotes
- Sealed Bid Purchases.
- Request for Proposals/Qualifications (RFP/RFQ)

### *Blanket Purchases*

Products and/or services, which are repetitively purchased (utilities, etc.) by City departments, are solicited and awarded as annual or multi-year term contracts. Accounts Payable is responsible for the processing of blanket purchase orders.

### *Emergency Purchases*

These are procedures to recognize that an emergency situation has occurred, which warrants an emergency purchase. An emergency situation is a situation in which operation of a City department would be seriously hampered or when the protection or preservation of public properties would be compromised by submitting a purchase request in the usual manner.

### *Formal Quotes*

The City Purchasing Policy requires quotes on purchases over \$2,500.

### *Sealed Bid Purchases*

In accordance with the Alabama Competitive Bid Law (Section 41-16-50, Code of Alabama, 1975), all expenditures of public funds for labor, services, or for the purchase of materials, supplies, or other personal property or lease of such items involving \$7,500 more shall be made only after a free and open competitive bidding process has been completed. Under Title 39 of the law, all public works projects which include the construction, repair, renovation, or maintenance of public buildings, structures, sewers, waterworks, roads, bridges, docks, underpasses, and viaducts as well as any other improvements to be made that are in whole or part paid with public funds must also be awarded through the competitive bid process if such projects involved \$50,000 or more.

### *Request for Proposal/Qualifications (RFP/RFQ) Solicitation*

Formal proposal solicitations are required to be issued when the cost of a service exceeds \$7,500. A "Request for Proposal Solicitation Notice" is sent to all firms registered to bid/offer proposals for service, as maintained by the Purchasing Coordinator.

The award shall be made to the responsible offeror whose proposal is determined in writing to be the most advantageous to the City, taking into consideration the evaluation factors set forth in the bid/proposal solicitations.

## **FAIR AND OPEN COMPETITION**

The City promotes a fair and open competitive solicitation process. Restrictive or proprietary specifications are kept to minimal use; and only applied where necessary to meet technical demands for operational compatibility with existing City equipment; or for truly unique and cost effective projects. The City may contract with persons other than City personnel for the preparation of specifications. However, no person preparing specifications shall receive any direct or indirect benefit from the utilization of such specifications.

## **SCOPE OF WORK AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Most City bid/proposal solicitations contain a Scope section and a Specifications section, which identify the procurement and presents the physical and/or functional characteristics of the material(s) being sought. The Scope and/or Specifications may include a description of any requirements for inspecting, testing or preparing a material, service or construction for delivery. A brand name or acceptable alternate specification may be used for the purpose of describing the standard of quality, performance or characteristics required or desired, but are not intended to limit or restrict competition.

## **SUBMITTING A BID OR PROPOSAL**

It is the bidder's/offeror's sole responsibility to ensure that a bid/proposal is received at the stated location prior to the time and date specified in the City's bid or proposal solicitation. If required, the bidder/offeror is to acknowledge all City solicitation amendments by signing and returning the amendment before the

specified bid/proposal due date and time. Bids/proposals may be modified or withdrawn before the time and date set for solicitation opening. Late bids/proposals will not be opened and will be rejected regardless of the degree of lateness or the reason, including causes beyond the control of the vendor.

The City will not accept late bids/proposals, which are hand carried. Late bids/proposals received through the mail will be filed unopened and a Late Bid Notice mailed to the sender (if name and address were printed on outside of the late bid/proposal envelope).

Submission of bids/proposals shall be on the forms included in each City solicitation. Telegraphic offers, mailgrams, facsimile and electronic bid/proposal responses will not be considered. The person authorized to sign the bid or proposal offer must submit Bids/proposals with an original ink signature. Unsigned bids will be rejected.

## **BID/PROPOSAL SOLICITATION OPENING**

Vendors and the public are invited, but not required, to attend the formal opening of bids/proposals. No decisions related to an award of a contract will be determined at the opening. At Invitation for Bid openings, the name of each bidder is read aloud along with the Bidder's prices and information indicating the product(s) and/or service(s) bid. Evaluation of bid/proposal responses and City Council approval is required before an award decision is made. Therefore, no decision will be made or announced at a bid/proposal opening.

