

# CITY OF VANCOUVER'S SUPPLIER HANDBOOK



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# Supplier Handbook

Procurement Services is responsible for all purchases made on behalf of the City of Vancouver. Except for Purchasing Card transactions, City employees may not order from a supplier without first obtaining a numbered purchase order. The supplier should not allow purchases to be made without a signed purchase order. To do so could result in delay or refusal of payment.

## About Vancouver, Washington

The City of Vancouver encompasses 52 square miles, has an estimated 2023 population of 198,000 and is projected to exceed 200,000 soon. The City is located on the I-5 corridor and extends along the shore of the Columbia River, 100 miles upstream from the Pacific Ocean. It lies directly across the river from Portland, Oregon and is the southwestern gateway to the State of Washington.

The City is responsible for vital municipal infrastructure and urban services. It builds and repairs roads, maintains water and sewer service, provides fire and police protection as well as parks & recreation programs, administers land use policy and takes an active role in Vancouver's commercial and industrial development.

Vancouver has a Council/Manager form of government with a City Council comprised of the Mayor and six councilmembers who set policy and direction. The City Manager oversees the day-to-day operations of the City. The City of Vancouver – in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252,42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations – hereby notifies all bidders that will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, that disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

The City of Vancouver is committed to providing equal opportunities to State of Washington certified Minority, Disadvantaged and Women's Business Enterprises in contracting activities. (Section 4 of Chapter 56, Laws of 1975, 1st Ex. Sess., State of Washington).

## Procurement Mission/Vision

**Our Mission:** To procure quality goods, services, and construction at the best value for the City, while providing excellent customer service, open and fair competition, transparency, and accountability while maintaining public trust through our integrity, experience and collaboration.

**Our Vision:** Be a leader in professional public procurement by continually achieving excellence in supplier engagement, ethical practices and innovative solutions.

## Values/Ethics Statement

The City of Vancouver Procurement Department is a supporter of The Institute for Public Procurement (NIGP) Values and Guiding Principles of Public Procurement to shape, empower and elevate the public procurement profession through global values, principles and standards of practice. The Values include: Accountability, Ethics, Impartiality, Professionalism, Service and Transparency.

## Supplier Code of Ethics

The City of Vancouver is committed to a procurement process that fosters fair and open competition, is conducted under the highest ethical standards and enjoys the complete confidence of the public. To achieve these purposes, Procurement encourages each supplier who seeks to do business with the City to subscribe to this Supplier Code of Ethics as follows:

- A Supplier's bid or proposal will be competitive, consistent and appropriate to the bid documents.
- A Supplier will not discuss or consult with other Suppliers intending to bid on the same contract or similar City contract for the purpose of limiting competition. A Supplier will not make any attempt to induce any individual or entity to submit or not submit a bid or proposal.
- Supplier will not disclose the terms of its bids or proposal, directly or indirectly, to any other competing Supplier prior to the bid or proposal closing date.
- Supplier will completely perform any contract awarded to it at the contracted price pursuant to the terms set forth in the contract.
- Supplier will submit timely, accurate and appropriate invoices for goods and/or services actually performed under the contract.
- Supplier will not offer or give any gift, item or service of value, directly or indirectly, to a City employee, City official, employee family member or other supplier contracted by the City.
- Supplier will not cause, influence or attempt to cause or influence any City employee or City Official, which might tend to impair their objectivity or independence of judgment; or to use, or attempt to use, their official position to secure any unwarranted privileges or advantages for that Supplier or for any other person.
- Supplier will disclose to the City any direct or indirect personal interests a City employee or City official holds as it relates to a Supplier contracted by the City.
- Suppliers must comply with all applicable laws, codes or regulations of the countries, states and localities in which they operate. This includes, but is not limited to, laws and regulations relating to environmental, occupational health and safety, and labor practices. In addition, Suppliers must require their suppliers (including temporary labor agencies) to do the same.
- Suppliers must conform their practices to any published standards for their industry. Compliance with laws, regulations and practices include, but are not limited to the following: Obtaining and maintaining all required environmental permits.
- Suppliers will endeavor to minimize natural resource consumption through conservation, recycling and substitution methods. Providing workers with a safe working environment, which includes identifying and evaluating workplace risks and establishing processes for which employee can report health and safety incidents, as well as providing adequate safety training.
  - o Providing workers with an environment free of discrimination, harassment and abuse, which includes establishing a written antidiscrimination and anti-bullying/harassment policy, as well as clearly noticed policies pertaining to forced labor, child labor, wage and hours, and freedom of association.

