

Vendor Guide to Business with the University of North Texas System

The University of North Texas System welcomes the opportunity to do business with interested merchants and encourages all vendors to become prospective suppliers to both the University and to the State of Texas. The Business Service Center is interested in fostering participation by all qualified businesses offering commodities and services that may be used by the University. The Purchasing area has the responsibility for assisting departments to make the most economical acquisition of quality materials and services that will assure efficient operation.

To that end, it is essential that interested businesses become familiar with the purchasing procedures of the university system. This information will serve as a general guide. Specific questions and concerns not addressed here should be directed to us by email at purchasing@untsystem.edu or by phone at 940-369-5500.

Vendor Registration

The UNT System utilizes the State of Texas Certified Master Bidders Listing (CMBL) for all formal solicitations. We strongly suggest that an active, accurate and current email address be maintained on your company's CMBL profile to insure receipt of bid opportunities.

The CMBL is a master database used by State of Texas purchasing entities to develop a mailing list for vendors to receive bids based on the products or services they can provide to agencies of the State of Texas. Manufacturers, suppliers, and other vendors wishing to furnish materials, equipment, supplies, and services to the state should register for the CMBL to receive bidding opportunities. The CMBL annual registration fee is \$70.00 and may be paid on-line by credit/debit card or check debit (US addresses only) or via a printable application. More information can be obtained from the State Comptroller website, <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/cmbll/>.

Please visit our website at <http://bsc.untsystem.edu/bid-listing> anytime to view current bid opportunities.

Decentralized Purchasing

Most of the University's informal purchasing is handled through the various University departments. Normal business hours are 8:00AM to 5:00PM Monday through Friday.

Visits to the Purchasing area of the Business Service Center are welcomed, but should be scheduled in advance. The visits give us a chance to learn about your service or product and give us an opportunity to direct you to those University departments which may be interested in purchasing your products or services.

HOW WE PURCHASE – Methods of Procurement

Small Procurements (Purchases \$ 5,000.00 or less)

Although competitive sealed bidding is the procedure universally preferred in government procurement, consideration of the time and cost dictates that a less formal procedure be used for small purchases. The Purchasing Policy and Procedures provides that procurements not exceeding \$5,000 may be made on the open market without formal bid and further provides for the use of informal written quotes or competitive oral quotations. Unless the purchasing card is used for the purchase, a formal Purchase Order (PO) is required prior to shipment and receipt of the goods.

Purchase Order

The signed Purchase Order (PO) authorizes the vendor to ship the items specified thereon and is required for each University transaction, other than those purchased through the Purchasing Card (MasterCard) program. It constitutes the contract between the University and the vendor. Purchase orders should be clear and concise in order to avoid misunderstandings or confusion. The PO is completed from the information furnished on the requisition from the departments and/or from the selected bidder's bid documents. The PO is prepared by the Purchasing area of the Business Service Center and must be signed by one of the authorized Buyers for the University. After signature, the PO is distributed to the vendor through fax, email, and/or US Postal Service.

Purchasing Card Program

The Purchasing Card program is designed to improve efficiency in processing low dollar purchases for certain goods and services from any vendor that accepts MasterCard credit cards. Each Purchasing Card is issued to a named individual employee and the institution is clearly shown on the card. Transaction limits are enforced on each card and is generally \$2,000 per transaction.

Informal Request for Quotes

Departments may solicit quotes for items between \$5,000 and \$24,999. Quotes is a less formal process than a competitive sealed Invitation for Bid (IFB) or Request for Proposal (RFP). Purchase awards are typically recommended to the most responsive and responsible bidder providing the best value to the University. A formal Purchase Order (PO) is required documentation for the transaction.

Emergency Purchases

Emergency purchases are sometimes necessary due to the breakdown of equipment or other unforeseen event which may affect the operation of the University. When this occurs, the using department is authorized to declare an Emergency under certain conditions to allow them to proceed with the necessary action for the emergency.

As a vendor, and for your protection, you should always make certain that a written Purchase Order or a Purchase Order number has been issued to your firm prior to delivery of materials or services. The Purchase Order ensures timely processing of payment.

Best Value Criteria

The UNT System purchases goods and services from vendors providing the best value to the University. According to Texas Government Code, Chapter 2155.074, the definition for best value includes, but is not limited to:

- Installation costs,
- Life cycle costs,
- Quality and reliability of the goods and services,
- Delivery terms,
- Indicators of probable vendor performance under the contract such as past vendor performance, the vendor's financial resources and ability to perform, the vendor's experience or demonstrated capability and responsibility and the vendor's ability to provide reliable maintenance agreements and support,
- Cost of any employee training associated with a purchase,
- Effect of a purchase on agency productivity, and
- Other factors relevant to determining the best value for the state in the context of a particular purchase.

Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Program

In accordance with the Texas Government Code, Chapter 2161, UNT is responsible for participating in the State of Texas HUB program. State agencies are required to make a good faith effort to utilize HUBs in contracts in the procurement process of construction goods, services, and public utility contracts. These initiatives are designed to eliminate barriers for equal economic opportunities in state purchasing for HUBs.

A "Historically Underutilized Business" is an entity with its principal place of business in Texas, and is at least 51% owned by an Asian Pacific American, Black American, Hispanic American, Native American and/or American woman who reside in Texas and have a proportionate interest and demonstrates active participation in the control, operations and management of the entity's affairs.

For more information on the State of Texas HUB program, please see <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/hub/>.

Small Business Program

The Master Small Business Contracting Plan at the University of North Texas System includes veteran-owned small business concerns (VOSB), service-disabled veteran-owned small business concerns (SDVOSB), historically underutilized business zones (HUBZone), small business concerns (SB), small disadvantaged business concerns (SDB) including historically black colleges and universities and minority institutions (HBCU/MIs), and women-owned small business concerns (WOSB).

Goals for SBs, VOSBs, SDVOSBs, HUBZone, SDBs, HBCU/MIs, and WOSBs will be developed for each solicitation from funds received from a federal contract that is expected to exceed \$500,000 and will be expressed in terms of percentages and dollars of total planned subcontracting. Goals for each solicitation will also include a description of the principal products and services to be acquired from each of the small business entities.

Formal Solicitation Purchases

All purchases over \$25,000 require a formal solicitation process unless otherwise provided for in the University Purchasing Policy and Procedures such as Emergency and Sole Source procurements. An Invitation for Bid (IFB), Request for Proposal (RFP), or Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will normally be used for these types of purchases. All formal competitive purchases are advertised and posted on the Bid Listing Page located on the Purchasing and Payment Services Web site at <http://pps.unt.edu>. Bids are also advertised on the State of Texas Electronic Business Daily at <http://esbd.cpa.state.tx.us>.

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

The IFB is a formal solicitation of sealed bids. Sealed bids designate a specific time and due date, are publicly opened and, upon request, the bidder's name and prices may be read at the time and place designated in the IFB. After the bids are evaluated, a Notice of Award and/or a Purchase Order (PO) is issued to the lowest cost responsible bidder meeting all specifications, contract terms and conditions. It should be noted that the contract award will not always be made to the bidder with the lowest price if the state determines that the low price bidder cannot clearly perform the contract requirements or a best value determination results in an award to a bidder other than the low bidder.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

The RFQ is a formal solicitation document requesting submittal of qualifications or specialized expertise in response to the scope of professional and consulting services as related to Section 2.20 of the Comptroller of Public Accounts Procurement Manual. The objective of the RFQ solicitation is to determine the most qualified service for completion of the job. The award is based solely on the best qualifications and not on cost.

Request for Proposal (RFP)

A RFP is a formal and competitive method of procurement whereby vendors are requested to submit proposals for the supply of goods and/or services in a format which allows for the consideration of factors in addition to the price in the evaluation and award process. This method of solicitation is used when it is determined that the project being bid does not lend itself to the creation of a clear and concise Statement of Work. The objective of the RFP solicitation is to determine a vendor who can offer the best possible solution at the most reasonable price.

The RFP describes in general terms the background and needs of the UNT System. However, unlike the informal or formal bidding process in which the UNT System prescribes both the specifications and solution in the bids that they submit, the RFP process contemplates that vendors will propose their own comprehensive and innovation solutions to the University's needs described in the RFP. Therefore, the RFP is used for highly technical equipment, complex services or when contracting with group purchasing organizations. The RFP defines requirements, asks suppliers for proposed solutions, defines criteria for evaluation, and outlines terms and conditions.

Proposals are opened on the scheduled day and time and only the names of the proposers are revealed to those present. Pricing is not revealed at this time. Recommendations for award are typically made by a multi-functional selection committee who determine which proposal is in the best interest of the UNT System based on the evaluation criteria defined in the RFP.

A negotiation process starts with the proposal or proposals identified as the best by the evaluation committee. Negotiations often include an opportunity for the Best and Final Offer (BAFO) from the proposed vendor(s). A formal contract is the final stage of the request and requires appropriate signature authority of the University and the selected vendor. Monitoring and reporting of the contract is then assigned to a University employee.