At Request for Proposal (RFP) opening, the name of each offeror (proposer) is read aloud along with an "offer" or "no offer" statement. Proposal prices are not read nor are details concerning the offeror's proposal made available until after the proposal is evaluated by City staff and a recommendation made to the City Council.

Whether a bid or RFP, all received bid/proposal responses are date stamped and the bidder's/offeror's name on envelope/package recorded. Bid proposals are filed unopened in a locked cabinet. The response envelope/package remains unopened until the designated time and date for public opening.

Successful vendor(s) will be notified of their award selection and upon award will be sent either a purchase order (PO) or Contract Award Notice. In certain instances, a more formalized contract may require further post award discussions and document signing between the City and the vendor selected for award.

Late bids/proposals are not received and are rejected by the City, regardless of the reason for lateness, including circumstances beyond the control of the bidder/offeror. To ensure timely delivery, never wait until the last minute to submit a bid/proposal response. There are too many chances for not being timely and this will negate a great deal of hard work in preparing a bid/proposal response, which will never have an opportunity to be considered.

## **BID TAB RESULTS**

After the bid due date for an Invitation For Bid, initial bid tab results may be obtained by sending the Purchasing Coordinator a letter of request and enclosing a self-addressed and stamped return envelope.

Bid tab results are not given over the telephone or faxed. It should be noted that figures shown on an initial bid tab represent those compiled at time of bid opening; and that per the terms and conditions of the bid solicitation; other evaluation factors exist and must be considered before an award recommendation is completed. After an award has been made, bidders may make an appointment with the Purchasing Coordinator and review the bid/contract file.

## **VENDOR BILLING**

Unacceptable products/services and/or incorrect billing invoices will delay vendor payments until such time as problem areas are corrected and accepted by the City customer (using) department(s); and the approved invoice is transmitted to the City Accounting Services Division. The City Accounting Payable processes all payments.

It is the vendor's responsibility to ensure item names, identification numbers and prices listed on an invoice or billing statement to the City are identical to those item names, identification numbers and prices placed into the vendor's bid/proposal response. The City audits each invoice and resolves any discrepancies before processing a payment.

## **FILING A PROTEST**

A protest based upon alleged improprieties in a City bid/proposal solicitation is to be filed with the Purchasing Coordinator before the bid/proposal opening date stated in the solicitation.

The contest of protest is to be in writing and include the following information:

- The name, address and telephone number of the protester
- The signature of the protester or its representative
- Identification of the solicitation or contract number
- A detailed statement of the legal and factual grounds of the protest including copies of relevant documents
- The form of relief requested.

The Purchasing Coordinator will immediately give notice of the protest to the vendor recommended for award or contractor if award has been made. The City will issue a written decision within ten (10) days after a protest has been filed. The decision shall contain an explanation of the basis of the decision.

## **ETHICS POLICY**

The City believes strongly in the precept of fair and open competition and in maintaining the integrity of the City's procurement and contracting process. To this end, the City has a strict "NO GRATUITIES" in any form policy. City employees are prohibited from accepting any gratuity, no matter how small the value and may lead to vendor's bid or proposal response being disqualified, cancellation of any contract with the City, debarment from participation in City solicitations. In addition, no person/firm preparing specifications for a City solicitation shall receive any direct or indirect benefit from the use of such specifications.

## **VENDOR TRADE SHOWS, PRODUCT FAIRS AND PRODUCT SAMPLES**

City employees may attend vendor trade shows open to the industry or public. Vendors with City contracts may also schedule "vendor product fairs" through the Purchasing Coordinator for the purpose of displaying

and issuing a limited number of sample "test" products to City departments. Vendors may also arrange through the Purchasing Coordinator for "testing" of sample products for evaluation and possible inclusion on any Qualified Products Lists established by the City.

