



VENDOR GPS

A GUIDE TO PROCUREMENT SUCCESS



OFFICE OF FINANCIAL
M A N A G E M E N T
P R O C U R E M E N T D I V I S I O N



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OFFICE OF FINANCIAL
M A N A G E M E N T
PROCUREMENT DIVISION

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in doing business with Sarasota County. This guide has been developed to provide helpful information and to explain how easy it is to do business with Sarasota County. Potential suppliers are encouraged to participate in competitive opportunities to sell commodities and/or services to Sarasota County. For existing vendors, this guide may serve as a quick reference tool.

What is “procurement?”

Procurement is the acquisition of products and services necessary to keep Sarasota County operating. Sarasota County’s procurement process is designed to achieve the best value when spending public money in a way that is fair and transparent for everyone.

Sarasota County must follow certain rules set by the state of Florida when procuring goods and services also must follow ordinances and resolutions that the Sarasota County Commission has adopted.

Our mission is to expertly facilitate the process of acquiring goods and services.

Our vision is to be a recognized leader and valued partner in procuring the right goods and services at the right time.

QUESTION: What does it mean to be a vendor for Sarasota County?

ANSWER: A vendor is simply a business that supplies products or services, usually through a competitive solicitation process, to Sarasota County Government. The method of procurement is determined by the Procurement Official.

Typical purchases made by Sarasota County include, but are not limited to:

- Professional services.
- Construction services.
- Maintenance services (HVAC, plumbing, electrical, carpentry, landscaping, etc.).
- Vehicles.
- Information technology products and services.
- Garments.
- Fuel.

SARASOTA COUNTY PROCUREMENT AND THE LAW

State statutes and local policy

Chapter 125 of the Florida Statutes (1) establishes the rules of county government in Florida. In accordance with Chapter 125, the Sarasota County Commission establishes policy for the procurement of goods and services for Sarasota County under the County Code of Laws. (See Article VI, Chapter 2 (Procurement Code) (2)). The purpose of the Procurement Code is to maximize the prudent use of funds, to provide safeguards for maintaining a procurement system of quality and integrity, and to foster full and open competition. A resolution establishes the signature authority for agreements and contracts as well as procurement method thresholds. The Sarasota County Procurement Manual (3) further establishes the procedures to be used in the procurement of goods and services in the county.

Links to all documents are available on the Procurement page of scgov.net (keyword procurement).

QUESTION: Is being a local vendor an advantage?

ANSWER: In an effort to foster the growth of local businesses, Sarasota County maintains a local vendor preference policy that applies to most bids and requests for proposals.

A checklist has been developed to help vendors determine if they meet the requirements to be considered a "local business" as defined in the Procurement Code. Visit scgov.net (keywords local preference checklist).

ETHICS IN PUBLIC CONTRACTING

Members of the public require the highest level of ethical standards from all areas of government. The Sarasota County Commission takes any suggestion of anti-competitive, collusive, dishonest, conflicting or corrupt behavior very seriously. All vendors are expected to maintain the highest standards of behavior and avoid any and all impropriety or the appearance of impropriety at all times.

Vendor Code of Conduct

Sarasota County requires every vendor who seeks to do business with Sarasota County to conduct itself with the best interest of the public in mind at all times and to comply with the following ethical standards:

- a. No vendor or potential vendor shall discuss or consult with other vendors or potential vendors intending to compete for the same or similar contract for the purpose of bidrigging, collusion or other activities that are illegal, unethical or have the effect of limiting competition.
- b. No vendor shall submit false information or intentionally submit misleading information to Sarasota County.
- c. After the issuance of any solicitation or during renegotiation of an existing contract, no prospective vendor or any person acting on their behalf shall contact, communicate with or discuss any matter relating to the solicitation or renegotiations with any Sarasota County employee or elected or appointed official, other than the Procurement Official or his/her designees. This prohibition ends upon execution of the final contract or when the solicitation has been canceled or the renegotiation is completed. Renegotiation will be deemed to have completed upon vote of the Sarasota County Commissioners or written notice from the Procurement Official. Any firm that lobbies any Sarasota County employee or elected or appointed official while a solicitation is in process, up to the execution of either a contract or purchase order, will be subject to suspension and debarment outlined in Section 2-222 of the Procurement Code(2).