Solicitation Documents

Requests for Quotes, IFB's, and/or RFP's are used to solicit responses from suppliers to sell goods and/or services and should not be construed as an order to make any purchase. A Request for Invitation (RFI) is used to obtain information from the vendor community that may or may not be used to develop a solicitation document at a later date. To be responsive, vendors should always review instructions, terms and conditions of the solicitation document and include all information and signatures as required. The bid or proposal must be returned to the address listed in the solicitation document by the time and date indicated for the bid opening or proposal deadline.

Occasionally, the University may utilize the assistance of a consultant in the development of a solicitation document. The consultants who participate in this process will be required to prepare and submit a nondisclosure statement regarding the procurement. Any consultant who assists in the development of a solicitation document will be prohibited from submitting a bid/proposal in response to that solicitation or from otherwise performing work on any contract directly resulting from that particular solicitation document, unless the University expressly waives this restriction in writing. Vendors who respond to RFIs may respond to any solicitations resulting from the RFI.

Any expense relating to the submission of a response is the sole responsibility of the bidder. The UNT System will not reimburse bidders for any cost related to bid preparation and/or submission.

Faxed Bids and Addendums

Faxed bids are not generally appropriate for sealed bids and proposals. A faxed response does not guarantee the integrity and confidentiality of the sealed bid or proposal process. The University offers facsimile (fax) service only as a convenience and is not responsible for bids received late, illegible, incomplete, or otherwise non-responsive because of electronic failure of the equipment or operator error. Faxed addenda are generally acceptable provided both the original bid and addendum have been received and time stamped before the published bid opening date and time.

Receipt of Bids and Proposals

A bid or proposal received after the date and time established by the bid invitation is a late bid and will not be considered under any circumstances. The official clock is the date stamp clock maintained at the customer service desk of the Business Service Center. All bids must be in the possession of the BSC not later than the posted bid opening. Late bids will be returned unopened to the vendor.

Bids will be checked for signature prior to tabulation. Bids without a signature will be disqualified as technically non-responsive and NOT considered valid for tabulation. Any unsigned bids will be notated on the tabulation sheet as "UNSIGNED" and attached to the file. These bids will be reflected as "unsigned"

in the comment area of the bid tabulation sheet. They will be kept with the main file and not returned to the bidder.

The terms “bid opening” and “closing date” are used synonymously. The date, time and physical location of bid opening shall be treated clearly on the formal solicitation documents. All bid openings shall be public. Bid opening dates may be changed and rescheduled if bidders are properly notified in advance by an addendum of the new date. If a bid opening is canceled, all bids which were being held for opening will be returned to the bidders. All bid tabulation files shall be available for public inspection. The UNT System will not provide bid tabulation information over the telephone.

The bids, all documents, and other pertinent information about the evaluation of the bids and bidders, will be withheld until after contract award.

Bids may be read in any order: alphabetical sequence, in order of date of receipt, or by lot. The opening will normally consist of announcing information to include the bid requisition number; the name of each bidder; the price or amount bid for each item (if applicable); and, the model number, if different from the specified model. Bidders will be advised to submit any concerns in writing to the appropriate Buyer.

Vendor Performance Program

The UNT System reports vendor performance to the State of Texas vendor performance program tracking system. The vendor will be copied on any performance report and will have 14 days from the date the form was submitted to comment on or provide any convincing evidence to refute the information before the report is finalized and included in the tracking system.

Vendor Invoices

Vendors are required to submit invoices in order to expedite payment.

Invoices can be submitted electronically to invoices@untsystem.edu. Please do not send other correspondence to this address. Payment inquiries should be sent to payments@untsystem.edu.

The invoice must include, but is not limited to:

1. Vendor’s mailing and email (if applicable) address;
2. Vendor’s telephone number;
3. The name and telephone number of a person designated by the vendor to answer questions regarding the invoice;
4. Purchase Order number;
5. A description of the goods or services, in sufficient detail to identify the order which relates to the invoice;
6. Other relevant information supporting and explaining the payment requested.

Vendor Payment

Payment will be made to the vendor within 30 days after receipt of a properly prepared invoice or the receipt of and acceptance of goods ordered, whichever is later. State law prohibits payments to a vendor if the vendor owes a debt to the state, is delinquent in payment of certain taxes, is delinquent in repaying certain student loans, and/or is delinquent in payment of certain types of child support.