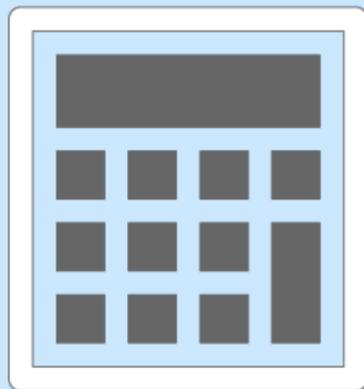


Vendor's Guide



Version 1.1
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This Guide is intended to be a resource on how to do business with Arlington County, Virginia. It does not replace or supersede the provisions set forth in the Purchasing Resolution or any specific solicitation; vendors must follow the instructions, specifications, terms and conditions set forth in such solicitations.

PURCHASING OBJECTIVE

The County strives to purchase goods and services in an open and fair manner to receive the best value for money spent on behalf of its citizens.

PURCHASING REGULATIONS

The procurement process in Arlington County is governed by the Arlington County Purchasing Resolution, which is available on the Purchasing website.

OFFICE OF THE PURCHASING AGENT

The Office of the Purchasing Agent provides all Arlington County Government departments with centralized procurement services. Information concerning the Arlington Public Schools procurement procedures can be obtained by calling 703-228-6123.

The Office of the Purchasing Agent processes and authorizes all purchases for the County in excess of \$5,000 per transaction, including the purchase of professional and consulting services, insurance, and construction. The County Purchasing Agent may delegate the authority to solicit quotations or proposals for certain goods and services to various County departments. This delegation is valid only for informal solicitations with a value below \$100,000.

No County employee other than the Purchasing Agent or designee is permitted to sign or award a contract, or authorize the purchase or delivery of goods or services on behalf of the County.

THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Depending on the value, type and complexity of the goods or services being procured, the County may use a variety of processes/methods to obtain the goods or services needed.

Purchases under \$5,000

Purchases of goods and/or services not exceeding \$5,000 per vendor/per department/per fiscal year may be made without competition.

Purchases between \$5,000 to \$100,000

If a purchase is over \$5,000 but less than \$100,000, the Office of the Purchasing Agent may authorize a County department to issue an electronic solicitation (Quick Quote) through the State of Virginia's electronic bidding system (eVA). Vendors registered in eVA will receive notifications for Quick Quotes that have been issued if the commodity code(s) selected for the Quick Quote issued by the County match the commodity code(s) selected by the vendor during registration in eVA. Vendors must submit their quotations electronically in eVA in accordance with the requirements set forth in the Quick Quote, or send their quote directly to the County department buyer via e-mail or fax. The department submits the results of the Quick Quote to the Office of the Purchasing Agent for final award approval and issuance of a Purchase Order.

Purchases Over \$100,000

For purchases with a value of over \$100,000, the Office of the Purchasing Agent issues formal solicitations in eVA. For these solicitations, vendors are required to submit hard copy bids or proposals in accordance with the requirements set forth in the solicitation

Invitations to Bid (ITBs) – used when the County can clearly specify its requirements, price is the main factor in determining the award. May include minimum qualification requirements.

Requests for Proposals (RFPs) – allows the County to consider factors other than price to determine which firm provides “best value” to the County. Vendors submit proposals demonstrating their qualifications and experience in performing the work requested, which is then evaluated by the County.

Joint and Cooperative Procurement

Arlington County may participate in, sponsor, conduct, or administer a joint procurement agreement for the purpose of combining requirements to increase efficiency or reduce administrative expenses in acquisition of most types of goods and services.

Arlington County may also purchase from a contract solicited by another public body, even if it did not participate in the solicitation as long as the awarding entity follows all applicable regulations of fairness and competition.

Sole Source

A contract may be awarded directly to a vendor without the competitive process if it is determined that there is only one source practicably available for the goods or services being procured.

Emergency Purchase Authorization

The County may order goods or services on an emergency basis. Such orders require authorization by the Office of the Purchasing Agent in the form of an emergency purchase authorization (EPA) number issued by the Office of the Purchasing Agent, but they do not require issuance of a County Purchase Order in advance.

Small Business Enterprise (SBE) / Minority, Women, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (MWDBE)

Arlington County encourages small businesses, minority-and women-owned, and disadvantaged businesses to do business with Arlington County. However, the County does not have a sheltered market or set-aside policy for these vendors.

Purchase Order Requirement

No purchase (with the exception of credit card purchases and emergency purchases) is valid unless specifically covered by a County Purchase Order. Vendors providing goods or services without such authorization do so at their own risk. The County is not liable for payment of any purchases made by its employees without an appropriate purchase authorization issued by the

HOW TO BECOME A REGISTERED BIDDER / SOLICITATION NOTICES

Arlington County posts all solicitations with a value of over \$5,000 on the State of Virginia's eProcurement portal (eVA) at www.eva.virginia.gov under the Solicitations Quick Quotes and Awards tab. Depending on the nature of the purchase or the type of the solicitation, the notice may also be advertised in a local newspaper, in a regional subscription service such as the Dodge Report, or in other sources.

Vendors interested in doing business with the County should register online with eVA. Registering with eVA allows a vendor to receive a notice when the commodity or the service they are interested in providing is needed by the County. However, vendors can also view and respond to the active solicitations without registering.

Current solicitations can be accessed via the County's Purchasing Website.

SOLICITATION DOCUMENTS

All solicitation documents can be downloaded from eVA at no cost to the vendor.

