

## Purchasing Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. How do I promote my business to Yakima County?**

For goods and services and non-architectural and engineering (non-A&E) consultant services contact the Purchasing Manager. For goods and services and architectural and engineering services related to a public work contact the Public Services division.

### **2. How do I get on your bid list?**

The Yakima County Purchasing Department uses Public Purchase, a web-based e-Procurement service. To begin or continue to receive bid notifications vendors must register with Public Purchase. The system is FREE to use.

The County encourages vendors to participate in county solicitation opportunities. However, it is the vendors' responsibility to keep their registration. Failure to respond to a formal solicitation is defined as a lack of response when invited to bid. The County reserves the right to update and validate the bidders' list periodically and may require renewal of applications on file.

### **3. How do I submit a bid or proposal?**

All formal bids and proposals shall be submitted as specified in the solicitation document. It is the vendor's responsibility to assure delivery of their response to a solicitation regardless of the method chosen for delivery. Submissions must be received by Yakima County on or before the published date and time contained in the solicitation document. The time and date deadline will be noted on the cover page of the respective bid or proposal. The Purchasing time stamp shall be the official time of receipt. Bids and proposals received after the designated date and time will be returned unopened and will not be considered for award.

### **4. Do local vendors get preference for the County?**

Yakima County does not have any preference programs, however, encourages departments to utilize small businesses for non-contract purchases of less than \$50,000.

### **5. Does the County buy what I sell? How do I find out?**

Yakima County purchases a wide variety of commodities and services needed to support dozens of county agencies. Additional information on the commodities and services purchased by the County can be obtained by searching the currently awarded contracts. This will provide information on not only what is being purchased but also the specifications, contractor, and prices.

Notices are published on the Purchasing Department's website when the County issues formal competitive solicitations (RFPs, IFBs and RFQs) for those procurements expected to exceed \$50,000. The notices are accompanied by the entire solicitation document, when practical, in a downloadable format. Notices are also posted in the Purchasing Department offices and published in county's newspaper or record which is the Yakima Herald.

### **6. How can I find out what goods or services are currently being solicited by Yakima County?**

All bids for goods and services currently being solicited are posted on the Purchasing Department's [web site](#) and can be found at [www.publicpurchase.com](http://www.publicpurchase.com).

### **7. How do I get added to an existing contract?**

Unless a solicitation is "Open and Continuous", new vendors may only be added to a contract through participation in a formal solicitation and award. If you are registered with Public Purchase and have selected your notification preferences as well as the appropriate commodity code, you will receive notification when a solicitation for those codes is (re)issued.

## **8. Does Yakima County always award to the lowest bidder?**

No, Yakima County may utilize the following solicitation methods:

Invitation for Bid: awarded to the lowest price, responsive and responsible bidder meeting specifications. If a response to an Invitation for Bids is not responsive, responsible or does not meet the minimum specifications, the price offered is irrelevant.

Request for Proposal: Awarded to respondent whose offer is in the best requirements of the County based on evaluation criteria contained in the solicitation.

## **9. How do you solicit goods and services?**

Unless otherwise required by law, all goods and services shall be procured by issuing competitive sealed bids or proposals. - Formal Requests for Proposals (RFP's), Invitations for Bids (IFB's) and Requests for Qualifications (RFQ's) are used for the purchase of goods and services more than \$50,000. Informal quotes are used for goods and services \$50,000 or less. The County Board of County Commissioners approves all contracts for goods and services. - Formal solicitations require posting of a public notice and submission of a sealed bid or proposal.

Although a sealed bid technique is not used, all informal quotations greater than \$5,000 are made on a competitive basis, soliciting quotes from at least 3 vendors whenever possible. Procurement requirements shall not be artificially divided to constitute a small purchase.

## **10. Are solicitation openings public?**

Unless otherwise stated on the Notices page, all formal bids are opened publicly at the location shown in the solicitation document on the date and at the time listed. The County Purchasing Manager presides over the bid openings and shall read pertinent information based on the solicitation method being used. A cordial invitation is extended to vendors, sales staff, and the interested public to be present at the bid opening to witness the reading. No decisions of award or rejections are made during the bid opening. No discussions relating to the bids are entered into during the bid opening. A copy of the "unofficial tabulation" that is recorded at the reading is made available upon request for those interested parties that are unable to attend. Other representatives of the County may be in attendance. [Notices Page](#)

## **11. What if I make a mistake?**

The County will allow for the correction or withdrawal of inadvertently erroneous bids before bid opening. After bid opening, corrections or withdrawals shall only be permitted to the extent that the bidder can show, by clear and convincing evidence that a mistake of a non-judgmental character was made. The Purchasing Manager reserves the right to waive any informality or irregularity in any bid/proposal. Any provision, which if changed or waived would materially change the bid/proposal, cannot be waived, as that would impact the fairness of the solicitation process.

