doing Business with Fairfax County Public Schools
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Dear Vendor:

Thank you for your interest in doing business with Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). We developed this guide to assist you in learning how FCPS procures goods and services and how you can sell your goods and services to us. An understanding of FCPS procurement requirements and business practices can help us establish a solid partnership with our vendor partners.

The Office of Procurement Services is the central procurement office for FCPS. We have included a brief description of the office. Also included is a summary of the electronic procurement initiatives that we have implemented with our vendors to better serve our schools, departments, and centers, including the Fairfax County Vendor Internet Portal (VIP) System and Virginia Procurement Portal (eVA). We use the Internet for solicitation announcements on the Fairfax County Current Solicitations webpage, at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/solicitation/ and notice of contract awards on the Fairfax County Contract Register. This guide is only a small sample of the information available on our web site. We hope you find this information useful. Please contact us at 571-423-3550 or at purchasingsupporthelp@fcps.edu if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Roger L. Ball, Director  
Office of Procurement Services  
Department of Financial Services
Overview

Who We Are...

The Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Office of Procurement Services (OPS) is a part of the Department of Financial Services. We provide schools, centers, and departments with overall material management which includes purchasing and contracts (excluding construction), warehousing, and inventory management.

OPS is a customer service organization, providing quality services that benefit our ultimate customers, the students. We strive to be the best in the nation in public procurement and to become a role model for others. OPS continues to seek the best practices combined with technology to meet the evolving needs of our customers.

The Purchasing & Contracts Group...

- processes purchase orders for good and services;
- initiates solicitations and awards contracts for goods and services;
- maintains the contract register and updates web catalogs for all contract items including equipment, supplies, and textbooks;
- administers contracts with cooperative groups, such as U.S. Communities, Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies (AEPA), and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG);
- provides guidance for equipping and outfitting new schools and for schools undergoing renovations, renewals, and/or additions.

Responsibilities include all aspects of contracting for goods, services, textbooks, freight management, system-wide contracts, and e-commerce activities.
The Purchasing & Contracts Group...(cont.)

OPS administers contracts that involve the use of non-appropriated funds by schools related to the acquisition of goods and services including but not limited to, class rings, school pictures, reconditioning athletic equipment services, and magazine fund raising; provides equipment and services for commencement ceremonies; videotaping of graduation ceremonies at the George Mason University Patriot Center; responsibility for lease-purchase activity and ensures that we are in compliance with federal, state, and county rules and regulations for financial leasing services.

The Warehouse and Inventory Management Group...

The Warehouse receives, stores, and delivers textual materials, supplies and equipment for schools, centers, and offices. Oversight includes daily courier service that delivers internal mail and print information to all locations. The internal mail service also picks up and processes outgoing United States postal mail for all schools and administrative centers. The Warehouse performs special projects such as moving furniture and equipment between schools for science fairs and concerts and serves as the key distribution center for FCPS.

Where We Are Located...

Gatehouse Administration Center
8115 Gatehouse Road, Suite 4400
Falls Church, VA 22042-1203
Main Telephone: 571-423-3550       Main Fax: 571-423-3587

Johnie Forte Center Warehouse Operations
6800B Industrial Road
Springfield, VA 22151
Telephone: 703-658-3640       Fax: 703-642-9159

Web Address: www.fcps.edu/fs/procurement
Contact information: www.fcps.edu/contact.shtml
Contact Information...
Roger L. Ball, Director: 571-423-3555
Purchasing Staff: 571-423-3550
Warehouse Operations: 703-658-3640
Surplus Property: 703-658-3640

When to Visit...
Vendors are welcome to visit the Office of Procurement Services Monday through Friday (except FCPS holidays) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. However, to ensure availability of staff, appointments are required and may be scheduled by calling 571-423-3550.