Vendors who fail to comply with county ethical requirements are subject to suspension and debarment as provided in Sarasota County Procurement Code (2).

- d. Vendors and potential vendors shall promptly disclose any conflicts of interest.
- e. Vendors and potential vendors shall not offer, give or agree to give compensation of any kind to a county employee(s) for the performance of any activity related to the performance of the county employees official duties.

- f. Vendors or potential vendors shall not make illegal political contributions.
- g. Vendors shall not profit, directly or indirectly, from the use of any secret or confidential knowledge or data of the county.
- h. Vendors and potential vendors shall not influence, or attempt to influence, any county employee to use his or her official position to secure privileges or advantages for the vendor.
- i. Vendors and potential vendors shall not send holiday gifts, office-warming gifts, tokens of appreciation or other items of value to any Sarasota County employees to influence the official actions or judgment of a county employee.

Vendors and potential vendors shall not invite county employees to meals, parties, sporting events, theatrical performances and similar social functions.

Vendors and potential vendors shall not seek to secure a county contract upon an agreement or understanding for a contingent fee, except for retention of bona fide employees needed for the purposes of securing business.

No person or business entity shall be awarded a contract by Sarasota County, for the provision of goods or services, if that person or business entity has been convicted of a public entity crime as set forth in Section 287.133 of the Florida Statutes (FS) (4). A person, business entity, or officer or employee of a business entity, having been convicted of one or more of the crimes included in Section 287.133, FS (4) shall be ineligible for the awarding of a contract by Sarasota County for a period as set forth in the statute. Any person or entity who claims that this ordinance is inapplicable because a conviction or judgment has been reversed by a court of competent jurisdiction shall prove the same with documentation satisfactory to the procurement official. Upon presentation of such satisfactory proof, the person or entity shall be allowed to contract with Sarasota County. Before entering into a contract with Sarasota County, vendors are required to execute and file with the Procurement Office an affidavit, verifying that neither the entity nor any person affiliated with the entity has been convicted of any public entity crime described in Section 287.133, FS (4).

QUICK TIP: Solicit appropriately! It is a violation of Sarasota County's Procurement Code for a potential vendor to have any interaction with any employee, agent, officer or elected or appointed official during an active procurement. All communications must be directed to the Procurement Official or his or her designee. This ensures a fair chance for everyone.

THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Monetary thresholds

Sarasota County uses a variety of competitive and non-competitive methods to select vendors. Chapter 7 of the Sarasota County Procurement Manual details all of the methods and types of solicitations used. In general, the following rules apply:

- Purchases up to \$5,000 require at least one informal quote.
- Purchases greater than \$5,000 up to \$25,000, require a minimum of three informal quotes.
- Purchases greater than \$25,000 up to \$100,000, require formal quotes.
- Purchases exceeding \$100,000 require a formal competitive solicitation.