## **12. How do I know who won the contract?**

For IFB's, the award is made to the lowest responsive (conforms in all material respects) and responsible (has the capability to perform and the integrity and reliability which will assure good faith performance) bidder who meets the minimum specification defined in the solicitation document. The Purchasing Division produces a tabulation for all formal IFB's. Copies of the official tabulations are available upon request after the award. Results are not provided over the telephone. The bid documents are public information and therefore may be inspected under the Freedom of Information Act.

For requests for proposal (RFPs), the award is made to the proposer whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the County based upon the evaluation criteria as published in the RFP document. The Purchasing Department's recommendation for award notice is issued to all RFP respondents after the evaluation process is finished. Proposals are available for public inspection under the Freedom of Information Act.

## **13. Does the County always issue an award?**

The County reserves the right to reject or cancel any or all bids or proposals for any reason. The County may or may not reissue bids or proposals if all responses are rejected.

**14. I submitted a response to a solicitation but wasn't successful. How can I see what the other respondents submitted?**

After a bid award has been approved, you can submit a Public Records Request to the responsible Procurement Representative listed on the solicitation.

**15. I just received a purchase order, what do I do now?**

If you have questions, contact the responsible agency listed on the purchase order. A purchase order is a document that authorizes a contractor or vendor to provide commodities or services to the County. The County may not be responsible for payment for services rendered or goods delivered in instances where an authorized purchase order has not been issued. If you are asked to fulfill an order or provide a service without a County purchase order, you are cautioned to acquire an authorized purchase order and to obtain the name and department of the individual who issued the request for commodities or services. A purchase order is essential to doing business with the County. It is your assurance that you are authorized to be paid for the goods provided or the services rendered.

**16. Why do you ask for delivery dates?**

Vendors are typically asked on the solicitation document to provide the number of days required before delivery of a commodity or service can be completed, or the specific date upon which delivery will be made. The time required for delivery may be a critical consideration in determining which vendor shall receive the award, or whether the contract should be awarded. Successful bidders will be expected to deliver the commodities and/or services they are providing within the specified time. If delivery dates cannot be met, Purchasing Department must be notified immediately. Purchasing Department will decide, after notification of late delivery, the next course of action.

**17. Where do I ship goods to?**

All shipments to the County must be made to the locations designated on the purchase order. Deliveries may be required to be made to different divisions in various locations. All purchases are made F.O.B. destination, unless otherwise specified. The County's title to goods occurs upon satisfactory delivery and acceptance at the delivery point shown on the purchase order. The purchase order number must appear on the shipping or delivery ticket, as well as on the invoice. Failure to meet specified delivery schedules may result in cancellation of the order. At a minimum, such delinquency will be noted in the vendor's record.

**18. Do I need a Tax Identification Number to register, or may I use my Social Security number?**

If you have a Tax Identification Number, also called a FEIN number (Federal Employer Identification Number) you should use it when registering your company. If you are an individual doing business, you will use your Social Security number to register.

**19. What if I can't ship the whole order?**

A delivery normally must be made in the exact quantity called for on the purchase order unless otherwise defined in the purchase order. Partial deliveries, however, are accepted in some instances. The County will make payment on partial deliveries when:

1. A contract for the commodities or contractual services extends over a period of months
2. The solicitation/contract does not require a single payment upon completion
3. Authorization for payment is made by the receiving agency

In the case of any partial delivery, the shipping ticket and invoices must indicate the quantity being delivered and not the quantity ordered by the County.

**20. How do I get paid?**

Vendors must submit an original invoice to the County. Invoices should not be sent to Purchasing Department. Invoices must show: 1. Purchase Order number 2. Complete description of the commodities or services furnished 3. Quantity 4. Unit prices and extensions 5. Date of delivery or date services were performed 6. The discount terms 7. Name of the department to which shipment was made or services performed 8. Vendor Registration Number In addition, the invoice should include the vendor's invoice number and date. Before issuing the invoice, be sure to

verify that it complies with the pricing agreed to in the contract or there may be a delay in payment while the discrepancy is resolved.

**21. How do I check on my invoice?**

Please contact the representative listed on your purchase order.

**22. What is the rule on personal gifts from vendors?**

Purchasing Department employees may not accept gifts, services or gratuities from vendors or potential vendors.

**23. What are your normal business hours?**

Purchasing Department is open for business from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except observed holidays. The office is located at: 128 S. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Yakima, WA 98901

**24. May I visit County Purchasing staff?**

Sales representatives are a valuable source of information in obtaining bids, specifications, state of the art advancements or product improvements. They also assist in resolving problems in delivery, billing, and payment matters, etc. Therefore, we value their visits. However, we recommend scheduling an appointment to effectively utilize time.

**Didn't find an answer? Contact the Purchasing Department 509-574-1519**