

Doing Business with the City of Cape Coral

Forward

The purpose of this guide is to explain the purchasing process by which the Procurement Division and the City's delegated buyers supply needed commodities and services to City departments and divisions.

It is the intent of the City to procure the necessary equipment and services at the lowest possible cost, consistent with the quality needed to meet the requirements of government. In addition, we want to ensure that the taxpayers receive the maximum value for each dollar expended. Every purchase should be made in the public's interest and provide all qualified vendors a fair and equal opportunity to compete.

How Do Vendors Find Out About Business Opportunities with the City?

Legal Advertising in The Breeze Newspaper (when applicable);

Advertised on the City's web page at www.capecoral.net under 'Business', and in Demand Star when appropriate;

Notice to Bidders mailed out in conjunction with the Commodities Vendor List.

Vendor/Bidder Application

A listing of vendors, classified according to materials, supplies, and services, is maintained by the Procurement Division. A prospective vendor interested in doing business with the City may download the PDF vendor application or come in person to the Procurement Division and obtain a vendor/bidder application. Upon return of a properly completed application (including a completed and signed W-9 Form), the vendor will be added to the bidders list under categories selected on the application. The bidders list is normally used when a notice to bid is mailed out for a formal quote or proposal. Currently the formal bid level is over \$50,000. The bidders list may be used for informal quotes and proposals as well.

Gifts and Gratuities

City policy prohibits acceptance of gifts at any time. Employees must not become obligated to any supplier and shall not participate in any City transaction from which they will benefit directly or indirectly.

Types and Methods of Purchasing

Fair and Open Competition:

The City of Cape Coral promotes free and open competition. In addition, the City strives to design specifications for compatibility with standard trade practices and to use procedures in accordance with the law and prudent business practice. Potential bidders are encouraged to advise the Procurement Division if they feel any language and/or requirement of a specification inadvertently restricts or limits competition; or if, in their judgment, specifications do not comply with standard trade practices or impose an impractical or unreasonable procedural burden.

Informal Telephone Quotes:

Goods or services under \$20,000 may be purchased through informal telephone quotes. Informal telephone quotes may either be taken by Procurement staff or by Requisitioners in the requesting

department or division. For this process, a minimum of three vendors will be contacted, given specific information as to the item or service sought, and asked for pricing and delivery time. The purchase order will be issued to the vendor offering the lowest price while meeting all specified requirements.

Informal Letterhead Quotes:

At the direction of the Procurement Manager, or through a requesting department, goods or services between \$20,000 and \$50,000 will normally be procured using informal written quotes on vendor letterhead. For this process, a written specification setting forth all requirements of the purchase is prepared and made available to a minimum of three vendors. The quotes are reviewed on a specified date and time, and award is made to the lowest quote meeting all specification requirements.

Formal Bid:

When the item or service to be procured is estimated to cost over \$50,000, a specification package is developed and made available to all interested vendors. The sealed bids are received on a specified date and time and are evaluated for compliance to the specifications, delivery time, and price. Award is normally recommended to the lowest bid meeting specifications. City Council approves the award.

Request for Proposal (RFPs):

The proposal process is used when no fixed criteria exist for a purchase. The process is similar to the formal bid process with the exception that award is based on predetermined evaluation criteria rather than solely on price. An evaluation committee will review and rank the proposals received for each of the evaluation factors. A tabulation of their scores will determine which vendor will be recommended for award of the proposal.

Cooperative Purchasing:

The City of Cape Coral is a member of the South West Florida Cooperative Purchasing Consortium. The purpose of this consortium is to jointly quote items common to all members in order to obtain volume discount pricing.

Piggybacking:

Most specifications include the provision for other governmental entities to be able to "piggyback" on the prices obtained and awarded.

Steps to Competitive Bidding

Specifications:

Specifications are detailed descriptions of the intended purchase, establishing the minimum acceptable standards. They are included in the bid documents. If there are any questions, concerns, or objections regarding specifications, contact the person indicated in the bid proposal, the Procurement Division, or make inquiries during the pre-bid conference. The City reserves the right to request that questions concerning interpretation or modification to plans, specifications, or contract documents be submitted in writing to the Procurement Manager.

Changes to the specifications shall be made in writing in the form of an Addendum circulated to all potential bidders. These changes become an integral part of the bid/proposal and receipt must be acknowledged in pricing pages.

Pre-Bid Conference:

Pre-bid conferences are often held on formal bids and proposals. The purpose of the Pre-Bid Conference is to provide a forum in which vendors may ask questions about the bid document. If there are any discrepancies, concerns, or suggestions, this is the time they should be brought forward. Vendors are asked not to wait until after the bids are awarded and Intent to Award has been sent to point out a deficiency in the specification documents.

Bid Opening:

All formal bids are to be received in a sealed envelope bearing the name and number of the project, and the date and time of the opening, prior to the stated deadline. Bids are opened and read publicly by the Procurement Designee on the date and time shown in the invitation to bid. Bids are opened in the presence of a Designee from the City Clerk's office. All bids are read aloud.

Bids may not be made public record until 10 days after the opening date. This is for review and evaluation purposes.

Tabulations and Awards:

All formal bids and proposals are tabulated by the Procurement Division. Copies of the tabulations are available for review or copy in the Procurement Division.

Tie Bids:

A thorough review of all tie bids shall be conducted by the Procurement Division. Award recommendations shall be based upon delivery dates, reputation of the vendors involved, past performance, and location of the vendor. If all factors and conditions relating to the bids are equal, then the tie bid will be awarded according to Local Preference, in compliance with Local Ordinances.

Late Bids/Proposals:

If a bid/proposal is received after the date and time stated as the deadline for receipt of bids/proposals, the bid/proposal will be returned unopened via certified mail to the vendor submitting the bid/proposal. If there is no return address or any indication of the company submitting the bid/proposal, the package will be placed unopened in the bid file and will not be considered for award.