

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL VENDOR WITH ALBANY COUNTY

The following instructions will help responsible bidders submit responsive bids by doing the following:

1. Search the website, **Empire State Purchasing Group** (ESPG) (<http://www.empirestatebidsystem.com/>) or read the legal ads placed in the Times Union and The Evangelist.
2. Download a copy of a Bid or RFP directly from the ESPG website as soon as possible after learning of a bid request. This will give you ample time to work on the bid and to contact your suppliers if necessary.
3. Read the entire bid package.
 - a. Follow all directions, terms and conditions.
 - b. Meet or exceed the detailed minimum specifications of the item(s) or service(s) being bid.
 - c. Furnish all information deemed necessary for the bid.
 - d. Read all of the conditions. When you bid, be prepared to honor all the conditions in a legal contract.
4. Attend pre-bid or pre-proposal conferences.
5. Use only the forms furnished. The Purchasing Agent will reject illegible or vague bids.
6. Double check all unit prices, price extensions and totals making sure they are correct. The bid will be accepted as written.
7. Make sure all mandatory documentation is submitted with the Bid, or RFP, as stated in the document.
8. If you have any questions concerning the bid specifications, or scope of work, or any part of the document you must submit your questions in writing to the Purchasing Agent. Questions will be answered in the form of a formal addendum which will become part of the bid package.
9. Keep a photocopy of the original bid for your records.
10. Submit your Bid or Proposal in a sealed envelope, clearly marked with your company name, the bid number and title and bid opening date.
11. Make sure your bid will arrive before the bid opening deadline. All late bids will be returned unopened with the date and time clearly marked on the envelope.
12. Remember that before a Bid or RFP opens you can always put a question in writing if you are unsure of a specification or would like clarification of an issue.



OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday (except holidays)

8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Phone: (518) 447-7140

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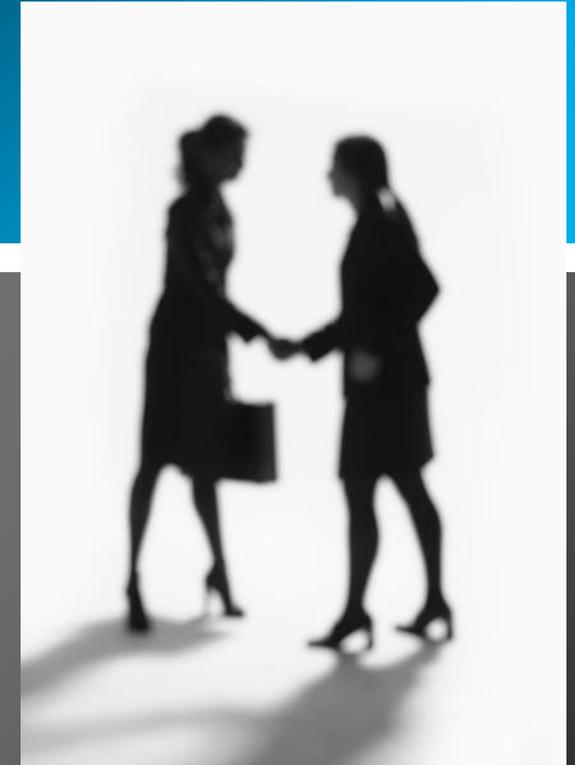
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Albany County does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, gender, age, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information, veteran status or marital status in its programs and activities.

HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH ALBANY COUNTY





DEAR VENDOR:

This is a brief introduction on how to do business with Albany County. The Albany County Purchasing Division conducts a centralized purchasing function and is constantly looking for suppliers of the varied goods and services we purchase. With over 30 different departments providing specialized services for our taxpayers, we purchase thousands of different products and services. We seek to maximize competition by constantly shopping, bidding or utilizing New York State or other local government contracts. We seek the most cost effective manner to purchase the goods and services for our taxpayers.

When trying to decide how to best spend public money, Albany County may take into account a range of factors:

- Quality and performance
- Value for money
- Balance of affordability and accessibility
- Partnership building with other levels of local government
- Environmental sustainability

METHODS OF PROCUREMENT

- Quotes
- Public Bids
- Request for Proposals
- New York State Contracts
- Cooperative Bidding
- Piggybacking from other local governments' contracts

QUOTES

Quotes do not need to be publicly advertised and Albany County's procurement policy dictates a minimum number of quotes to be obtained based on the dollar value of the purchase. Purchasing Division employees will usually contact suppliers directly to seek a quote when the need arises.

General Municipal Law 104 requires that Albany County develop their own set of rules for buying goods (under the bidding threshold) and professional services, called a Procurement Policy. This document contains other cost benchmarks.

For example, Albany County requires three separate quotes for commodity purchases between \$4,000 and \$19,999.99.

The purpose of this procurement policy is to:

- Ensure a standard process for purchasing across Albany County;
- Demonstrate to taxpayers that we are being careful spending their money;
- Ensure that Albany County is being ethical, transparent and truthful when purchasing;
- To get the best possible result across a range of factors, including best value.

PUBLIC BIDDING / REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Really, a public Bid/RFP is just a more formal quote process. There are more rules, and it needs to be publicly advertised in the Times Union and The Evangelist, but essentially, Albany County invites all interested suppliers to put a bid in to supply the goods or services needed.

How to bid or propose is clearly stated within the Bid or RFP documents that are prepared by Albany County. A Bid/RFP also clearly sets out what the County needs, per the Bid specifications or Scope of Work. To be successful, you must carefully address each specification or scope of work.

Albany County uses the Empire State Purchasing Group (ESPG) website (<http://www.empirestatebidsystem.com>) to distribute its Bids and RFPs. Potential suppliers can register their businesses to receive automatic notifications when new Bids/RFPs are released, by paying a small fee of \$89.99 a year, and view results on previously awarded bids as well. Businesses must register with the site in order to download a copy of the Bid or RFP. Please note that you do not have to pay for the automatic notification, however, it is then the responsibility of the vendor to watch the ESGP site for business opportunities. Currently there are 149 local governments participating in the site and registration, either paid or free, gets you access to all 149 local governments posted Bids/RFPs and quotes.

NEW YORK STATE CONTRACTS

Albany County is a political subdivision of the State of New York and is allowed to make purchases using State contracts as an exception to competitively bidding.

COOPERATIVE PROCUREMENTS

Various local governments may choose to cooperatively bid together to drive bulk discounts down using economies of scale. Cooperative procurements produce better prices by having just one bid for a number of local governments, thereby reducing administrative costs, saving time and money for taxpayers.

PIGGYBACKING FROM OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

New York State General Municipal Law 103 was amended to add a new Section 16 that authorizes the piggybacking of certain contracts. This will allow the use of contracts issued by all local governments within New York State and other governmental agencies outside of New York State (if the piggybacking language is included in the original bid).

ETHICAL STANDARDS

Albany County residents expect the highest levels of good governance and ethical standards from us. As a result, Albany County takes any suggestion of anti-competitive, collusive, dishonest or corrupt behavior very seriously. All suppliers to Albany County are expected to maintain the highest standards of behavior and avoid all conduct that does not promote fair competition and dealings. Anything that may be construed as an attempt to gain preferential treatment is strictly prohibited.

