



# HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH ALACHUA COUNTY

## A VENDOR'S GUIDE

## From the Purchasing Manager. . . .

Dear Vendor:

This guide has been prepared to explain how vendors may participate in Alachua County's purchasing process. The demand generated by Alachua County results in a continual need for a wide variety of goods and services.

The Purchasing Division hopes this guide will help you become acquainted with our policies and procedures for procurement, and that the information given will be of benefit to potential new vendors, as well as those who are currently doing business with Alachua County.

This guide is intended to serve as a general guide to the Purchasing Division and may not answer all of your questions. Therefore, please feel free to contact the Purchasing Division for any additional information.

Sincerely,



Larry M. Sapp, CPPB, Purchasing Manager  
Alachua County Board of County Commissioners

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## *Your Invitation to the Alachua County Purchasing Process*

### **THE PURCHASING DIVISION**

The Purchasing Division is responsible for handling the purchase of goods and services for all Alachua County departments under the County Manager. This includes all aspects of the purchase from receipt of departmental requisitions to the award of the purchase or issuance of a purchase order. The County, through the Purchasing Division, contracts for about 10 million dollars in goods and services each year.

The primary objective of the Purchasing Division is to acquire the highest quality goods and services at the lowest possible cost. We constantly seek out new sources of supply and welcome your participation.

We believe you will find doing business with Alachua County easy. Most purchases are made through a comprehensive system of specifications, terms and conditions, and with regard to who has the capacity to deliver the service or product on time.

### **RELATIONSHIPS WITH VENDORS**

We realize that it is essential to develop and maintain good relationships with our suppliers. One of the most important relationships, in the development of goodwill between the seller and customer, is the relationship between salesperson and buyer. It is therefore our policy to treat all salespersons with fairness, courtesy, and respect.

However, our operating agencies and the purchasing staff are usually quite busy, and it would be appreciated if you made the Purchasing Division your first point of contact. We will then arrange, where necessary, contacts with our operating agencies. It would be helpful to make an appointment prior to visiting the Purchasing Division whenever feasible.

### **LOCATION**

**The Purchasing Division is located at the Alachua County Administration Building, 12 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Gainesville, Florida 32602. Office Hours are 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. The phone number is (352) 374-5202.**

## RECEIVING BID SOLICITATIONS

Vendors are advised that the County is under no obligation to mail Invitations to Bid to any vendor and the County disclaims any liability or responsibility for doing or not doing so. Vendors should check public notices and other forms of notification as indicated below to determine what services or commodities are currently being solicited by the county

The Purchasing Division contracts with an outside vendor, DemandStar by Onvia, to maintain an automated registered vendors list by specific category. For a small annual fee, vendors may register with Onvia, which will automatically deliver bid announcements from all participating agencies in Alachua County via fax or e-mail. In order to register (place your firm's name on the bidders list) with Onvia and to receive automatic notification regarding formal bidding opportunities, the vendor needs to complete a vendor's application on-line at [www.demandstar.com](http://www.demandstar.com) or by contacting Onvia at 1-800-711-1712.

This system is utilized for formal bids and is used as a reference listing for smaller purchases. Based upon the registered vendors' listing, vendors are notified via fax or e-mail of formal bidding opportunities for the product(s) or service(s) that were selected in the completion of their application.

Participation in the DemandStar system, however, is not a necessary requirement for doing business with the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners. However, if a vendor decides not to register with DemandStar, they will not automatically receive notification of bidding opportunities. Vendors may, however, continue to find out about bidding opportunities by checking the local newspaper, The Gainesville Sun; checking the County's website at [www.alachuacounty.us](http://www.alachuacounty.us); and by calling the DemandStar system number, (407) 975-0070.

Vendors may pick-up Bid Solicitations at the Purchasing Division for a small fee based on the number of pages in the Bid package.

***Publication/Notification of Bid Solicitations:*** Vendors may learn of formal bid solicitations from the Wednesday advertisement in the legal section of the Gainesville Sun. Occasionally ads may be placed on days other than Wednesday to meet the needs of the County.

## **UNDERSTANDING HOW WE BUY**

Alachua County uses several different Purchasing procedures for acquiring goods and services. These are as follows:

- **Request for Quotation** - a method of soliciting written quotations by either telephoning or mailing a request for quotations which incorporates specifications and terms and conditions.
- **Invitation to Bid** - all documents whether attached or incorporated by reference, used for soliciting sealed bids for purchases exceeding fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00). Once bids are opened by the County, no changes in scope or price is allowed.
- **Competitive Sealed Proposal** - a method that requires the vendor to provide a detailed proposal in response to the specifications, which may be more general in nature, and usually results in a contractual agreement. This method allows for negotiation in scope, price, and delivery; whereas, the sealed bid allows no substantial changes. Proposal under this process are solicited through a request for competitive sealed proposals.
- **Procurement Card Program** – A Procurement Card Program has been established as an efficient method of purchasing and paying for goods and services. Purchases made with a procurement card have a maximum of \$2,500.00 per transaction, and \$10,000.00 per month.

