



Doing Business with Polk State College

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Preface

Polk State College (“the College”) welcomes the opportunity to do business with interested suppliers in the community.

The Purchasing Department has the responsibility to make the most economical acquisition of quality materials and services that will assure efficient operation of the College. To that end, it is essential that interested business persons become familiar with the College's purchasing policies and procedures.

This brochure will serve as a general guide. Specific questions and concerns not addressed here should be directed to the Director of Purchasing.

Doing business with a public entity can be complicated and even inconvenient if there is confusion regarding basic rules and procedures which are necessary to protect the taxpayer.

This guide is an attempt to ensure that doing business with the College is a positive experience. Proper communication between the buyer and seller will invariably engender the understanding necessary to avoid confusion and inconvenience.

No single publication can answer all questions or solve all problems occurring in even the most simple business transaction. It is hoped, however, that this effort will provide all parties with sufficient information to avoid the more common pitfalls.

Authorization

Suppliers are cautioned against making a delivery or performing a service for the College without having an authorized purchase order or receiving authorization via a credit card. If vendors supply items to College personnel without proper authorization, the vendor must assume the responsibility for collection of the payment of these goods or services from the individual with whom the transaction was made. However, for authorized purchases, deliveries shall be made to the address indicated on the purchase order or to other locations as authorized by the Purchasing Department.

In accordance with the Purchasing Manual, the Purchasing Department is authorized to administer all purchasing activities. Purchasing's primary function is to ensure that the College receives the best possible products and services for the monies expended.

Competitive Bidding System

Rules governing purchasing and contract procedures were established under the concept of open competitive bidding. Under this system, purchase awards are made to the lowest bidder who meets the stated specifications in accordance with the stipulated terms and conditions, and also has the capacity to provide the service or product. These specifications and conditions are outlined in bid packages that are available to all interested vendors.

Vendor Contact

The Purchasing Department coordinates all vendor contacts and supervises the procurement process to ensure compliance with purchasing policies and procedures. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Contact with College Departments

Vendors may, with prior approval from the Purchasing Department, visit any College Department to demonstrate a product or service. Additionally, at times user Departments may call to solicit quotes directly from vendors. No purchase commitment can be made without the issuance of a valid College Purchase Order Number or credit card authorization.

M/WBE

The College encourages all segments of the business community to participate in its purchasing program. Minorities and women business owners are asked to contact the Director of Purchasing for more information or assistance in participating in the College's procurement program. In accordance with State Board of Education requirements, the College can acknowledge only the State of Florida's Office of Supplier Diversity's certification program.

Gifts and Gratuities

Acceptance of gifts by College's employees at any time, other than advertising novelties, is prohibited. Employees must not become obligated to any supplier and shall not participate in any College transaction from which they will personally benefit, either directly or indirectly.

Affiliations

The College's Purchasing Department is a member of:

- The Council of Purchasing Professionals (COPP)
- The National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP)
- The Florida Association of Public Procurement Officials (FAPPO)
- The Institute of Supply Management (ISM)
- The National Purchasing Institute (NPI)
- The National Association of Educational Procurement (NAEP)

The College's Purchasing staff adhere to their respective Codes of Ethics.

The Director of Purchasing, Wendy Geltch, currently serves on the Universal Public Procurement Certification Council.

The Purchasing Process

Bidder List

The Purchasing Department maintains a computerized list of vendors. From this list, vendors are contacted to participate in the purchasing process.

To be placed on the Computerized Vendor list, complete and submit a Vendor Registration Form. Be sure to include the following information:

- Name of firm
- Address
- City, State, Zip + 4
- Remittance address
- FEIN or Social Security Number
- Telephone Numbers
- Fax number
- EMail Address
- Website Home Page
- Commodity Code(s) for goods/services which you can provide

It is your responsibility to ensure that the Purchasing Department is notified should any of this information change.

Methods of Procurement

The following procurements methods are used by the College to acquire products, services, and equipment:

➤ **Informal Quotes (*Up to \$15,000.00*)**

The Purchasing Department solicits verbal or written quotes from selected vendors. Vendors should take particular care when quoting prices to assure accuracy. Quotes should be provided by the required date and time. The Purchasing Department selects the lowest quote meeting required specifications for award.

➤ **Written Quotes (*\$15,000.01 to \$65,000.00*)**

Written quotes for purchases from \$15,000.⁰¹ to \$65,000.⁰⁰ are solicited by requesting written quotes from a minimum of two vendors. Often a "Request for Quote" form is sent via facsimile (fax) or EMail. The "Request for Quote" details the quantity of items being purchased and the required specifications. Vendors must return the completed "Request for Quote" within the designated time period. Purchasing staff reviews quotes and determines which vendor is the lowest responsive, responsible bidder for award purposes.

➤ **Formal Sealed Solicitations (*\$65,000.01 and over*)**

Purchases \$65,000.⁰¹ and over, whether a ONE TIME PURCHASE or a CONTRACT or BLANKET PURCHASE, are acquired through this process, unless the item is exempt from competition, or if a State Contract (or other "piggybackable" public contract is being utilized.

Legal notices are published in a local newspaper (usually the Polk County Democrat) informing the public of the products or services being bid. Additionally, a dedicated webpage is posted for every formal procurement.