E-Procurement Programs
The Office of Procurement Services has implemented electronic procurement initiatives to enhance the way we conduct business. Vendors are encouraged to register with the Virginia Procurement Portal (eVA) and Vendor Internet Portal (VIP). Current FCPS and Fairfax County solicitations can be accessed at http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/solicitation/.
Internet Access...

- FCPS Web site
  Our web site offers a vast array of information about our school system. It contains information about how we provide educational services to our students and families as well as how the business community can provide goods and services that meet our requirements.

- Procurement Information Web Pages
  The Office of Procurement Services web site provides extensive information about who we are and how we operate. You may find the following information useful:
  
  Current Solicitations:
  www.fairfaxcounty.gov/solicitation/

  Small Business Information:
  www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpsm/osb/default.htm

  Bid Tabulations:
  www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpsm/bidtab.htm

  Contract Register:
  www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cregister

  Virginia’s E-Procurement (eVA):
  www.eva.virginia.gov

  Vendor Internet Portal (VIP)
  www.fairfaxcounty.gov/vendorportal
**Virginia E-Procurement Portal (eVA)**...

eVA is Virginia’s electronic purchasing portal that opens the door to business opportunities between vendors and state and local governments. See Page 8 for vendor registration information.

**Procurement Card Program**...

Instead of issuing a purchase order, FCPS schools and departments are encouraged to use a “procurement card” for placing orders for purchases costing less than $5,000. The procurement card is similar to a commercial credit card and is currently under contract with JP Morgan/Chase. Vendors are encouraged to accept this method of receiving orders. To establish an account with MasterCard, please contact MasterCard Merchant Services at 800-999-5189, or [www.mastercard.com/us/merchant/index.html](http://www.mastercard.com/us/merchant/index.html).

**Purchasing Regulations**

FCPS purchasing and contract administration functions are regulated by the “Virginia Public Procurement Act,” Title 2.2, Chapter 43 of the Code of Virginia and the Fairfax County Purchasing Resolution.

- Fairfax County Purchasing Resolution—The FCPS Purchasing Resolution prescribes the policies for the conduct of all purchasing in Fairfax County Public Schools.

- The Virginia Public Procurement Act governs the purchase of supplies, materials, equipment and contractual services from non-governmental sources. It also specifies the methods of procurement, including bidding and awarding of bids.
Fairfax County Vendor Relations Division

FCPS, in conjunction with Fairfax County Government, has adopted a Small Business Program designed to increase business opportunities for small and minority firms in all aspects of procurement. Vendors are encouraged to participate in events that take place throughout the year as well as meet with FCPS and County staff to become better acquainted with our procurement procedures.

FCPS provides vendor workshops where you can meet purchasing staff and learn more about how we do business. We invite you to register for one of the workshops which are held quarterly.

You can obtain more information by calling 571-423-3550 or the Fairfax County Vendor Relations Division, at 703-324-3012. The following web site also contains information in English and Spanish: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpsm/osb.

How to Sell to Fairfax County

Vendor Registration...

If you are interested in doing business with FCPS, you should register with eVA, the Commonwealth of Virginia’s electronic procurement portal. Not only will you have access to FCPS solicitations but also more than 170 other local governments and state agencies in the Commonwealth of Virginia. To register, reactivate your registration, or update your, file go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/vendorportal

For help or more information on eVA, please contact the eVA support line at 1-866-289-7367.
Product Demonstrations...

Product demonstrations are considered normal sales efforts. If the product or service is of district-wide interest, FCPS may make arrangements for product demonstrations where a number of similar vendor products or services may be demonstrated at a single event, as appropriate. Contact the appropriate contract administrator by calling 571-423-3550. The presentation of a product or service to a school or department does not imply that you will receive an order.

The Virginia Public Procurement Act requires purchases greater than $5,000 be competitively bid. All specifications are carefully reviewed by the Office of Procurement Services to ensure that schools and departments’ requirements are correctly interpreted and that maximum competition occurs. Purchases will be made from the lowest responsive and responsible bidder meeting objective specifications. Furnishing sales literature or other product information is considered normal sales effort and generally is not considered in any competitive solicitation unless it is a stated requirement.
How We Buy

Methods of Procurement...