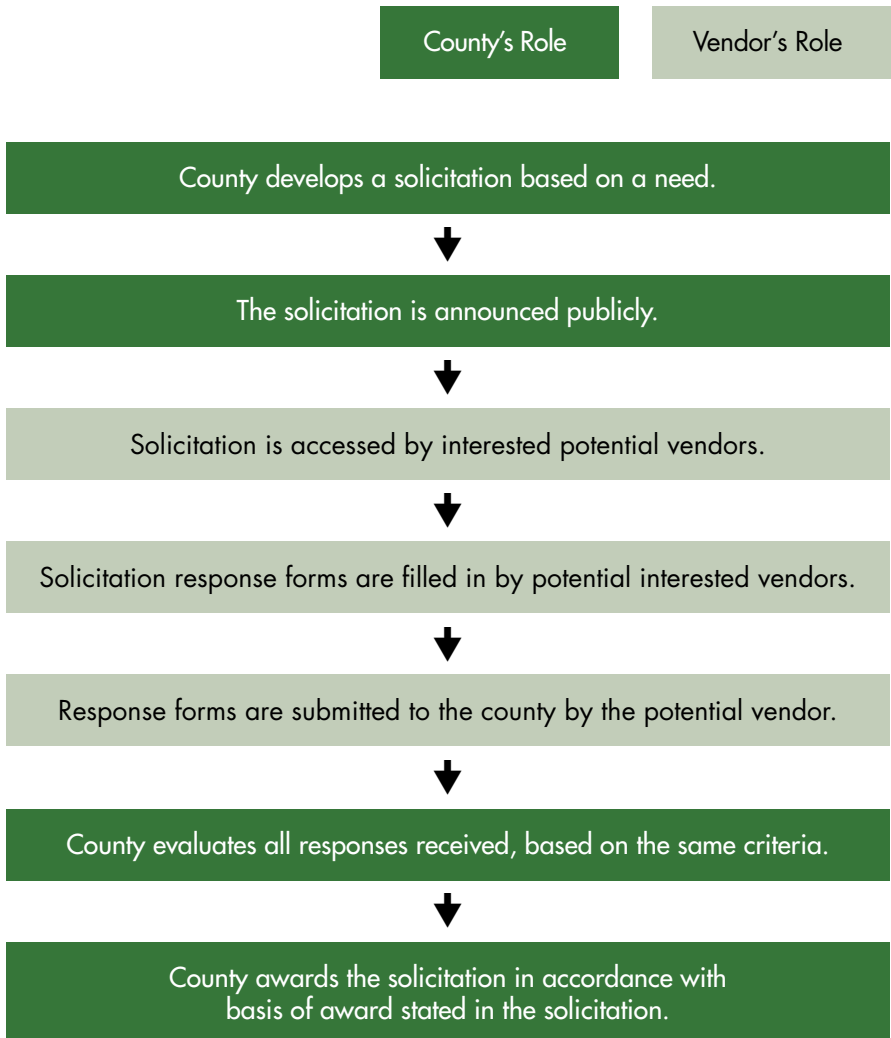
Finding competitive bid opportunities

Sarasota County uses web-based bidding services to make it easier for vendors to immediately receive and respond to bidding opportunities. To participate in the competitive bid process, vendors must first register with BidSync. There is no cost to register. Once registered, vendors receive automatic notifications of opportunities to do business with Sarasota County.

To register, visit bidsync.com and select "Get Started."

For technical assistance, contact BidSync Support at 800-990-9339, option 1, or email support@bidsync.com.

Steps in a typical solicitation process



QUESTION: What is a solicitation?

ANSWER: A solicitation is a document issued by Procurement for the purpose of obtaining offers or replies.

Solicitation types

The types of solicitations used by Sarasota County include:

- Invitation for Bid (IFB) — used for many procurements exceeding \$100,000. Sealed bids are submitted in response to a formal invitation for bids and pricing is revealed only at the time and date set for the bid opening.
- Invitation for Quotes (IFQ) — used for procurements between \$25,000 and \$100,000.
- Quick Quote (RFIQ) — used to solicit small dollar purchases under \$25,000.
- Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) — a competitive negotiation process that is used when the procurement authority deems it is in their best interest to negotiate to achieve “best value.” A form of source selection that is similar to the Request for Proposal process.
- Request for Proposals (RFP) — used for soliciting proposals from potential providers of goods and services when consideration of qualifications is necessary.
- Request for Information (RFI) — used to gather information from potential providers of a product or service.
- Request for Professional Services (RPS) — used to solicit professional engineering, architectural, landscape architectural and survey and mapping services in accordance with 287.055 Florida Statutes (5).
- Professional Services Library — a group of firms selected to provide professional engineering, architectural, landscape architectural and mapping and surveying services on an ongoing basis through continuing service contracts.

