

# Procurement Overview for Vendors

## Understanding the Terminology and How the County Buys

### Procurement Methods

**Small Purchase (Up to \$1,000):** Using agencies place most orders directly with vendors using procurement (credit) cards.

**Open Market Purchase (\$1,000.01 - \$5,000):**

- Price quotes may be obtained by telephone, via email, by fax or written from suppliers.
- The information is submitted to Purchasing, and a Buyer will place most orders directly with vendors using procurement (credit) cards.

NOTE: Purchasing Buyers can buy on procurement card above \$1,000.

**Request for Quotation (RFQ)/Informal Bids (\$5,000.01 - \$25,000):**

- Informal quotations/bids may be solicited via Baltimore County's { HYPERLINK "<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/budfin/purchasing/currentsolicitations.html>" } page as a courtesy.
- Solicit at least three (3) bids by date and time specified
- Award to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder conforming to the specifications ("Low Bid")

**Request for Bid (RFB)/Formal Bid (Over \$25,000):**

- To foster open and fair competition, bids are publicly advertised on the Purchasing website at { HYPERLINK "<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/budfin/purchasing/currentsolicitations.html>" }
- Bid Packages contain required affidavits
- Pre-bid conferences (optional) may be necessary to clarify terms and conditions that may impact the bid. Attending pre-bid conferences is strongly encouraged.
- Written bid responses must be sealed and stored until the appointed date and time of the bid opening.
- Bids are opened publicly in the Purchasing Division, Room 148, Historic County Courthouse
- Buyer evaluates the bid for responsiveness and responsibility
- Award is made to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder ("Low Bid")

**Requests for Proposals (RFP)/Formal Bids (Over \$25,000):**

- Used for Nonstandard commodities or complex service purchases
- If estimated to exceed \$25,000, RFPs are advertised on the Purchasing website: { HYPERLINK "<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/budfin/purchasing/currentsolicitations.html>" }
- Pre-proposal conferences are used to clarify the scope of services, requirements and terms and conditions that may impact the bid. Attending pre-bid conferences is strongly encouraged.
- Questions are addressed at the pre-proposal conference. If necessary, the RFP will be revised and addenda will be posted on the County's website.
- Responses must be written.
- Technical response and price proposals must be sealed separately and date/time stamped in the Purchasing Division before the due date/time of the opening
- Public opening of the Proposals:
  - Proposers are identified as "responded"
  - Technical responses and prices are NOT read
  - Proposals are simply recorded as received.
- Proposals are evaluated by a pre-selected committee led by the buyer in Purchasing

- Award is based on quality factors including technical performance and price (“Best Value”)

**Noncompetitive Procurements (Sole Source, Proprietary and Emergency)**

- Sole Source – contracts which there is only one source of supply
- Proprietary – Brand name products that can only be obtained from the manufacturer or an authorized distributor
- Emergency – Purchases that are made as a result of circumstances that generate an immediate need to restore continued operations of service or to eliminate the risk of dangerous conditions.

**Cooperative Purchases**

- Baltimore County is a member of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council. This organization is comprised of the region's elected officials representing Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard counties.
- The Council's subcommittee, Baltimore Regional Cooperative Purchasing Committee (“BRCPC” pronounced *brick pack*) includes purchasing officers from the six jurisdictions, their school systems, the City of Annapolis and the Maryland Department of General Services.
- BRCPC combines solicitation requirements amongst the jurisdictions in an effort to conduct { HYPERLINK "http://www.baltometro.org/cooperative-purchasing/brpcpc-contracts" \o "Obtain a listing of BRCPC's cooperative purchaes." \t "\_blank" }.

**Purchasing Buys, but not limited to, the following items**

Office supplies, Pharmaceutical supplies, Envelopes	Building Services (painters, mowing, janitorial, etc)
Recreational Products, Athletic Equipment, Landscaping Services	Construction Services, Materials and Supplies
Vehicles, Equipment and Transportation Services	Printing, Office Furniture, Uniforms, Vending Services
Computer Software and Related Services	Telecommunications, Electrical and Mechanical Services and Sprinklers
Professional Services & Consultants, Computer Hardware & Printers	Human Services, Health/Medical Related Items and Services, Training
Traffic Engineering Supplies,	Floor Covering, Janitorial Supplies, Promotional Items

**Department of Public Works Buys (requires pre-qualification)**

<b>Construction Contracts Administration— Capital Improvement Projects</b>		<b>Professional Services Projects</b>
Utility Services (water/sewer lines and pumping stations)	Architects, Landscape Architects	
Road (Horizontal) Construction/Repairs	Engineers	
Building (Vertical) Construction		

The Department of Public Works maintains a list of pre-qualified contractors/firms for

- Construction Contracts Administration at: { HYPERLINK "http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/publicworks/contracts/overview.html" }
  - General contractors must be pre-qualified 10 days before bid date.
  - Subcontractors are required to be pre-qualified on some projects.
- Professional Services at: { HYPERLINK "http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/publicworks/pssc/prequalification.html" }
  - Pre-qualification forms for Professional Services are accepted throughout the Pre-Qualification Cycle (August 1 to July 31) the following year for Prime Consultants in the areas of Architects, Landscape Architects and Engineers.
- Source Supply list at: { HYPERLINK "http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/publicworks/contracts/pw\_contracts\_supply.html" }

- Suppliers that wish to be approved (pre-qualified) for the Source Supply list must conform to the General Provisions in the Standard Specification For Construction & Materials.

### **Contracting opportunity notifications**

- Register for weekly solicitation email notification for Purchasing and Construction Contracts Administration: { HYPERLINK "<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/purchasing>" }
- Subscribe to Professional Services New Project Announcements: { HYPERLINK "<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Subscribe/psscnewjobs>" }

### **Things you should be familiar with:**

- County Council approval is required prior to executing contracts for services
  - For a term exceeding two (2) years, or
  - For contracts exceeding \$25,000 in value for any single year
- Purchase Order (PO)/Contract (CT)
  - Authorizes a vendor to deliver and charge for the commodities or services specified
  - Shall include description, quantity, price, terms of payment, time and place of delivery, responsibility for shipping cost and reference to solicitations and/or proposals when appropriate.
- Master Agreement (MA)/Delivery Order (DO)
  - MA establishes the prices, terms and conditions of the contract.
  - DO references the original contract (MA) number, utilizes the pricing schedule of the contract and becomes the vehicle for encumbering the funds to purchase specific commodities or services on the term contract.
- Contracts Due to Expire
  - A report of forecasted contracts due to expire within 1-year can be found at { HYPERLINK "<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/purchasing>" }
- Minority Business Enterprise and Women's Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE)
  - The program is established by Executive Order visit { HYPERLINK "<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/go/mwbe>" } for details and appropriate forms.
  - MBE/WBE goals are set in some contracts where subcontracting opportunities are feasible.
  - The County may "Piggy-back" contracts of other jurisdictions that have established MBE/WBE participation as long as it is not in conflict with the County's policy and procedures.