



Table of Contents

<i>General Guidelines</i>	3
<i>Contacting Purchasing Services</i>	3
<i>How the School District Buys</i>	
<i>Formal Sealed Bids</i>	4
<i>Informal Purchases</i>	4
<i>Exempt Purchases</i>	4
<i>Dispute of formal Sealed Bids</i>	5
<i>Bidders Lists</i>	5
<i>Specifications</i>	6
<i>The Bid Proposal Form</i>	6
<i>Submitting a Bid</i>	6
<i>Noncompliant Bids</i>	6
<i>Bid Openings</i>	6
<i>Samples and Descriptive Literature</i>	7
<i>Product Evaluation</i>	7
<i>Delivery Dates</i>	7
<i>Rejection of Bids</i>	7
<i>Public Records</i>	7
<i>Suspension and Debarment</i>	8
<i>Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)</i>	8
<i>Taxes</i>	8
<i>Vendor Invoicing</i>	8
<i>Invoice Payment</i>	8



From the Superintendent

Dear Current or Prospective Vendor:

On behalf of Duval County Public Schools I thank you for your interest in conducting business with the District. As you may be aware, our school system is among the largest in the country and, as such, has a continual requirement for a variety of products and services to maintain efficient and effective operation. We rely upon various companies such as yours to assist in meeting the needs of the system as we strive to provide the best possible education for our students.

Our Purchasing Services Department staff has devoted many hours in development of this Vendor Handbook to assist you as an informative and useful tool to participate in the market created by our needs. The purpose of the Handbook is to provide general information regarding our procurement policies and procedures and serve as a guideline for offering your products and/or services for consideration by the district.

This publication is not intended to serve as an all inclusive manual. If you have questions that are not answered in the Handbook, please contact Purchasing Services at (904) 858-4848. You will find our purchasing staff to be an informed and supportive resource for any additional information you may require.

Again, thank you for your interest. We look forward to working together with you to maintain the highest level of educational excellence for our students.



Duval County Public School System Mission

The Duval County Public School System is committed to providing high quality educational opportunities that will inspire all students to acquire and use the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a global economy, and culturally diverse world.



General Guidelines

The Purchasing Services Department is responsible for administering and enforcing purchasing policies and procedures in the acquisition of materials and services for Duval County Public Schools (DCPS). The following guidelines are pertinent to conducting business with this district and must be adhered to:

- In most instances, requests for prices of commodities and/or services and the obligation of budgeted school district funds will be made by Purchasing Services. Under certain circumstances, Purchasing Services may delegate this authority in accordance with school district policy. Purchases made by DCPs employees without prior authorization will not obligate the school district for payment. Such purchases will be considered personal in nature and the vendor shall seek payment from the individual.
- Purchasing Services retains full authority to question the quantity, quality and nature of materials and/or services requested in order that the interests of the school district are being served.
- Other than advertising novelties, acceptance of personal gifts by any DCPS employee is prohibited. Additionally, employees shall not receive tangible or intangible benefit or profit from any transaction made on behalf of the school district.
- Purchases will only be made from suppliers who demonstrate adequate financial strength, high ethical standards and a record of adhering to specifications, maintaining shipping promises and providing a full measure of service.
- All bidders will be afforded the opportunity to bid and compete on equal terms and conditions. Every effort will be made to make purchases on the basis of quality, service, and price.
- Purchase orders will not be issued when there is evidence of collusion or a conflict of interest. In any instance where this is apparent, the Director of Purchasing Services will refer to the issue to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Contacting Purchasing Services



The Purchasing Services Department is located at 4880 Bulls Bay Highway, Jacksonville, FL 32219. The main office telephone number is (904) 858-4848. The Purchasing Services Department web page may be accessed at www.duvalschools.org.

Current and prospective vendors are encouraged to periodically present themselves to the Buyer responsible for their commodities or services. However, unannounced visits are discouraged. To assure the appropriate staff member is available; it is recommended that appointments be made by contacting Purchasing Services. Vendors are prohibited from visiting schools or operating departments prior to communicating with Purchasing Services personnel. When appropriate, Purchasing Services staff will refer sales representatives to schools and departments.



How the District Buys

Formal Sealed Bids

Most competitive purchases with an estimated cost exceeding the bid threshold amount as established by the State Department of Education (DOE) are made by the use of formal sealed bids. Written technical specifications that describe commodity or service are developed together with general and special conditions and the complete Invitation to Bid package is available to all interested vendors.

