

COSTARS™



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES



The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Cooperative Purchasing Program
Passport to Business Opportunity and Procurement Savings



SUPPLIERS BROCHURE



www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS



The passage of the Commonwealth Procurement Code, Act 57 of 1998 (“Code”), permitted local public procurement units (LPPUs) and state-affiliated entities to engage in cooperative purchasing with the commonwealth. Initially, the Department of General Services (DGS) limited the LPPUs’ cooperative purchasing options to certain statewide agency contracts.

In 2004, the General Assembly passed an amendment to the Code (Act 77, 62 Pa. C.S. Sections 1902 and 2107) that expanded DGS’s responsibility and authority, requiring in some cases and, in other cases, permitting DGS to enter into contracts exclusively for the benefit of LPPUs and state-affiliated entities. DGS included these special non-commonwealth agency contracts, known as “COSTARS-exclusive contracts,” as part of its new COSTARS Program, administered by the Bureau of Procurement. Today, all DGS contracts through which LPPUs and state-affiliated entities may make purchases, including specific statewide agency contracts as well as COSTARS-exclusive contracts, are part of the COSTARS Program. Local purchasers using these contracts must be registered COSTARS members. Eligible LPPUs are defined as:

- Any political subdivision (local government unit), such as a municipality, school district or commission.
- Any public authority (including authorities formed under the Municipality Authorities Act of 1955 or other authorizing legislation, such as the Public Transportation Law or the Aviation Code).
- Any tax-exempt, nonprofit educational institution or organization
- Any tax-exempt, nonprofit public health institution or organization.
- Any nonprofit fire, rescue company or ambulance company.
- And, to the extent provided by law, any other entity that regularly spends public funds for the procurement of supplies and services (such as council of governments or an area government, or an organization that receives public grant funds).

There are more than 9,000 entities registered with DGS that can take advantage of existing commonwealth and COSTARS contracts, including commodities such as: furniture; audio/visual equipment; grounds keeping services and supplies; office supplies; sodium chloride (road salt); vehicles; IT hardware and software; security and surveillance systems; laboratory supplies and medical supplies.

It is estimated that COSTARS members spend more than \$1.2 billion per year using the COSTARS program. Our goal is to produce contracts with competitive pricing, while providing increased opportunities for suppliers and eligible participants.

How to Become a COSTARS-Authorized Supplier

Register and maintain company data at the PA Supplier Portal.



Submit a responsible and responsive bid to a COSTARS Invitation for Bids (IFB), posted at www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS and completing the Bid Item Workbook contained in the solicitation.

If your company has never been a supplier with the commonwealth, you must register your business at the PA Supplier Portal. This allows you to search and respond to commonwealth bidding opportunities and to manage your important account information.

If your company already has a six-digit vendor number issued by the commonwealth, you may already be registered with us.

NOTE: Although it is a prerequisite, registering and receiving a vendor number DOES NOT MEAN a supplier has been awarded a contract and is able to sell to COSTARS members. To become a COSTARS supplier, one needs to respond to bidding opportunities that are published on the DGS COSTARS website to be awarded a contract.

Register at:

www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us

For assistance, call the Supplier Help Desk at (717) 346-2676 or (877) 435-7363.

Bidding Opportunities

All bidding opportunities (with an estimated cost in excess of \$10,000) for supplies and services for commonwealth agencies and COSTARS contracts are advertised online at: www.emarketplace.state.pa.us.

Opportunities to bid on COSTARS-exclusive contracts are advertised online at: www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS.

COSTARS Supplier Benefits

Additional Business Opportunities

Once awarded a COSTARS contract: COSTARS suppliers have access to a list of nearly 9,000 COSTARS members and their contact information. COSTARS members may choose COSTARS suppliers based upon whatever criteria they consider important (e.g. price, geography, quality, etc.), allowing suppliers to “sell quality, not just price.”

COSTARS Brand

COSTARS-authorized suppliers may use the trademarked COSTARS name and logo in their marketing materials, in accordance with contract terms and conditions.

Flexibility

COSTARS-exclusive contracts do not dictate any specific lists of items. Rather, a bidder may offer any type or number of items within the scope of the contract. Resellers may bid as many product lines as their manufacturers authorize them to sell. A supplier may supplement its original bid to provide pricing for additional items within the scope of the contract or to remove items or services it no longer wishes to offer at any time. A supplier may adjust its pricing under certain circumstances in accordance with the contract terms and conditions. Suppliers may offer their products statewide or limit their market area to certain counties.

Ancillary Services

Certain COSTARS-exclusive contracts enable a supplier to offer ancillary services in conjunction with the products it provides to a purchaser. Sample ancillary services include, but are not limited to: training; post-warranty support and maintenance; and assembly, installation and construction activities.

Dealer Network

All COSTARS-exclusive contracts enable a supplier to offer contract items through its designated local dealer network.

Negotiate

Suppliers are able to negotiate prices with members for less than bid prices.

Reduced Costs

COSTARS members and suppliers save the cost and time associated with the formal bidding process, since suppliers have been awarded COSTARS contracts through a qualified bidding process. Most COSTARS members are required by law to pay their invoices within 30 days of receipt of their goods and services.

Education

Free workshops, online training, toll-free telephone assistance, and a quarterly newsletter are provided by COSTARS staff to assist prospective suppliers on how to submit a COSTARS bid, research contracts, market COSTARS contracts, and other topics of interest and trends in government purchasing.