The Fairfax County Purchasing Resolution prescribes the basic policies for the conduct of all purchasing in FCPS. There are six basic methods used to procure goods and services for FCPS. A summary of each method is as follows:

I. Micro-purchases include goods and services where the estimated cost is less than $5,000. Most small purchases are delegated to schools, centers, and departments who will work directly with the vendor to obtain information such as price, delivery, and other terms of the sale. The order will be made by issuance of a Purchase Order, or if under $5,000, using a Fairfax County Public Schools “Procurement Card” (credit card). The procurement card may only be used for transactions under $5,000.

II. Informal Bids are purchases for goods and services where the estimated cost is either between $5,000 and $100,000 (for goods, non-professional, and consultant services). eVA may be used to advertise these solicitations and to receive bids for review and award.

III. Formal Bids are purchases for goods or services where the estimated cost is more than $100,000. There are two types of formal competitive procurements used by the Office of Procurement Services: an Invitation for Bid (IFB) and a Request for Proposal (RFP). Each type has specific requirements as outlined in the Fairfax County Purchasing Resolution. A summary of these requirements is as follows:

a. Invitation for Bid (IFB) - An IFB, or competitive sealed bid, is a written request for specifically defined goods or consultant and nonprofessional services, such as procuring vehicles. Current IFBs can be accessed from the Fairfax County Government’s “CurrentSolicitations.”
Bid openings are public in which vendor names and bid prices are read. Vendors are welcome to attend. After the bid opening, a tabulation of the bids will be prepared and posted on the Fairfax County Department of Purchasing & Supply Management’s “Bid Tabulation” web site.

b. Request for Proposal (RFP) - An RFP, or competitive negotiation, is a written request which indicates in general terms the goods or services being procured by FCPS. An example of an RFP is consulting services. Vendors respond by providing a technical and a business proposal by the closing date and time specified. Unlike an IFB, there are no bid openings. Proposals are available for public inspection only after the contract is awarded.

IV. Exceptions to competitive procurement exist when OPS has determined that there is only one source practicably available. A written record documenting the basis for this determination is posted in the FCPS Office of Procurement Services.

V. Emergency procurements may be made without competition under an emergency condition. A written determination of the basis for the emergency and for the selection of the particular contractor is posted in the FCPS Office of Procurement Services.

Cooperative Procurement Program

Objective...

The purpose of the cooperative procurement program is to combine requirements from other jurisdictions—locally and/or nationally—into one solicitation in order to increase efficiency and to reduce administrative expenses. Participating jurisdictions also benefit from the resulting combined purchasing power by paying lower prices.
Cooperative Procurement Program (cont.)

Local...
The Office of Procurement Services actively participates and, in many cases, sponsors “cooperative procurements” with other local governments which include:

National..
U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance is a nationwide program designed by public purchasing professionals for use by government agencies and nonprofit organizations throughout the country. Program sponsors include: Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO), National Association of Counties (NACo), National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP), National League of Cities (NLC), United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), and a number of state associations.

The Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies’ (AEPA) mission is to cooperatively serve public agencies through a continuous effort to explore and solve present and future purchasing needs. The primary goal is to obtain multistate volume purchasing contracts that are cost effective.

Benefits To You...
Vendors awarded contracts through a cooperative purchasing program also benefit from:

- A single solicitation issued by one jurisdiction on behalf of multiple public agencies locally and/or nationwide;
- A reduction in administrative and sales overhead associated with responding to multiple bids from multiple jurisdictions;
- A “one-stop-shop” access to public agencies through the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Cooperative Purchasing Program, U.S. Communities Government Purchasing Alliance, and Association of Educational Purchasing Agencies.