**DISCLAIMER:** This Code of Ethics is intended as a reference and procedural guide to suppliers. The information it contains should not be interpreted to supersede any law or regulation, nor does it supersede the applicable vendor contract. In the case of any discrepancies between it and the law, regulation(s) and/or vendor contract, the law, regulatory provision(s) and/or vendor contract shall prevail.

## What Does the City Buy?

The City purchases a wide variety of goods and services ranging from office supplies and police equipment to public works services and welcomes all vendors to participate in its procurement processes and compete for business opportunities. The City buys all the items you would expect, such as computer hardware and software, construction services, consulting and professional services, furniture, industrial supplies, office supplies, personal protective equipment, uniforms, etc.

Some of the more unusual services/items we also buy:

- Fire Apparatus
- Entertainment vendors
- Water slides purchase and maintenance
- Car washing services
- Public art

So, it's likely we buy what you sell!

## Types of Purchases and Thresholds

### Types of Procurement Methods:

Depending on the estimated value and complexity of the procurement, the City may use one of the following procurement methods:

- **Informal Quotes (Quotes):** An informal process in which at least three quotes are obtained before a purchase order is issued. Award is typically based on the lowest quote received. For public works projects, the process will be limited to participants of the City's MRSC Roster.
- **Invitation to Bid (ITB):** Formal competitive process, award is based on the lowest responsive, responsible bidder. Solicitations are posted on the City's Procurement Portal.
- **Request for Proposals (RFP):** A formal competitive process awarding based on the best value. Proposals submitted by suppliers will be evaluated on a multitude of factors listed in the solicitation, such as experience, personnel and cost. Solicitations are issued through and posted on the City's Bonfire Procurement Portal.
- **Request for Quotes (Quotes):** Competitive process based on the lowest submitted quote. Solicitations would typically be issued through and posted on the City's Bonfire Procurement Portal. For public works projects, the award process will be limited to participants of the City's MRSC Roster.
- **Request for Qualifications (RFQ):** Competitive best value award based on qualifications only, no costs are allowed to be submitted as a part of the evaluation process. This process is typically limited to participants of the City's MRSC Roster. Solicitations would typically be issued through and posted on the City's Bonfire Procurement Portal.
- **Direct Purchase:** If allowable, the purchase would be made directly with no competitive process.
- **Joint/Cooperative Procurement (Piggybacks):** The City participates in or purchases from an appropriate competitively bid contract issued by another jurisdiction.
- **Sole Source:** Direct award if there is only one practicable source available. This process is carefully reviewed by Procurement staff and follows the City's Sole Source policy. To review current sole source contracts, see [the City of Vancouver's Procurement Portal](#).
- **Emergency Purchase:** These purchases are allowed by RCW 39.26.130, goods or services shall be obtained with maximum feasible competition in situations that present a real, immediate, and extreme threat to the proper performance of essential functions; or may reasonably be expected to result in

material loss or damage to property, bodily injury, or loss of life, if immediate action is not taken. To review the City's emergency purchases, please see the City of Vancouver's Procurement Portal

The City of Vancouver promotes free and open competition through its practices and specifications. 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/proposers are encouraged to advise the City if they feel any language and/or requirement of a specification inadvertently restricts or limits competition; if, in their judgment, specifications do not comply with standard trade practices or impose an impractical or unreasonable procedural burden. Whenever possible, the City encourages and solicits bids/proposals from certified minority or woman contractors.

### Types of Purchases:

- **Contracted Services, Goods, Materials and Equipment:**

Contracted Services are services that are not identified as a professional service nor a public work, that provide routine, necessary functions for the City. This may include printing, delivery, waste disposal, vehicle inspections, etc.

Goods, Materials and Equipment are purchases that are tangible in nature. This may include clothing, office supplies, heavy equipment, etc.