Questions Regarding Specifications

Questions concerning any solicitation must be addressed to the party identified in the solicitation documents, or to the Purchasing Agent. If the answers to such questions, in the opinion of the Purchasing Agent, substantively affect the solicitation, an amendment to the solicitation will be issued. Unless otherwise stated in the solicitation, questions received by the County less than three (3) calendar days prior to the time and date when responses will be opened may not be considered.

Terms, Conditions, and Instructions

Vendors should carefully review all terms, conditions, and instructions in the solicitation. They are tailored to meet the requirements of each solicitation and can contain contractual and other information that could affect the vendor's proposed pricing.

Bonding Requirements

The County generally limits its bonding requirements to construction projects. The dollar threshold will vary upon the type of the project and whether the County has conducted a prequalification of vendors. However, some projects other than construction projects may also have bonding requirements because of the complexity, size or type of the service or commodity requested.

Completing the Solicitation Forms

Solicitation forms must be completed in compliance with the instructions/requirements contained in the solicitation. Failure to submit the forms as required, and making any changes or additions to the forms, may result in rejection of the bid, quote, or proposal as nonresponsive. Failure to submit other documents required in the solicitation (brochures, specifications or samples) may result in rejection of the response.

BIDDING POLICIES

Late Responses

The County will reject any response to a solicitation received past the exact time and date specified as the due date. Explanations that a late bid or proposal submission was caused by delays in traffic, lack of adequate parking, late mail deliveries, or for any other reason, will not be accepted.

Equivalent Items

The County may identify an item with a brand and model number adding the words, "or equivalent," or "or approved equal." In such cases, the County encourages submission of bids for items that perform the same function as the named brand and model in accordance with the specifications outlined in the solicitation.

When the specification identifies a brand and model as "No Substitute," only the specified brand and model is acceptable. If a vendor feels that the request for a "No Substitute" item is not justified, the vendor may contact the Office of the Purchasing Agent to obtain the County's reason for the "No Substitute" designation.

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Delivery

All goods purchased by the County must be shipped FOB Destination to an address in Arlington, Virginia specified in the solicitation, with all costs of shipping, handling and delivery included in the base unit price(s) of the item(s).

Insurance Requirements

When evidence of insurance is to be provided by a vendor, the solicitation document will identify the specific coverages and limits required. Vendors must review the insurance requirements with their insurance agent prior to submitting a bid or proposal to ensure that they can obtain the required coverages. Failure to provide the specified insurance will result in cancellation of the award.

Attendance at Public Opening of Responses

Bidders may attend any opening of responses identified as a "public" opening. Openings of solicitations let under the "Competitive Negotiation" process are not public.

Solicitations that require electronic submission of quotes (Quick Quotes) do not have public openings.

Notification of Unsuccessful Bidders or Offerors

The County notifies all vendors who submitted a bid or proposal for a solicitation of the contract award by sending a Notice of Decision to Award via e-mail. Firms that did not participate in the bidding process can contact the Office of the Purchasing Agent for information regarding award results for formal solicitations. Award information for Quick Quotes is posted on the eVA website, and may also be obtained from the County department that solicited the quotations.

Protests, Appeals and Disputes

The Office of the Purchasing Agent encourages vendors and County users to resolve the issues amicably prior to escalating the matter in accordance with the provisions of the Purchasing Resolution or the contract.

Procedures for filing and resolving protests, appeals, and contractual disputes are described in Article 7 of the Purchasing Resolution.

Failure to follow the correct procedures when filing a protest, dispute or appeal can result in denial of the request.

CURRENT COUNTY CONTRACTS

The list of current County contracts can be found on the County's Purchasing website.

VIRGINIA SALES TAX EXEMPTION

Arlington County is exempt from the Commonwealth of Virginia's sales taxes for the purchase of tangible goods. The County's tax exemption information is available from the Office of the Purchasing Agent.

SALE OF SURPLUS PROPERTY

Materials and equipment identified by the County as surplus may be sold to the public through public auction or through competitive bidding.

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PROHIBITION OF GIFTS

Because public employees' actions are subject to intense and constant scrutiny, acceptance of a gift from a vendor can be easily misconstrued. Therefore, the existing law prohibits the offering of gifts of more than a nominal value to County employees and County regulations prohibit their acceptance.

County employees are encouraged to decline any gift or gratuity offered by a vendor or business, even where acceptance of such gifts may be technically within the law, due to the perception of impropriety which can be as damaging to the image of the County and the employee as actual impropriety.

DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED

In the solicitation of awarding of contracts, the County does not discriminate because of race, religion, color, sex, or national origin of the bidder or offeror.

ETHICS IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Arlington County employees follow a strict code of conduct in relation to procurement transaction. An employee may not participate in a procurement transaction when the employee, employee's partner, or any member of the immediate family:

- ◆ is employed by a vendor involved in the procurement transaction; or
- ◆ holds an executive position with the vendor, or owns or controls an interest of more than 5% in the company; or
- ◆ has a pecuniary interest arising from the procurement transaction; or
- ◆ is negotiating, or has an arrangement concerning, prospective employment with the vendor.

VENDOR CONTACT WITH COUNTY DEPARTMENTS

Vendors may visit County departments without advance approval of the Office of the Purchasing Agent to make sales calls, drop off literature, or conduct demonstrations. Advance appointments should be made with the department to be visited.

QUESTIONS

Vendors may obtain information or clarification of any part of the procurement process in Arlington County, by contacting the Office of the Purchasing Agent by phone at 703-228-3410, by fax at 703-228-3409, by email at purchasing@arlingtonva.us, or by mail at 2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 500, Arlington, VA 22201.

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