Vendors may obtain information on current (active) bids in the following ways:

- Check the legal advertisement section of “*Financial News & Daily Record*”, for our bid advertisements.
- Visit our office at 4880 Bulls Bay Highway, Jacksonville, Florida 32219. A listing of current bids is maintained on the bulletin board in the main lobby.
- Onvia DemandStar is our bid distribution agency. You may request copies of bids by calling 1-800-711-1712 or emailing <http://www.demandstar.com/> . There is a nominal fee for bid documents.
- Log on to our website at www.duvalschools.org/purchasing . Click on BID INFORMATION and follow the directions.

**Call our Bid
Hotline at
904-858-4843
for information
on current
bids. Hotline
information is
updated
weekly.**

BID PACKAGES ARE NOT MAILED TO VENDORS FROM PURCHASING SERVICES.

Interested vendors may obtain copies either by telephoning Onvia at the number shown above or by picking them up in person from the Purchasing Services office.

Bids and proposals are publicly opened at a specified date, time and place. All responsive bids or proposals are reviewed by an evaluation committee, consisting of a member of the Purchasing staff and a representative group of staff members involved in the use of the commodity or service. The committee presents its recommendation to the Superintendent who when required, in turn makes recommendation of award to the School Board in formal session for their review and consideration. The School Board reserves the authority to make the ultimate determination of award.

Recommendations for award are made on the basis of the lowest responsive and responsible bidders as determined by the evaluation committee. For the purpose of evaluation, the term **RESPONSIVE** may be defined as a bidder whose bid: conforms to the specifications; adheres to the required delivery timeframes; has a clearly stated price which does not require conversion or interpretation; is not contingent upon the award of other bids currently under consideration; is accompanied by a bid surety, if required; is received within the allotted time; and contains no escalation clause. The term **RESPONSIBLE** may be defined as a bidder who demonstrates or has demonstrated: financial stability; the necessary production capacity; a willingness and ability to provide technical support and service; and prior experience involving the subject commodity or service.

*NOTE: Notices of award recommendations are **NOT** sent to unsuccessful bidders prior to School Board approval. The information is posted as described herein. It is the vendor’s responsibility to obtain this information.*

Informal Purchases

Many purchases with estimated costs below the bid threshold amount are made by soliciting written quotations from a minimum of three (3) suppliers. Award is made by the appropriate Buyer, based upon quality, timeliness of delivery, suitability for the intended purpose, cost and any other pertinent factors.

Routine purchases with very low estimated costs are often processed directly. However, solicitation of written or verbal quotes may be requested at the discretion of the Director of Purchasing Services or a designee.

Exempt Purchases

Certain purchases are exempt from competitive solicitation requirements. Examples of exempt purchases include, but are not limited to: purchases from active bids of other political subdivisions or from existing contracts and agreements established by the State Department of Management Services; test and testing material; information technology resources; instructional services; and purchases of materials from a sole provider



Dispute of Formal Sealed Bids

Bid tabulations with award recommendations for formal sealed bids will be posted on the bulletin board at the main reception area outside the Purchasing Services offices. Posting of recommendations serves as the official notification for the purposes of this section. Any actual or prospective bidder, proposer or contractor who is aggrieved in connection with the solicitation or award of a contract may file a protest and shall deliver its written notice of protest to the Hearing Officer no later than two (2) working days after bid opening or after recommendation of award. The written protest with documentation shall be delivered to the Hearing Officer no later than 2 p.m. on the 4th calendar day immediately following the bid opening or receipt of notice of intent to award recommendation as is appropriate. If that day is a Duval County School Board non-workday, the protest shall be delivered no later than 9 a.m. the next DCPS workday. Protests shall be presented with specificity, and every issue shall be fully documented. After the allotted time has passed without protest, the School Board will not consider any subsequent protest as valid.

Bidders Lists

Duval County Public Schools has entered into an agreement with Onvia DemandStar to provide automatic notification to prospective suppliers whenever an Invitation To Bid (ITB) or Request For Proposals (RFP) is released. Business firms that subscribe to the Onvia service receive notices of the availability of ITB's and RFP's for categories in which they have registered. To have your company placed on the list of prospective bidders, contact Onvia at <http://www.demandstar.com/> or calling 1-800-711-1712. Prospective subscribers are advised there is a fee to subscribe to the Onvia service. However, your subscription assures notification of available bidding opportunities with the District. This notification system will provide prospective suppliers a choice of delivery methods for immediate access to these documents.