## **UNAUTHORIZED CONTRACTS NULL AND VOID**

All vendors and contractors are cautioned and strongly advised to ensure that a City contract or purchase order is obtained before performing any service or incurring any expense.

## **PREPARING FOR SUCCESS**

Once a business obtains a copy of a City bid/proposal solicitation, the next major step is to prepare an acceptable bid/proposal response to the City bid/proposal solicitation. Below are several recommended actions, which may enhance a firm's opportunities for success.

- Give an incoming City bid/proposal solicitation an immediate and thorough review. Pay attention to any requirements (terms, conditions, instructions, specifications, pricing methods, etc.), which must be met to be responsive.
- Contact the City staff member identified in the City bid/proposal solicitation to answer any questions or to settle any points of confusion. Do not wait until the last moment and hope to accomplish this clarification. If a clarification may be material to the outcome of the bid/proposal, place questions in writing and obtain a written response from the Purchasing Coordinator.
- Present a clear, well-organized and well-prepared bid/proposal response. Follow any bid/proposal preparation instructions that are given within the City bid/proposal solicitation. Whenever possible, type a bid/proposal response and thoroughly proof read the prepared response. Double check pricing accuracy, ensure all required supporting documentation is enclosed with the bid/proposal response, answer any questionnaire information, provide any instructed information and sign the bid/proposal response.
- Provide required responses to any question asked by the City with an accurate and truthful statement. Failure to meet or exceed a mandatory requirement will result in a non-responsive bid/proposal response. Any alternate method proposed should be stated as an "alternate" in the bid/proposal response. Fully explained any technical material submitted to substantiate the "alternate" method. The City will make the ultimate decision to accept or reject any alternate method.
- Sign all required signature pages and return all required bid/proposal documents. An unsigned bid/proposal offer and/or substantially incomplete bid/proposal response will be non-responsive and not considered.
- If a City bid/proposal solicitation requests multiple copies of a bid/proposal response for evaluation purposes, be sure to include these extra copies.
- If a City bid/proposal solicitation requires that product technical literature or samples are included with a bid/proposal response, be sure that such materials are enclosed within your bid/proposal response package. Failure to include required technical literature and samples for evaluation purposes might cause your response to be rejected and not considered.

- Be sure to clearly label each sealed bid/proposal response envelope/package according to the City's bid/proposal solicitation.
- Make sure that the City staff member specified in the City's bid or proposal solicitation receives a bid/proposal response before the designated date and time scheduled for bid/proposal opening. Late bids/proposals are rejected and not considered.

In determining the responsiveness of a bid/proposal response, City staff will review the bidder's/offeror's response as to its conformity with all stated requirements and evaluation criteria of the City bid/proposal solicitation. Once a bidder/offeror is determined to be responsive, bidders/offerors will be reviewed as to price and value considerations of their comparative products and/or services.

Vendor (bidder/offeror) capability to perform a contract in a quality and timely manner is also considered before any award recommendation. The likeliness as to whether a vendor can perform a contract is reviewed according to criteria established within the City's bid/proposal solicitation. Past performance, histories are considered and any requested bidder/offeror references are checked. The City (at its discretion) may not make an award recommendation to any vendor previously defaulting on a contract obligation with the City. Vendor financial stability is also checked if considered material to the longevity of a contract or to the supply of products and/or services which require an initial or start-up expense by the contracted vendor.

A committee approach is used in the evaluation of Request for Proposals responses to reach an award decision and recommendation.

After a contract award has been made, the Purchasing Coordinator may hold post award meetings to enable both supplier/service provider and City staff to reach a more complete understanding of each other's contract expectations, performance standards and operating schedules. It is at these meetings that a professional, working relationship is often bound.

## **CITY CONTACTS**

City staff responsible for the purchasing process is as follows:

Frankie Williams, Purchasing Coordinator (334-720-0547)  
Harvey Smith, Finance Director (334-720-0542)  
Alfred Davis, City Manager (334-720-0515)

Information of an operational or policy nature concerning City Procurement practices and policies may be addressed to the Frankie Williams, Purchasing Coordinator.