

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: Only Purchasing's 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 [Current Solicitations](#) 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 Purchasing's web site](#).
- Bid Packages contain required affidavits.

- Pre-bid conferences (optional) may be necessary to clarify terms and conditions that may impact the bid.
- 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 Purchasing’s web site](#).
- Pre-proposal conferences are used to clarify the scope of services, requirements and terms and conditions that may impact the bid.
- Questions are addressed at the pre-proposal conference. If necessary, the RFP will be revised and addenda will be posted on the County’s web site
- 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 and 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 Baltimore 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 [cooperative \(joint\) purchases](#).

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 and Consultants, Computer Hardware and 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-qualifications):

- Construction Contracts Administration - Capital Improvement Projects

Utility Services (water/sewer lines and pumping stations)

Road (Horizontal) Construction/Repairs

Building (Vertical) Construction

Professional Services Projects

Architects, Landscape Architects

Engineers

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

Construction Contracts Administration

- General contractors must be pre-qualified 10 days before bid date.
- Subcontractors are required to be pre-qualified on some projects.

Professional Services

- 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

- 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 and Materials.

Contracting Opportunity Notifications

- [Register for weekly solicitation e-mail notification](#) for Purchasing and Construction Contracts Administration
- [Subscribe to Professional Services New Project Announcements](#)

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 one year can be found at www.baltimorecountymd.gov/purchasing

- Minority Business Enterprise and Women's Business Enterprise (MBE/WBE)
- The program is established by Executive Order visit 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.