- Contracted Services and Goods purchases that are equal to or less than \$10,000, can be purchased with no competitive process.
- Contracted Services and Goods purchases that are greater than \$10,000 and less than or equal to \$50,000, require three written quotes which can be accomplished informally by contacting at least three suppliers.
- Contracted Services and Goods purchases that are greater than \$50,000 and equal to or less than \$300,000, require a sealed Request for Quotations or Request for Proposals process.
- Contracted Services and Goods purchases that are greater than \$300,000, require a formal, sealed Invitation to Bid or Request for Proposals process.

- **Shipping and Delivery:** All proposals, quotes and bids must include shipping costs unless the solicitation specifically states otherwise. All purchases must be shipped as Free On Board (F.O.B) Destination. In the event the City agrees to pay shipping costs, the supplier shall prepay freight and add it to the invoice as a separate line item (F.O.B Destination, Freight Prepaid and Added). In such cases, the supplier shall still be responsible for ensuring the shipment is delivered in acceptable condition to the City of Vancouver.
- **Packaging:** All packaging must conform to the award standard acceptable to the trade and required by ICC regulation. A packing slip or invoice must accompany all shipments and reference the purchase order number, contract number or Visa number.
- **Professional Services:**

Professional Services are services that are rendered by a member of a recognized profession or possessing a special skill, commonly to provide advice, instruction or training. This may include veterinary services, planning services, certified trainings, etc.

- Professional Services that are equal to or less than \$50,000, can be purchased with no competitive process.
- Professional Services that are greater than \$50,000 require a formal, sealed Request for Proposals process.

- **Architecture & Engineering Services:**

Architecture & Engineering Services are a type of professional service that requires state licensing and provides services for design, development, surveying. These services are governed by Chapter 39.80 RCW.

- Architecture & Engineering Services that are less than \$50,000 require review of three statements of qualifications, whenever possible, this is done through a Request for Qualifications process, but can also be accomplished informally by contacting three consultants on the MRSC Roster.
- Architecture & Engineering Services that are greater than \$50,000, require a formal, sealed Request for Qualifications process.

- **Public Works:**

Public Works is a type of service that is governed by Chapter 39.04 RCW and is defined as all work, construction, alteration, repair or improvement. Examples of these service would be road construction, roof repair, water main installation, HVAC upgrades, etc. All Public Works projects will require that the bidder meet the requirements of RCW 39.04.350 and prevailing wages in accordance with Chapter RCW 39.12 are paid to workers. In addition, there are retainage requirements pursuant to Chapter 60.28 RCW that is applicable to City projects greater than \$35,000.

- Public Works that are less than or equal to \$50,000, require three written quotes, whenever possible, this is done through a limited works quotations process by contacting at least three contractors on the MRSC Roster.
- Public Works that are greater than \$50,000 and equal to or less than \$300,000, require a sealed Request for Quotations process.
- Public Works that are greater than \$300,000, require a sealed, formal Invitation to Bid process.

- **Unit-Priced Contracts:**

The City utilizes Unit-Priced Contracts as authorized by RCW 35.22.620. The intent of these contracts is to provide Public Works services anticipated on a recurring basis to meet the business or operational needs of the City. These contracts are set for a term of not to exceed four years.

- **Job Order Contracting:**

Job Order Contracting is an indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract that allows for a multiple of Public Works projects between \$35,000 and \$350,000 to be conducted. Costs are based on the RS Means Construction Cost Estimating Book and the multiplier in the contract. This program is authorized under RCW 39.10.430 and require the contractors to sub-contract out 90% of the work. To get more information or if you are interested in being a sub-contractor, please contact Procurement Staff.

The City of Vancouver is utilizing the Municipal Research and Services (MRSC) Small Works Roster, [mrscrosters.org](http://mrscrosters.org). Any questions on the MRSC Rosters can be directed to the MRSC Rosters Manager, at (206) 625-1300 or via email at [mrscrosters@mrscrosters.org](mailto:mrscrosters@mrscrosters.org).