Insurance

Vendors are required to provide evidence of insurance in the type and amounts specified by Sarasota County before being able to perform work on county property. Each solicitation and contract will specify the minimum insurance coverage and limits required. The amount of insurance coverage the vendor is required to maintain is determined by the amount of risk involved in the work being performed. A copy of a current insurance certificate showing proof of coverage must be received prior to commencement of any work. Vendors are required to maintain the type and limits of insurance coverage specified and provide updated insurance certificates throughout the term of the contract. For some projects, bonds, including payment and performance bonds and bid bonds, may be required.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

Contract approval process

Once a vendor has been selected, a contract is prepared for execution and approval by the vendor and a representative of the county. With few exceptions, the vendor will be required to execute the document before it is routed for signature by the county representative authorized to sign contracts on behalf of Sarasota County.

The county uses an electronic contract routing approval system to ensure that the proposed contract is reviewed by all county departments impacted by the contract.

Following execution, the vendor will be mailed an original, fully executed document for his/her records. However, no compensable work may begin until the vendor receives an approved purchase order for the work. Construction contracts may further require that the vendor not begin work until receipt of an official Notice to Proceed.

QUESTION: Why do some procurement approvals take longer than others?

ANSWER: Sarasota County is dedicated to ensuring fiscal sustainability and stewardship of public tax dollars. The method of procurement, statutory requirements, the value of the item needed, the complexity of negotiations and the nature of the item being contracted are all factors which affect the length of time it takes to achieve a final executed contract.

Monitoring contract performance and deliverables

Monitoring contract performance is a key function of efficient contract management and is essential to ensuring that the county receives the goods and services specified in the contract. Unless otherwise delegated, the county's administrative agent or contract manager named in the contract is charged with ensuring that contract requirements (deliverables) are being provided.

During the life of the contract, the administrative agent, contract manager or project manager will communicate regularly with the vendor to ensure that the goods and services are being provided in accordance with the specifications of the contract, and will work to resolve any issues promptly. For any contract-related issue, the first point of contact is the administrative agent or contract manager named in the contract.

Payment

Following the completion of work and in accordance with the contract requirements and issued purchase order, invoices should be mailed to:

Finance Department
Clerk of the Circuit Court
P.O. Box 8
Sarasota, FL 34230
941-861-5867

The purchase order number must appear on ALL invoices, packing lists, packages and correspondence. Each shipment must have a separate invoice. All payment inquiries should be directed to the address and phone number above.

CONTRACT AMENDMENTS AND RENEWALS

Amendments

A contract amendment is used to make modifications to the agreement between the county and the vendor. All contract amendments must be in writing and executed by both parties to the agreement. The following are examples of permitted contract amendments:

- Increase or decrease in quantity of a product beyond the contract amount.
- Increase or decrease in frequency of a service.
- Increase or decrease in locations to be serviced.
- Increase or decrease in price.

An amendment is requested by the county's administrative agent and reviewed by the procurement team before being drafted and forwarded to the vendor for approval. Amendments shall be approved in accordance with the contract approval process section.

Renewals

Contract renewals are permitted when prescribed in the original agreement. When renewals are available within the contract, prior to renewal, the county's administrative agent will consider whether renewal of the existing agreement is in the best interest of Sarasota County. All contract renewals must be in writing and approved by all parties to the agreement.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Vendor code of conduct

Vendors doing business with Sarasota County are expected to communicate with county employees and members of the public in a civil manner. All aspects of a vendor's performance, including complaints received from county employees or members of the public, may impact the county's decision to enter into, renew or terminate an existing contract in accordance with the provisions contained therein.

The following 12 standards apply to the county/vendor relationship. A successful vendor provides:

- 1. Customer service**
Provides excellent customer service to the county staff and the public.
- 2. Contract deliverables**
Supplies the goods and services outlined in the agreement, in accordance with the terms of the agreement.
- 3. Delivery schedule**
Performs in accordance with the agreed upon schedule and avoids delays.
- 4. Quality**
Provides the highest level of quality goods and services.
- 5. Billing and invoicing**
Submits detailed and accurate invoices matching the work performed.
- 6. Project management**
Consistently demonstrates the ability to properly manage the work.
- 7. Subcontractor management**
Maintains a professional relationship with subcontractors.
- 8. Equipment and resources**
Provides the best available equipment in an adequate amount necessary to perform the work.
- 9. Materials management**
Demonstrates "best practice" in handling and storage.
- 10. Cost control**
Manages costs responsibly to avoid cost overruns.
- 11. Maintaining technical requirements**
Monitors quality control of the products and services to ensure requirements are being met.

