

VENDOR GUIDE



PROCUREMENT SERVICES

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<https://www.ventura.org/general-services-agency/procurement-services/>

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INTRODUCTION

Procurement Services purchases for the County (and designated special districts) materials, equipment, supplies, furnishings, and other personal property. It is also responsible for negotiating and executing equipment service contracts, lease/rental agreements, professional service and consulting contracts, labor and material construction contracts, and concessionaire agreements. To provide supplies, equipment, and services at the lowest possible cost, consistent with the quality needed for the efficient performance of County activities, higher-cost items are purchased through competitive solicitation. Procurement Services has an obligation to the citizens of Ventura County to obtain maximum value for money spent, and to provide reliable service.

This guide provides information to vendors wishing to contract with the County. Ventura County is always interested in securing responsible vendors who can supply its needs promptly, economically, and in the desired quality and quantities.

The County is an active participant in “Green Procurement,” whereby recycled products are purchased and sold to reduce the amount of solid waste attributable to business operations. Vendors are encouraged to suggest recyclable equivalents whenever these goods and/or services meet product specifications and appear to be advantageous for the County.

SALES CALLS AND CONTACTS

Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Buyers will attempt to meet with vendors visiting our office even if they have not called for an appointment; however, the buyers specifically assigned to vendor’s product lines may not be available. To conserve the vendor’s time and ensure adequate hearing, vendors are encouraged to schedule an appointment. Routine “courtesy” visits are not encouraged.

Sales representatives should deal directly with Procurement Services. **No one outside Procurement Services is authorized to commit the County to a purchase.** Do not ship materials or initiate any services without a Purchase Order number. Doing so puts the vendor at risk of not getting paid for unauthorized sales.

EXCEPTION: *There are times during emergencies when County personnel must place an order after hours or on weekends; times when the Procurement Office is normally closed. Emergency purchases may be made for items which are immediately necessary for the continued operation of the department, or which are immediately necessary for the preservation of life or property. Be assured that true emergency purchases at such times without Purchase Order numbers will be approved.*

County employees are required to keep free from obligations by refusing to accept entertainment or gifts offered by vendors or their representatives. Therefore, vendors must refrain from offering gifts to County employees.

VENDOR ONLINE REGISTRATION

Procurement Services maintains a list of vendors for all classes of commodities and services that are regularly purchased by the County. To be placed on the list, please register online at <https://ventura.bonfirehub.com/>. Registering to be on the vendor list does not guarantee that a vendor will be notified every time a quotation or bid is issued for the commodities or services selected in the registration process.

OBTAINING PRICING

It is the County's policy to develop maximum competition for all purchases and to make awards based on the lowest responsible and responsive bid received. The County obtains pricing in the following ways:

Telephone Inquiries:

For purchases of \$25,000 or less, buyers may, at their discretion, contact vendors informally by telephone for price quotes. The number of vendors contacted will vary depending on the dollar amount and required delivery date of the purchase.

Quotations:

For purchases of more than \$25,000 but less than \$200,000, buyers may contact vendors requesting written price and delivery quotes.

Solicitations:

For purchases of \$60,000 or more (\$75,000 for public projects), formal bids or Requests for Proposal (RFP) are normally required. Formal solicitations must follow the submittal process listed in the solicitation document. Bids are normally submitted via the County's Vendor Self Service (VSS) website. RFPs are normally submitted through the mail or delivered in person to the Procurement Services Office. Formal solicitations cannot be submitted via facsimile. Solicitations cannot be accepted after the time and date shown on the Notice to Bidders, regardless of the postmark. Please allow enough time for mail delivery or for uploading into VSS. Telephone and oral amendments to formal solicitations cannot be accepted.

A formal bid constitutes an offer to enter into a contract with the County that, if accepted, is binding upon the vendor. Do not promise deliveries which cannot be fulfilled. When a bid is accepted, the vendor will be obligated to all the terms of the invitation to bid. Please note that a notice of award is NOT to be regarded as authorization to make deliveries. Vendors are not to ship until they receive a written Purchase Order signed by the Purchasing Agent, which serves as formal notice to furnish the supplies or services in detail thereon.