Purchasing Services does not mail copies of ITB/RFP documents to prospective suppliers or maintain bidder's lists by using Vendor Application Forms.

As a prospective supplier, your participation in the Onvia network offers a number of important benefits:

- You will receive automatic notification of Bids and RFPs released by Duval County Public Schools;
- You can receive this notification by either e-mail or by fax;
- You will have immediate access to bid/RFP documents and be able to download documents relevant to your business from the Internet;
- As other Duval County governmental entities enter into similar agreements with Onvia, you will also be able to receive automatic notification of their procurement opportunities;
- As additional features of the Onvia network become available, including an internet-based quotation system, your company will be positioned to take advantage of additional opportunities to do business with the District.

As a prospective supplier, participation in the Onvia network is not a mandatory requirement for doing business with DCPS. You will still be able to get information about our Bids/RFPs by monitoring publications for our legal ads and by logging on to the District's Web Site.

However, unless you register with Onvia, you may not receive personal notification of any Bid/RFP opportunities.

Should you have any further questions regarding this subject, please call Purchasing Services at (904) 858-4848.

If your company requests and receives an ITB or RFP, it is imperative you either submit a positive response or return a statement of no bid showing the reason. Failure to respond will be considered an indication that your firm does not wish to conduct business with Duval County Public Schools.

Companies wishing to receive Requests For Quotations (RFQ) for purchases below the formal bid threshold are advised to contact the appropriate Purchasing Services personnel to assure their interest is known. RFQ's are solicited from interested vendors on a rotating basis to afford an opportunity of business for all known suppliers.



Specifications

ITB's which contain specifications for the required items are available and may be obtained as described elsewhere in this booklet. It is the purpose of specifications to accurately describe the commodity or service to be purchased.

In some instances a brand name or names may be used. This is not intended to restrict bidding, but rather to establish the quality of material or service required, unless the term "Only" or "No Substitute" appears on the Bid Proposal Form. The phrase "Or Acceptable Substitution" may be used in conjunction with a brand name to allow the offering of alternative items. However, it is the responsibility of the bidder to prove the substitution is comparable to the specified item in quality and suitability for the intended purpose. The District reserves the right of final determination of acceptability.

When you receive an Invitation To Bid (ITB), read the terms, conditions and specifications carefully. Any alteration or deviation from them may render your bid non-responsive.

The Bid Proposal Form

If you are able to provide the item(s) to be purchased, complete the Bid Proposal Form contained in the ITB. Prices must be stated in units of measure specified in the bid. In the event of a discrepancy between the unit price and total price, the unit price shall govern. In the event of a discrepancy between a numerical price and a written price, the written price shall govern.

Be certain your bid is properly signed by an authorized agent of the firm. Unsigned bids will be considered non-responsive.



Submitting a Bid

All formal bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope and must be properly identified as indicated in the Instructions To Bidders. Bids may be delivered personally or by mail. Formal bids submitted by telephone, telegram, e-mail or facsimile are **NOT** acceptable. It is the bidder's sole responsibility to assure their bid is received at the designated office by the date and time required. **Bids received after the designated date and time will be returned to the bidder unopened.**

Noncompliant Bids

Bids received which do not comply with the requirements as set forth in the ITB/RFP will not be considered for award. Areas of noncompliance are as follows.

- Failure to complete and/or return any required portion of the Bid Proposal Form
- Manual signature not original
- Completion in pencil
- Erasures or use of correction fluid/tape on price or quantity columns
- Any other provision in the ITB/RFP which is not adhered to.

Bid Openings

All bid openings are public and we invite the general public as well as interested vendors to attend. Bids are opened at the location, date and time as indicated in the ITB/RFP. If multiple bids are to be opened, they will be opened in sequence by bid number. Bids are read aloud upon the request of anyone in attendance. Tabulations are posted in the general area as soon as is practicable for public review. After Award, bid tabulations are available for review at the bid information website, as listed elsewhere in this handbook.



Samples and Descriptive Literature

All prospective bidders should examine the Instructions To Bidders to determine if a product sample and/or descriptive literature is required to be submitted. For bids received on items to be considered as substitutes for the brand/make/model listed, DCPS reserves the right to require descriptive literature and/or samples, even if not specifically called for in the bid. When required, samples must be provided at no cost or obligation to the school district. Upon completion of award, vendors may retrieve, at their own cost, any sample not destroyed by testing. Samples not retrieved within thirty (30) days of bid award may be considered as donations to the school district.

