
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, invite your comments, and wish you luck.

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 touching 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. 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 five competitive types of procurement allowed by the District Procurement Code are outlined below as they relate to the levels of competition.

- **Procurements Less Than \$25,000**
- Small purchases are procurements less than \$25,000. Request for Quotes (RFQ) may be solicited verbally for procurements less than \$10,000. If the procurement is over \$10,000 and less than \$25,000, then the quotes must be written.
 - Procurements less than \$1,500 must possess a minimum of one (1) verbal source.

- Procurements from \$1,500.01 to \$5,000 require a minimum of three (3) verbal sources.
 - Procurements from \$5,000.01 to \$10,000 require a minimum of three (3) sources confirmed in writing.
 - Procurements from \$10,000.01 to \$25,000 are advertised in the South Carolina Business Opportunities (SCBO) or other newspaper of wide circulation. Contracts awarded within this level may not be protested.
- **Procurements Of \$25,000 Or More**
 - Competitive Sealed Bids is the preferred procurement method for all procurements of \$25,000 or more. An Invitation for Bids (IFB) is used to solicit these procurements. The IFB includes specifications and all applicable terms and conditions. Adequate notice, usually in the SCBO, is given prior to the date set for the opening of bids. Award of a contract is made to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder whose bid meets the requirements set forth in the IFB.
 - The Competitive Best Value Bid procurement method allows for factors other than price to be considered in the determination of award based on pre-determined criteria. Award is made to the responsive and responsible bidder whose bid is determined to be most advantageous to the District, taking into consideration all evaluation factors set forth in the best value bid.
 - The Competitive Fixed Price Bid procurement method provides multiple sources of supply based on a pre-set maximum price which the District will pay. Award is made to all responsive and responsible bidders to the District's request for fixed price bids.
 - The Competitive Sealed Proposal (RFP) is used when the use of competitive sealed bidding is either not practicable or not advantageous to the District. The RFP will state the relative importance of factors to be considered in evaluating proposals. Award is made to the responsive offeror whose proposal is determined to be most advantageous to the District, taking into consideration price and the evaluation factors set forth in the RFP. Price may, but need not be, an evaluation factor.

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

For all solicitations awarded by Procurement Services, a Statement of Award is mailed to the awarded vendor. For solicitations greater than \$25,000, the Statement of Award is posted for public review on the Procurement Services Bid/Award Board at 3999 Bridge View Drive, North Charleston, SC 29405. Additionally, for contracts of \$50,000 or more a statement of Intent to Award is sent to all bidders or offerors and posted on the Procurement Services Bid/Award Board at 3999 Bridge View Drive, North Charleston, SC 29405.

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

Protests of the issuance, the award or the intent to award of solicitations by a bidder, offeror, contractor or subcontractor are allowed if forwarded in writing to the Contracts and Procurement Services Director within fifteen (15) days of the posting of the challenged document. The protest must include the specific issues of protest and the relief sought. The District Procurement Code requires that the Contracts and Procurement Services Director attempt to resolve the matter of protest or contract controversy. The written decisions of Contracts and Procurement Services Director resulting from unresolved protests may be appealed to the District Procurement Review Panel. The Panel does have the option of sanctioning protesters when a finding of a frivolous protest is made.

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, nor 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.