

TAMPA BAY AREA COOPERATIVE PURCHASING PROGRAM PROCEDURES FOR JOINT BIDDING

Purpose

To provide member entities in the greater Tampa Bay area with a cost-cutting tool. By agreeing on uniform competitive specifications and contract terms and conditions for an item of common usage, participants can combine their requirements for a single request for competitive sealed bids. This joint bidding program can provide participants with:

- Better prices due to larger volumes (economy of scale)
- Better quality due to better, competitive specifications
- Saving of time, as only one entity prepares and issues Invitations for Bids for each item purchased through the joint bid program

This program will therefore reduce the cost of services.

Essential Elements

Participants must explicitly provide the authority for “joint bidding” under the rules and procedures established by the purchasing authority.

Participation in any bid is elective, not mandatory.

The entity assuming the responsibility for bidding a product or service must conduct its operation according to the principles of open competition, using specifications that are fully competitive.

Participants must agree to abide by all contractual requirements, including prompt payment of bills.

Membership

Membership in this purchasing cooperative is open to all governmental entities, school districts, public colleges and universities, public utilities, special authorities and other political subdivisions located in the Tampa Bay area.

Purchasing Cooperative

The Purchasing Cooperative, herein called the Cooperative, shall be responsible for conducting the business of the Cooperative. Member entities shall select a chairperson and a secretary. The Cooperative shall also consist of a representative from each member entity participating.

Responsibilities

The chairperson shall:

- Preside at regular meetings of the Cooperative.
- Prepare agenda.

- Prepare checklists and identify products for joint bidding.
- Assign project leaders and project teams.
- Keep participants informed of commodity schedules, including contracts and their expiration dates.
- Website responsibilities?

The secretary shall:

- Maintain minutes of regular meeting of the Cooperative.
- Maintain records of the Cooperative.
- Maintain a roster of the member entities and their buying staff.

Meetings

The Cooperative should meet quarterly to discuss product checklists, schedules, specifications, bid tabulations, bid awards, and vendor problems. Documents pertaining to the above will also be distributed at these meetings. Special meetings will be held when necessary.

Participation

Each participating entity has the option of not participating in a particular joint bid if doing so would not be advantageous in terms of specification, price or otherwise.

Preparing Requests

The project team will be responsible for executing the following procedures:

- Preparing draft specifications that all participants agree upon.
- Obtaining estimates of requirements from all entities interested in participating in the proposed purchase. It is not necessary for all member entities to participate in every purchase. However, once a bid is awarded, each participant is expected to honor its commitment.
- Developing the Invitation for Bid format (the project team must include special billing and delivery requirements).
- Developing a list of suggested suppliers to whom Invitations for Bids will be mailed.

Review of Bid Package

After specifications, Invitations for Bids and a list of suppliers are drafted, participants will:

- Review the specifications of the Invitation for Bid format and recommend changes as they see fit.
- Review the list of potential suppliers and recommend changes as they see fit.

Soliciting Bids

The team leader will then solicit bids using the agreed upon specifications, Invitation for Bid format, and list of potential suppliers. The procedures followed should be no different from those used when soliciting bids on items required by the team leader's own entity. Participants must

be sure that the project leader's entity requirements for legal advertising (Notice to Bidders) are as rigorous as their own entity's.

Receipt and Tabulation of Bids

The project leader will at a minimum receive and tabulate bids and will present this information to the Cooperative (via email).

Recommendation of Awards

Based on the Cooperative determination, the participating representatives will recommend contract awards to their respective purchasing authorities or governing bodies.

Contract Administration

Each participant will issue its individual purchase order (or contract) and will be billed separately.

Contractors will deliver products or services as required by the Invitation for Bid.

Participating entities will receive, inspect and test products on an individual basis.

When non-conforming shipments occur, participants will seek their own remedies and share their experiences with the other participants.

Extracted from NIGP Public Procurement Management (Part 1, 1985)

Under the Joint Bid method of cooperative purchasing, two or more governmental entities agree on specification and contract terms/conditions for an item of common usage and combine their requirements for this item in a single invitation to bid. Once bids have been received, tabulated and awarded by the host agency, each entity issues its own purchase order or contract, is billed separately, does its own receiving and inspections and resolves its own disputes.

Since it is, in a rather loose sense, an extension of the centralized purchasing concept to the intergovernmental level, joint bids often obtain better prices for participating governmental units due to increased purchase quantities.

Joint bidding also eliminates duplication of effort in preparing specifications, advertising and issuing bid documents/ receiving /tabulating bid documents since responsibility for soliciting bids rotates among the participants in the joint bid program. Smaller entities in particular are permitted to take advantage of the increased market clout and purchasing expertise which otherwise would not be available to them. All participants benefit from the exchange of information on product innovation, sources and current prices.