Product Evaluation

For any product which has performed unsatisfactorily, the vendor will be notified as to the nature of the problem. The product may be excluded from consideration in future purchases. Upon prior approval from Purchasing Services, a vendor may submit samples of products to test by actual usage in lieu of products currently in use. Any such samples are to be submitted at the vendor's sole risk and expense. No liability or obligation will be incurred by DCPS as a result of accepting such samples.

From time to time, Purchasing Services may advertise to known product suppliers of the intent to accept samples for testing to establish a Qualified Product List (QPL). The methods of testing will be publicized and all vendors will have the opportunity to submit their product(s) for evaluation. The resulting QPL, consisting of the products which have successfully completed testing, will then be used as the only acceptable products in any subsequent bid. Items not found on the QPL would not be considered for award.

After the establishment of a QPL, any vendor who wishes to have their product added must complete the testing at their own expense and present the test results to Purchasing Services. If the product successfully completed the testing, it will be included in subsequent bids.

Delivery Dates

A definite number of days for delivery after receipt of order should be stated by the bidder. **Delivery time is important and may be used as a factor in determining a bid award.**

Delivery dates are considered to be firm and any deviation must be approved by Purchasing Services. Unless otherwise agreed upon, all deliveries are to be F.O.B. Destination.

Rejection of Bids

Duval County Public Schools reserves the right to reject any or all bids, request new bids, consider alternate bids meeting the general specifications and waive any informalities. DCPS also reserves the right to award bids on an individual, multiple, lump sum or low total basis for those items deemed to best suit the needs of the school district. Additionally, award may be withheld on any bid due to budgetary limitations.

Public Record

Each bid tabulation with award recommendation(s) is posted in the Consolidated Service Center main lobby. Copies of tabulations are sent, as requested, upon action by the School Board. Completed bid files may be reviewed by contacting Purchasing Services for an appointment to review the documents in the presence of a purchasing staff member. Copies of documents contained within the file are available for a nominal charge.



Suspension and Debarment

The School Board may debar vendors for various infractions of acceptable business practices for a period not exceeding three (3) years. Those vendors so debarred will be prohibited from conducting **ANY** business with DCPS for the duration of their debarment period. The director of Purchasing Services has the authority to suspend a vendor from consideration for award of contracts for a period of time not to exceed (3) months

The causes for suspension and/or debarment include, but are not limited to:

1. Conviction of a criminal offense relative to a public or private contract or subcontract, or in the performance of such contract or subcontract
2. Conviction under state or federal statutes indicative of a lack of business integrity or honesty, such as embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, records falsification or records destruction
3. Conviction under antitrust statutes arising out of the submission of bids or proposals
4. Debarment by another governmental entity
5. Any other cause that the Director of Purchasing Services deems to be as serious and compelling as to adversely affect the vendor's responsibility as a DCPS contractor.

Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)

Duval County Public Schools has adopted a program designed to assist and encourage the growth of minority businesses by removing unnecessary obstacles and promoting an atmosphere conducive to the development of these enterprises.

All procurements will be made in accordance with the provisions of the DCPS Minority Business Development and Assistance Program.

Additional information regarding the MBE Program may be obtained by contacting the Minority Business Affairs Office at (904) 858-1480.

Taxes

Duval County Public Schools is exempt from most taxes imposed by the State of Florida or the Federal Government. The tax exemption number is printed on the face of each purchase order. A copy of the tax exemption certificate can be furnished upon request. Tax exempt status is afforded to the District in making direct purchases. Vendors who purchase materials for use by DCPS are **NOT** exempt from paying taxes.

Vendor Invoicing

To receive prompt payment for products or services provided, the vendor must submit an itemized invoice showing the appropriate unit prices and extension and the purchase order number to:

Duval County Public Schools
ATTN: Accounts Payable, 2nd Floor
1701 Prudential Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32207

**Do you have
questions regarding
payments? Contact
Accounts Payable at
904-390-2151.**

Invoice Payment

Payment of invoices will be made after:

1. Materials and/or services are received and certified by the appropriate school or department
2. Inspection of items for conformity to specifications
3. Completion of any additional requirements as found in the ITB or on the purchase order
4. Invoice has been received by Accounts Payable
5. Compliance with applicable terms of the Vendor Handbook.