Examples of Awarded COSTARS-exclusive Contracts

- ★ Appliances & Cafeteria Equipment & Supplies
- ★ Copiers
- ★ Emergency Responder Equipment & Supplies
- ★ Energy Consulting Services
- ★ Electronic Monitoring Services & Equipment
- ★ Food
- ★ Furniture & Window Treatments
- ★ Graphic & Printing Services
- ★ Groundskeeping Services & Supplies
- ★ Heavy Equipment Rental
- ★ IT Hardware & Software
- ★ Janitorial Supplies
- ★ Maintenance, Repair & Operation (MRO) Equipment, Supplies and Services
- ★ Medical & Laboratory Supplies
- ★ Office, School & Library Supplies
- ★ Recreation & Fitness Equipment
- ★ Security, Fire Alarm & Surveillance Systems
- ★ Signage
- ★ Stormwater Management Products & Services
- ★ Street Lighting & Parking Meters
- ★ Theatre Furniture, A/V Equipment & Musical Instruments
- ★ Uniforms
- ★ Vehicles
- ★ Waste, Recycling & Material Handling Containers
- ★ Water & Waste Water Equipment & Consumables

Registering with the PA Department of State (DOS)

If your business is not incorporated or registered in Pennsylvania, your company must register with the Department of State Corporation Bureau prior to being approved for a COSTARS or state agency contract.

Forms for registering with the DOS can be found on their website at <http://www.dos.pa.gov/BusinessCharities/Business/RegistrationForms/Pages/default.aspx>.

General Provisions

Supplier Registration

Suppliers are required to register their business in the PA Supplier Portal and receive a six-digit vendor number as a prerequisite to bidding on a state agency or COSTARS contract. The Supplier Registration process is available at www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us. Although it is a prerequisite, **registering and receiving a vendor number DOES NOT MEAN a supplier has been awarded a contract and is able to sell to COSTARS members.** To become a COSTARS supplier, one needs to respond to bidding opportunities that are published on the DGS COSTARS website to be awarded a contract.

Bidding Opportunities

All COSTARS-exclusive contract bidding opportunities are published on the DGS COSTARS webpage. DGS does not post on its website any one particular COSTARS member's request to contract for a specific purchase. Any contract that DGS bids as a COSTARS-exclusive contract is available for use to ALL COSTARS members.

Solicitations

DGS uses the competitive sealed bidding process to establish COSTARS-exclusive contracts. Suppliers participate in the COSTARS Program as contractors by submitting a responsible and responsive bid to a COSTARS Invitation for Bids (IFB) and completing the Bid Item Workbook embedded in the solicitation to receive a COSTARS-exclusive contract award.

Facsimile Bids

Facsimile bids are not accepted.

Electronic Bidding

Electronic bidding is not available for COSTARS-exclusive contracts. However, the bidder should include in its hard-copy (printed) bid package an electronic submission of all offered items and pricing on a USB flash drive and in an unprotected format (Microsoft Word or Excel).

Bid Opening Date

All COSTARS-exclusive contract bidding opportunities are continuous. Continuous bidding permits prospective suppliers to submit a bid on a COSTARS-exclusive contract at any time, instead of waiting for a supplemental bidding opportunity. Bids will be accepted on any given commonwealth business day. Any bid received after the Bid Opening Time (1:30 p.m. Eastern) will be opened on the next commonwealth business day.

Multiple Awards

DGS awards COSTARS-exclusive contracts to ALL responsible and responsive bidders. Because everyone who is responsible and responsive will be awarded a contract, DGS will not compare bidders' pricing submittals for COSTARS-exclusive procurements. Although pricing will not be a factor in contract award, pricing may be a consideration when members select a contractor and place their orders. Consequently, each bidder should present their very best response to an IFB.

Administrative Fee

Suppliers are required to pay the appropriate fee in each contract period, for each contract, and according to the following criteria:

Bidder-Contractor Classification	Required Administrative Fee
Verified Diverse Small Business	\$166
Qualified Small Business To determine if your business qualifies as a Department of General Services Self-certified Small Business, visit https://www.dgs.pa.gov/Small%20Diverse%20Business%20Program/Pages/default.aspx for more information and a step-by-step Application Guide for self-certification. To be eligible for the discounted administrative fee, bidders must complete the self-certification process at www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us .	\$500 
All Other Bidder-Contractors	\$1,500

Right-to-Know Law

The Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law, 65 P.S. §§ 67.101-3104, applies to COSTARS-exclusive contracts. This legislation requires most state contracts, including COSTARS-exclusive contracts, to be available for public viewing on an Internet website. To comply with this legislation, COSTARS-exclusive contracts are published within the **COSTARS Members Area** of the COSTARS webpages and are also accessible from the **PA eMarketplace** webpages. This means you are able to view your competitors' COSTARS-exclusive contracts and they are able to view yours.

What are COSTARS suppliers saying about the COSTARS Program?

Grounds Keeping Services and Supplies: "Becoming a COSTARS supplier has been an asset for our business and when we let customers know we are a COSTARS supplier, we get a very positive response. The ability to negotiate is a big attraction for the buyers."

Water & Wastewater Components/Equipment: "The program continues to grow for us as more and more municipalities get to know the program and township managers recognize the usefulness of the system and its ability to save money and remove complexities from the procurement process. It's a win/win proposition that's a great fit for us and for our customers."

**For more information regarding
COSTARS, please contact:**



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www.dgs.pa.gov/COSTARS

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