## Solicitation Practices

### Correspondence

Any question concerning the solicitation or evaluation process should always be directed in writing to the Procurement Specialist whose name is listed on the solicitation. All communication during the solicitation process must be submitted in writing to Procurement; Suppliers may not contact City staff, evaluators, or design consultants directly. The person corresponding should specify the solicitation number and project name. No interpretation shall be considered binding unless provided in writing via an addendum.

### Negotiation Practices

It is the intent of the City to award a contract on a fair and competitive basis. All performance and technical standards stated in the solicitations must be met as a condition of submittal acceptance. Solicitations released will contain a written agreement with the City in which the awarded supplier will undertake certain obligations. These

obligations may include terms and conditions, or a contract intended for signature, these terms are meant to be non-negotiable, but may be modified at the City's sole discretion. Any modification requests shall be submitted in writing per the instructions in the solicitation. Requests to modify the terms after the solicitation's closing date and time will not be considered.

In best value solicitation processes, the City will attempt to reach a final agreement with the highest-scoring responding proposer. However, the City may, at its sole discretion, terminate negotiations and reject the proposal if it appears agreement cannot be reached. The City may then attempt to reach a final agreement with the next highest-scoring proposer and may continue on, in the same manner, with remaining proposers until an agreement is reached.

Award of the contract shall be made with reasonable promptness by giving verbal and written notice to the proposer whose proposal best conforms to the request, receives the highest score through the evaluation process, and which will be the most advantageous to the City.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The competitive procurement process and the obligations imposed by Washington law require that Procurement Services ensure that the competitive process operates in a fair and equitable manner. A conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest may occur if a supplier is directly or indirectly involved with a staff member that is evaluating or managing a project. Working directly with a staff member prior to a solicitation on a proposed good or service is considered a conflict of interest by the City, in which case the staff member would be removed from the evaluation and the supplier may be prohibited from submitting a proposal. Suppliers must inform Procurement Services of any potential conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof. City Staff also abide by the same requirement and are required to sign a Conflict of Interest statement to evaluate a submittal.

### **Cone of Silence**

The Cone of Silence is designed to protect the integrity of the procurement process by shielding it from undue influences prior to the recommendation of contract award. This Cone of Silence shall prohibit any communication on a solicitation by and between City Staff (with the exception of Procurement staff) and Suppliers for six months prior to the solicitation release through contract award. Any unauthorized contact may cause the disqualification of the proposer from this procurement transaction. To ensure the integrity of the review and evaluation process, companies and/or individuals submitting proposals for any part of this project, as well as those persons and/or companies representing such proposers, may not lobby or advocate to the City staff, officials, or the governing body.

### **Confidentiality**

During the evaluation process, the City of Vancouver makes every effort to keep the identity of evaluators confidential and will maintain that confidentiality to the fullest extent provided by law. Staff may not discuss the evaluation, scoring, or status of any proposal or any action effecting any proposal with any person, firm, corporation, or other outside business entity at any time prior to, during, or after the procurement process. Staff may not use information obtained as an RFP evaluator for any personal benefit, monetary or otherwise, nor copy and/or disseminate any portion of any proposal at any time prior to, during, or after the procurement process.

### **Substitutions**

A substitution is defined as an item that materially conforms to the specifications but is technically different from the item requested. Substitutions require written approval via addendum. Any products delivered that do not meet the specifications will be returned to the supplier at the supplier's expense. When a shipment or product is returned, the supplier must make immediate replacement with acceptable merchandise, or the City may seek remedies for default.



## Errors

Prior to submission of submittals, errors may be corrected by lining out and entering the substituted words or figures. The person signing the submittal shall initial the change. In the case of errors in the extension of price, the unit price will govern. Suppliers are urged to examine all documents before submission, failure to do so will be at supplier's risk.

## Modification Or Withdrawals of Submittals

Submittals may be modified or withdrawn prior to the solicitation opening/closing date and time specified in the solicitation. Generally, no supplier may withdraw a submittal after the opening/closing date.

## Terms and Conditions

The City issues a terms and conditions for purchases not purchased under a written contract, to review the terms and conditions, please visit [Procurement Services -The City of Vancouver, WA.](#)

The City utilizes two sets of terms and conditions: General Terms and Conditions apply to purchases of goods, contracted services and public works. Professional Service Terms and Conditions only apply to professional services procurements.