In preparing a quotation or bid to submit to the County, vendors must understand all the requirements of the specifications and bid instructions applicable to the purchase. Please carefully note the delivery dates, units of measure, and the location of delivery.

Prices must be quoted as complete including all delivery charges unless otherwise specified. Tax should NOT be included in the price(s) quoted unless otherwise specified. If in doubt as to the meaning of any part of the specifications, contact Procurement Services prior to the deadline.

METHODS OF PROCUREMENT

The County makes purchases in the following ways:

Procurement Bank Card:

For purchases of goods \$5,000 or less, some County staff hold Procurement VISA Bank Cards issued by U.S. Bank. The credit card is a supplement to the Purchase Order process. This system benefits the County by reducing costs involved with traditional accounts payable functions, as well as opening a new supplier base. Purchases are usually paid within two business days, thereby reducing vendor accounts receivable expenses. If you are not yet accepting this card, but are interested in doing so, please contact your local bank/financial institution or call U.S. Bank at 800 334-1941.

Purchase Orders:

For all other purchases, Purchase Orders are issued. The vendor will receive a copy of the Purchase Order, against which invoices are to be submitted according to the instructions on the Purchase Order. Vendors should reference the Purchase Order number on all invoices and correspondence.

Master Agreement:

A Master Agreement allows a vendor to sell goods to the County on an as-needed basis, usually at specific prices or under a specific pricing formula, for a limited period of time (one fiscal year or less). Prices are negotiated with Procurement Services prior to any purchases. A vendor holding a Master Agreement does NOT ship goods until an authorized County employee issues a written or verbal release for goods to be supplied, pursuant to the Master Agreement. **Only items which are described on the Master Agreement may be purchased.** The vendor must follow invoicing instructions on the Master Agreement.

Change Orders:

The Purchase Order is the County's contract with the vendor. **Any change to that contract must be in writing and authorized by the Purchasing Agent.** Department personnel are not authorized to make changes to the Purchase Order.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Tax:

The County is exempt from federal excise tax by federal law, but not California Sales or Use tax. Prices quoted by vendors shall not include sales or use tax, unless otherwise requested, but all applicable taxes should be included on invoices. Use tax is paid directly to out-of-state vendors, if the vendor is licensed to collect such tax.

Insurance:

In all instances in which vendor personnel enter County property to repair, install, service, construct, etc., the County of Ventura requires General Liability and Auto Liability Insurance. The Certificate required must also name the County of Ventura as additional insured and must include Workers' Compensation Insurance coverage. Whenever insurance is required on a Purchase Order, the vendor will be supplied with complete requirements for coverage. Some vendors have their carriers issue the

Certificate to cover “all operations” for the County of Ventura. This eliminates the need to provide a Certificate for each project.

Bid and Performance Bonds:

Bid and performance bonds are required only when it is necessary to protect the interests of the County, and they may be required on certain purchases, depending on the dollar value and complexity of the procurement, and public projects.

EEOP:

The County of Ventura is an equal opportunity employer. A copy of the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan (EEOP) is available by contacting Human Resources at (805) 654-5129.

DBE:

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises: While the County does not offer price preferences, it is our policy to promote the development of DBE’s. Procurement Services will be glad to answer any questions and help with purchasing procedures, bid opportunities, and contract awards. Visit: <http://ventura.org/general-services-agency/procurement-services> for DBE resource links.

Living Wage:

Pursuant to Ventura County Living Wage Ordinance (LWO) No’s. 4233 and 4236, contractors providing services to the County must provide a Living Wage to covered employees commensurate with ordinance wage rate requirements. The ordinance also provides for 12 paid leave days per year for covered employees. Covered employees spend a minimum of 4 hours per week on the County contract. Covered employees do not include a student trainee or intern under the age of 21, anyone regardless of age earning academic credit as part of a formal time-specific training program, or volunteer.