## **PURCHASING THRESHOLDS**

### **Informal Bids (up to \$50,000)**

<b>MINIMUM</b>	<b>AMOUNTS</b>
<b>1 Phone (Verbal) Quote</b>	<b>\$2,500 or less</b>
<b>2 Phone (Verbal) Quotes</b>	<b>2,500+ - 10,000</b>
<b>3 Phone (Verbal) Quotes</b>	<b>10,000+ - 25,000</b>
<b>Written Quotes</b>	<b>25,000+ - 50,000</b>

The County's policy permits purchases, up to \$50,000.00, to be purchased via informal requests referred to as quotations. The procedure is as follows:

1. A written request for quotation or requests for telephone quotes are made, depending on estimated cost and complexity of specifications.
2. Quotes are received, tabulated, and evaluated.
3. Lowest responsive and responsible quote is selected.
4. A formal purchase order or agreement is prepared and issued.

### **Formal Bids (Over \$50,000)**

It is the County's policy to solicit competitive sealed bids for all purchases exceeding \$50,000.00. The procedure is as follows:

1. A Public Notice is issued in the local newspaper.
2. Invitations to Bid are posted on our website and on DemandStar.
3. Bids are received, tabulated, and evaluated.
4. Awards are made to the lowest most responsive and responsible bidder.
5. Awards are approved by either County staff (under \$50,000.00) or by the Board of County Commissioners (over \$50,000.00).
6. A formal purchase order or agreement is issued to the successful bidder.

*Other purchase methods such as sole source or emergency purchases may be utilized where warranted.*

## **PURCHASE ORDERS**

All purchases exceeding \$100, whether for single or multiple items, must be supported by a duly authorized purchase order, unless specifically exempted by Purchasing policies. The Purchasing Division is authorized to issue formal purchase orders. As a vendor, and for your protection, you should always make certain that a written purchase order has been issued before you make delivery of goods or services. The County's purchase order establishes the full agreement between the vendor and the County.

## **GENERAL PURCHASING INFORMATION**

### **GIFTS AND FAVORS**

As public purchasing officials, we are required to maintain high standards of ethics and conduct. Additionally, we are required to maintain complete independence and impartiality in dealings with vendors, both in fact and appearance. This is essential in order to preserve the integrity of the competitive process and to ensure there is public confidence that all purchases are awarded equitably and economically. Therefore, in order to avoid any misunderstandings or any appearance of impropriety relative to the competitive process, we respectfully request that vendors refrain from offering anything of value to the staff of the Purchasing Division or any other County representative.

### **BID FORM**

When specifications have a bid form, the bidder shall use this page to submit the price. Care should be taken that all amounts in your bid are correct. Extensions should be checked to ensure their accuracy. In the case of extension error, the unit price will prevail. Prices not submitted on the bid form will be rejected.

### **SUBMITTING A BID**

All formal quotations or formal sealed bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope and identified as indicated in the specifications. Bids may be delivered personally or by mail. Offers by facsimile or telephone are not acceptable. It is the responsibility of the bidder to have their bid to the designated place as indicated in the specifications, by the date and time shown in the specifications. Late bids will not be opened and shall be rejected unopened.

### **ADDENDA TO SPECIFICATIONS**

On occasion, it may be necessary to issue an addendum against a specification. Addenda will be posted on DemandStar and must be acknowledged on the Bid Form of the Solicitation.

## **MODIFICATION OR WITHDRAWAL OF BIDS**

Bids may be modified or withdrawn prior to the bid opening date and time specified in the bid. Generally, no bidder may withdraw a bid after the opening.

## **BID OPENINGS**

The bid opening is public, and we invite the public and those who have submitted bids to be present. This permits those who have entered bids to become better acquainted with our policies and procedures. The bids are read aloud, but may not be available for public inspection until the County has made an intended decision to award, or within ten (10) days after the bid is opened, whichever is earlier.

## **REJECTION OF BIDS**

Alachua County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids in whole or in part, to waive irregularities, and to request rebids.

## **CANCELLATION OF INVITATION TO BID/ REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

An invitation to bid or request for proposal may be canceled by the County any time prior to an award.

## **BONDING**

Certain circumstances require the provision of added protection or security by vendors for the County involving the bidding of projects and the performance of services. This added security involves the provision of bid, performance and payment bonds. While there will be cases where bid bonds, payment bonds, or performance bonds are required, the County is committed to requiring bonds only when the County determines it is necessary. Bonding is recognized as a possible impediment to a new or a small business enterprise and, as such, is generally not called for on smaller and more routine projects or services.

## **CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING BIDS**

Any question concerning the bid should be directed in writing to the purchasing agent whose name and telephone number is listed on the bid document. The person corresponding should specify the bid number and the bid opening date. No interpretation shall be considered binding unless provided in writing.