## Bonds and Insurance

The City may require bonds or insurance from a supplier for their services. Whenever required these requirements will be listed in the solicitation. Bonds and insurance will need to be listed in the Authorized Insurance List in the State of Washington published by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner and carry an "A" rating and is of the appropriate class for the bond amount as determined by Best's Rating System. Where bid bonds, payment bonds, or performance bonds are required, the City is committed to use bonds only when specifically justified.

## Outreach

The City strives to attend multiple trade shows and outreach events each year to meet new suppliers and create greater connections with current suppliers. If new suppliers would like to do business with the City of Vancouver, we encourage the suppliers to register on our Procurement Bonfire Portal:

<https://cityofvancouver.bonfirehub.com/projects> to learn of any new bidding opportunities. In addition, we suggest registering on the City of Vancouver's supplier list for commodity, services and construction contracts, in order to do this please visit the [Municipal Research and Services Center website](#) and sign up under the City of Vancouver roster.

If your firm would like to reach out to the City directly, we suggest you reach out to the Procurement Specialist that corresponds with the area of interest. All Procurement Specialist contact information can be found at [the City of Vancouver Procurement's Page](#). It is suggested to reach out with specific information on what your firm can offer the City and include pricing information whenever possible. Sending mass blanketed emails can be an ineffective tactic of outreach, as it will commonly be lost in the staff's junk mail or flagged as possible spam.

## Existing Contracts

Take an opportunity to look at the contracts the City currently has, including when the contract is expected to expire on the Procurement Bonfire Portal: <https://cityofvancouver.bonfirehub.com/projects>. Contracts are typically set for a five-year span.

## Federal Requirements

Some City contracts receive federal funding. Federally funded projects may include requirements such as “Buy America(n)”, Davis-Bacon Act requirements and disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) participation. Federal requirements should be outlined in the solicitation. For information about state and federal DBE certification, contact the Washington State Office of Minority & Women’s Business Enterprises: <http://www.omwbe.wa.gov>

## Payment Process

**Delivery:** All shipments to the City of Vancouver shall be made in a timely manner to the location identified.

Once the items are received or services rendered, the supplier may submit an invoice to the City. The City will require a separate invoice for each purchase order is required. Invoices shall be submitted to the City contact on the Purchase Order or otherwise identified.

**Invoices must show:** (1) City of Vancouver purchase order number; (2) complete description of goods or service provided; (3) quantity; (4) unit prices and extensions; (5) discount terms; and (6) invoice number.

The City has a Net 30 payment policy. Payment will be made within 30 days of the date of the invoice or the date of the receipt of all required paperwork and approvals.

## Business Licensing

Suppliers may be required to hold a city business license if working within Vancouver city limits. The Contractor shall apply for city license via the State of Washington Department of Revenue (DOR), Business Licensing Service (BLS), at [secure.dor.wa.gov/](https://secure.dor.wa.gov/). For application assistance, contact DOR BLS at 360-705-6741. For more information about city business license regulations and fees, see [cityofvancouver.us/businesslicense](https://cityofvancouver.us/businesslicense) or call 360-487-8410 option 3.

The Contractor, at no expense to the City, shall be responsible to obtain all necessary licenses, permits and similar legal authorizations required to perform the work associated with this Agreement. The Contractor will be required to hold a city business license if working within Vancouver city limits. The Contractor shall apply for city license via the State of Washington Department of Revenue (DOR), Business Licensing Service (BLS), at [secure.dor.wa.gov/](https://secure.dor.wa.gov/). For application assistance, contact DOR BLS at 360-705-6741. For more information about city business license regulations and fees, see [cityofvancouver.us/businesslicense](https://cityofvancouver.us/businesslicense) or call 360-487-8410 option 3.

## Additional Resources

The City works with multiple government agencies to ensure we are following legal requirements. For more information, below are some additional resources/information that may be helpful:

- [Vancouver Municipal Code 3.05](#) – Purchasing and Public Works
- [Labor and Industries](#) – Contractor Resources
- [Municipal Research and Service Center \(MRSC\) Roster](#) – City Roster