Service contracts subject to federal or state laws are not subject to the LWO (example: construction contractors paying prevailing wage), nor are contracts between financial or banking institutions, professional services requiring specialized skill or licensure; and non-profit corporations qualifying under Internal Revenue Code section 501 (c) (3). Vendors can apply for exemptions to the LWO for the following reasons: employs less than 5 employees (small employer); operates under a Collective Bargaining Agreement; provides In-Home Support Services; certified as a Board and Care service provider; or licensed as a Printing/Copying business. Exemption applications are available from Procurement Services.

Prevailing Wage:

Pursuant to provisions of Section 1770, et seq., of the Labor Code of the State of California, construction contractors shall pay their employees the general prevailing rate of wages as determined by the Director of the Department of Industrial Relations for all public projects. In addition, the contractor shall be responsible for compliance with the requirements of Section 1777.5 of the California Labor Code relating to apprentices on public projects. Public projects are those which involve public buildings, land, streets, harbor, wharf, etc. Prevailing Wage rates are on file in the Procurement Services’ office. Rates can be found on the Internet at <http://www.dir.ca.gov/DLSR/PWD>. As of April 1, 2015, no contractor or subcontractor may be awarded a contract for public work on a public works project unless registered with the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to Labor Code section 1725.5.

Environmental Purchasing Policy:

Bidders able to supply products containing recycled and environmentally preferable materials that meet performance requirements are encouraged to offer them in bids and proposals. The County of Ventura will favorably consider the selection of recycled-content and renewable materials, products, and supplies where availability, fitness, health, operational efficiency, quality, safety, and price of the recycled product is otherwise equal to, or better than, the non-recycled-content and/or non-renewable alternative.

Delivery:

Vendors should carefully follow shipping instructions appearing on the Purchase Order. The County normally makes purchases Free On Board (F.O.B.) Destination and specifies the “ship to” address. When the method of delivery is not specified, the least expensive delivery method should be used unless the nature of the shipment calls for special service. Delivery dates are specified on most Purchase Orders. Failure to comply with the specific date may cause cancellation of the order and reflect adversely on the vendor’s overall performance rating.

Billing and Payment:

The County requires invoices for each Purchase Order issued to the vendor. Each invoice should be exact in its description of items and prices, and should always include the Purchase Order number, quantity, description of item, unit price, extensions, discounts, and sales tax. Invoices should be submitted to the department listed in the “Submit Invoice To” section of the Purchase Order.

Sending invoices to any other department (unless instructed) will delay payment. The County tries to pay all invoices within a month of their receipt. Questions regarding payment of invoices should be addressed to the A/P contact listed in the “Submit Invoice To” or the “Bill To” section of the Purchase Order. Vendors inquiring about payment will need to reference the Purchase Order and invoice number.

County of Ventura - Procurement Ethics Policy

The Purchasing Agent as established under The California Government Code and delegation through ordinance 4084 from the Board of Supervisors of Ventura County hereby adopts the following ethics policy for the County of Ventura:

Each employee has an obligation to the citizens, to the people's elected representatives, to fellow employees, and to the administration to cooperate in accomplishing the County's goals, to expose corruption wherever discovered, to refrain from disclosing any confidential information, to preserve and safeguard the County's assets, and to uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.

Procurement employees shall act:

To regard public service as a sacred trust, giving primary consideration to the interests of the public agency that employs us.

- To purchase without prejudice, seeking to obtain the maximum value for each dollar expended.
- To avoid unfair practices, giving all qualified vendors equal opportunity.
- To honor our obligations and require that obligations to our public agency be honored.
- To accord vendor representatives courteous treatment, remembering that these representatives are important sources of information and assistance in solving our purchasing needs.
- To refuse to accept any form of commercial bribery and prevent any appearance of so doing.
- To be receptive to counsel from our colleagues, and to cooperate with them to promote a spirit of teamwork and unity.
- To conduct ourselves with fairness and dignity, and to demand honesty and truth in the purchasing process.
- To strive for greater knowledge of purchasing methods and of the materials we purchase.
- To cooperate with all organizations and individuals involved in activities designed to enhance the development of the purchasing profession, remembering that our actions reflect on the entire purchasing profession.

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