## **BID ERRORS**

Prior to submission of bids, errors may be corrected by lining out and entering the substituted words or figures. The change shall be initialed by the person signing the bid. In the case of errors in the extension of price, the unit price will govern. Vendors are urged to examine all documents before submission. Failure to do so will be at bidder's/proposer's risk.

## **CRITERIA FOR AWARD**

Award will be made to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder/proposer considering such factors as, but not limited to, price, responsibility, qualification and capability of respondent, availability of funds, and all other relevant factors, provided the bid/proposal meets specifications and other requirements of the request for bid/proposal. The criteria to be applied for an award will be incorporated into the bid/proposal.

## **SAMPLES**

All bidders should examine the specifications closely to see if they are required to submit samples with the bid. Samples are required only when requested. When samples are required, they must be presented to Alachua County by the vendor without cost or obligation. Alachua County will hold all samples until completion of the awarded purchase order, after which, samples may be picked up by the vendors.

## **DELIVERY DATES**

Unless already defined in the specifications, a definite number of days for delivery after receipt of order should always be stated by the bidder. The time required for delivery is of the essence and may be an important factor in determining who shall be awarded the bid.

## **SHIPPING POINT AND DELIVERIES**

All County purchases are to be F.O.B. Alachua County, inside delivery at a designated delivery point assigned on the purchase order. Exceptions will have to be prearranged. The purchase order number should appear on the shipping or delivery ticket and on packages or containers delivered. Failure to meet the specified delivery schedule may result in the cancellation of the order.

## **TAXES**

The County is exempt from most taxes imposed by State or Federal government. Tax exempt numbers are on file and available to prospective vendors.

## **CONVICTED VENDOR LIST & PUBLIC ENTITY CRIME STATEMENT**

The State of Florida requires that the County (as a political subdivision of the State) advise vendors (as potential bidders) of the public entity crime requirements of Section 287.133(2)(a), Florida Statutes, which specifies that a person or affiliate who has been placed on the convicted vendor list following a conviction of a public entity crime may not submit a bid on a contract to provide any goods or services to a public entity, may not submit a bid on a contract with a public entity for the construction or repair of a public building or public work, may not submit bids on leases of real property to a public entity, may not be awarded or perform work as a Consultant, supplier, subconsultant, or Consultant under a contract with any public entity, and may not transact business with any public entity in excess of the threshold amount provided in Section 287.017, for CATEGORY TWO for a period of 36 months from the date of being placed on the convicted vendor list.

## **VENDOR'S INVOICES**

To receive payment for goods or services rendered, the vendor must submit the original of the invoice to the address indicated on the purchase order. Vendor's invoices should indicate the purchase order number and the ship-to address as shown on the purchase order.

## **PAYMENT**

Vendor invoices will be paid after:

1. Goods are received, inspected for conformity to specifications, and certified for payment by the operating department.
2. Vendor's original invoice is received by the Finance & Accounting Department, and is to

be in agreement with the terms of the Purchase Order.

The Purchasing Division is generally not involved in the payment process, but we are available to provide our vendors with general information on the payment process.

### **COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES**

All vendor complaints or grievances should first be submitted in writing to the Purchasing Manager. The Purchasing Manager will investigate the validity of the complaint and present the findings in writing to the vendor. If the vendor is dissatisfied with the Purchasing Manager's remedies, he/she may then make an appeal to the County Manager. This policy does not preclude consideration of legal questions in connection with any decisions made by the County.

## **EXAMPLES OF WHAT WE PURCHASE**

### **SERVICES**

Accounting Services  
Actuarial Services  
Air Conditioning and Heating  
Appraisal Services  
Architectural Services  
Attorney Services  
Carpentry  
Computer Maintenance  
Construction  
Electrical Remodeling/Renovations  
Engineering Services  
Health Care Services  
Landscaping  
Lawn Maintenance  
Painting  
Pest Control Services  
Plumbing  
Repair and Maintenance  
Remodeling/Renovations  
Towing and Wrecker Services  
Vehicle Maintenance, Supplies and Service

### **COMMODITIES**

Automobiles  
Automotive/Truck Parts & Supplies  
Building Materials  
Computer Hardware  
Computer Software  
Janitorial Supplies  
Office Equipment  
Office Furniture  
Office Supplies  
Paper Products  
Signs

## **SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (SBE)**

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners created a Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program to increase SBE participation in County contracts. The Purchasing Division, in cooperation with the Equal Opportunity Division, is responsible for implementing and coordinating this program. To qualify as a small business, vendors must be certified by Alachua County. To obtain information about becoming certified as a small business, contact the Equal Opportunity Division, at Star Garage, 105 SE 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Suite 3, Gainesville, Florida 32602, or call (352) 374-5275; (352) 374-5284 (TDD); (352) 338-3205 FAX.

Alachua County Board of County Commissioners has adopted a 15% goal and has established policies which encourages the participation of Small Business Enterprises in the provision of goods and services. Further, the County monitors the Small Business Program with respect to the achievement of this goal.