Bid packages are prepared with appropriate terms and conditions, and detailed Scope of Work or specifications including items bid, units, and total (or estimated) quantity desired, instructions for bidding, delivery information, and any special requirements for bidding. The date, time, and location for the Pre-Bid Conference and for the Public Bid Opening are also included.

Copies of the bid packages are mailed to vendors on the Bidder List. They are also made available for pick up at the Purchasing Department, or can be downloaded from the dedicated webpage. "Fill-in-the-blank" forms are available for downloading on the dedicated webpage.

Sealed bids or proposals are publicly opened and read at the time designated in the bid documents and legal notices. Public bid openings are usually held in the Conference Room, Room WAD-215 on the Winter Haven Campus.

Bid tabulations showing bid results are posted in the Purchasing Department and on the dedicated webpage.

Bids are evaluated and recommendations are forwarded to the appropriate level of authority for review, approval, and award.

Purchase orders and/or contracts are awarded to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder(s) meeting the specifications.

The College reserves the right to reject all bids or parts of bids when such rejection is in the best interest of the College. The College reserves the right to award all bids on an item-by-item basis or aggregate basis, whichever is deemed in the best interest of the College. These rights apply to all purchases regardless of dollar value.

Read all instructions carefully. Failure to properly complete all bid forms and comply with all instructions may result in disqualification of your bid. Unsigned bids will be automatically rejected.

When bidding, please ensure that your bid is fully responsive and correct. Common errors include (but are not limited to):

- Rounding off of price extensions
- Rounding off unit price, but multiplying the "real/intended" unit price, so that the unit price as shown x quantity \neq extension
- Incorrect decimal placement
- Incorrect price extensions
- Incorrect total bid price

Bid responses shall be made available for public inspection ten (10) days after bid opening. To arrange for inspection, you may contact the Director of Purchasing. Bid results may be obtained by accessing the Purchasing Department's website at:

www.polk.edu/purchasing/

Professional Services & Service Contracts

A variety of professional services are retained by the College to fulfill its work programs and objectives. These professional services fall into two major categories:

1. Those governed by Florida Statutes (287.055), specifically, the Consultants' Competitive Negotiation Act (CCNA).

The CCNA pertains to guidelines for selecting consultants for specific types of services which include engineers, architects, landscape architects, surveying, and mapping services. The procedure generally includes:

- Issuing a Request for Qualifications
- Publicly advertising
- Pre-Submittal Conference
- Receipt of Submittals
- Short-listing
- Interviewing
- Approval by the College's President
- Board approval, if required
- Negotiation
- Execution of contract

Prices may not be requested until the negotiation stage of the procurement.

2. Non-CCNA Services

Non-CCNA professional services are handled very similarly to those that must meet CCNA requirements. However, the College may request pricing as a part of the written proposal.

Construction Contracts

Construction services are acquired by either a formal sealed bid process or by issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Construction Management at Risk Services. All construction bids estimated over \$200,000^{.00} require performance and payment bonds in the amount of one hundred percent of the awarded contract. At the option of the College, construction projects estimated under \$200,000^{.00} may also be required to provide performance and payment bonds.

Vendor Responsibilities

- Assure that a current Vendor Registration Form is on file with the College - even if you have been awarded a bid in the past.
- Notify the Director of Purchasing in writing (preferably via EMail) of any changes.
- Read and understand each page of any solicitation which you receive.
- Attend the Pre-Bid Conference (when applicable).
- Double check your offer prior to submittal.

- Ensure that your offer is made by the due date, and to the proper address.
- Provide reasonable and competitive prices.
- Provide all information as required in a RFP, ITB, or Request for Quote.
- If awarded, make delivery as specified.
- Contact Purchasing should you have any questions.

Helpful Hints

Some helpful hints to a business interested in doing business with the College include:

1. The Bid Response Form (or other appropriate form) in the ITB must be signed by an authorized person with the authority to legally bind your company.
2. Bid Security must accompany your bid, when required by the ITB.
3. Supporting literature (if required) must accompany bid documents.
4. Addenda must be acknowledged.
5. Items must be delivered exactly as bid by awarded bidder.
6. Respond to every ITB which you may receive - if the response has to be "No Bid," that is acceptable; it tells the Purchasing Department that you do not care to bid at this time. State the reason for the "No Bid," and whether you would like to continue to receive Invitations to Bid. Failure to respond with a No Bid may result in your firm's name being removed from the Bidder List.
7. Immediately contact the Purchasing Department to clarify any questions you may have.
8. **If one or more of the Terms and Conditions of the ITB "give you heartburn," please let us know via fax or EMail - we will take your concerns into consideration, and may possibly be able to revise the ITB via addendum.**

Be Careful

The College, School Board, Polk County, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Sheriff, and cities within Polk County are separate entities, and will not accept bids in response to other entities' Invitations to Bid. Each have their own procedures for doing business and separate Vendor Lists. Should you wish to do business with any or all of these entities, you must contact each separately. See our website for links to their websites.

Non-Binding Nature of This Publication

This publication is designed solely to provide general summary information to those wishing to do business with the College. As such, it is not binding in either a legal or regulatory sense. The procurement activity of the College is performed in accordance with applicable law, State Board of Education Rules, the Purchasing Manual, and other applicable rules and regulations which govern. The information in this publication is intended to summarize various areas of purchasing.

Vendor Information Workshop

For more information, please attend one of our quarterly Vendor Information Workshops. Schedules and locations are posted to our website at www.polk.edu/purchasing