12. Safety standards

Ensures staff is trained and properly equipped to perform the work safely.

Suspension or debarment of vendors

Sarasota County reserves the right to suspend or debar vendors from consideration for award of future contracts in accordance with Section 2-222 of the Procurement Code (2) for failure to abide by these standards. After consultation with a Sarasota County Government attorney, the county administrator is authorized to suspend or debar a person or entity from consideration for award of contracts if the county administrator has adequate documented evidence to demonstrate that the person or entity has engaged in any activity that is grounds for suspension or debarment.

Causes for suspension or debarment

The causes for suspension or debarment include:

1. Conviction for commission of a criminal offense as an incident to obtaining or attempting to obtain a public or private contract or subcontract.
2. Conviction under state or federal statutes of embezzlement; theft; forgery; bribery; falsification or destruction of records; receiving stolen property; or any other offense indicating a lack of business integrity or business honesty which currently, seriously and directly affects responsibility as a Sarasota County vendor.
3. Conviction under state or federal antitrust statutes arising out of the submission of bids or proposals.
4. Persistent and repetitive violation of contract provisions.
5. Failure without good cause to perform in accordance with the specifications and/or budget or within the time limit provided in the contract.
6. A record of unsatisfactory performance in accordance with the terms of one or more contracts.
7. A documented history of significant deviation from contract specifications, engineering standards, design or material requirements or safety regulations.
8. Debarment by another governmental entity for any cause listed above or provided for in general law.
9. For violation of applicable ethics standards, including the ethical standards set forth in Chapter 112, Florida Statutes (6) and this section.

Ineligibility for award of contracts

Any business entity controlled by or affiliated with any person or business entity ineligible for the award of a contract may also be prohibited from contracting with Sarasota County if the relationship or affiliation is such that, in the reasonable opinion of the Sarasota County administrator, the person or business entity, by reason of the relationship with the ineligible person or entity, is likely not to conduct business in a responsible or lawful manner, or if the ineligible person or business entity could directly benefit from the contract. Such factors as ownership interest, one or more members of the governing boards in common, control of one entity by the other, interlocking or shared management or principals, and limited management and ownership among family members, shall be considered in determining ineligibility.

CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

Sarasota County Procurement

Questions about how to do business with Sarasota County or about the procurement process should be directed to a member of the procurement team.

PHONE: **941-861-5000**
LOCATION: 1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota
HOURS: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday
WEBSITE: **scgov.net/Procurement**

Sarasota County Contracts Administration

Questions relating to an existing contract should be directed to a member of the contracts administration team.

PHONE: **941-861-5000**
LOCATION: 1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota
HOURS: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday
EMAIL: **contracts@scgov.net**

Resources

Register as a vendor and view active solicitations at bidsync.com.
For technical assistance, contact BidSync Support at 800-990-9339.

1. (n.d.). Florida Statutes. Retrieved from Chapter 125: leg.state.fl.us/statutes
2. (n.d.). Sarasota County Code, Article VI, Chapter 2. Retrieved from Procurement Code: scgov.net/procurement
3. (n.d.). Sarasota County Procurement Manual. Retrieved from scgov.net/procurement
4. (n.d.). Public entity crime; denial or revocation of the right to transact business with public entities. Retrieved from The Florida Statutes, Chapter 287, Procurement of Personal Property and Services: leg.state.fl.us/statutes
5. (n.d.). Acquisition of professional architectural, engineering, landscape architectural, or surveying and mapping services; definitions; procedures; contingent fees prohibited; penalties. Retrieved from The Florida Statutes, Chapter 287, Procurement of Personal Property and Services: leg.state.fl.us/statutes
6. (n.d.). Florida Statutes Chapter 112 . Retrieved from Public Officers and Employees: General Provisions: leg.state.fl.us/statutes

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**OFFICE OF
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For more information

Visit: scgov.net

Call: 941-861-5000