



Rockdale County Public Schools
Model for Continuous Growth



**How to do Business
(RCPS)
Vendors' Guide
2020**

Purchasing Department
1062 North Street
Conyers, GA 30012
Tel (770) 860-4289
Fax (770) 918-6171
www.rockdaleschools.org

MISSION

The Purchasing Department operates under the Division of Financial Services and is the central procurement arm for Rockdale County Public Schools. Our mission is to provide best practices in the purchase of goods and services through fair competitive processes and support to each school and central office department. We do this in accordance with Board policies and state laws governing educational procurement.



ROCKDALE FACTS

Dear Vendor:

Welcome to the Rockdale County Public Schools (RCPS) Purchasing Department vendors' guide. You will find our purchasing operations are similar to those encountered in many other government organizations. Full and open competition is the foundation of our purchasing program and we abide by the policy and procedures mandated by the Rockdale County Board of Education and the appropriate State and Federal regulations and laws in all purchasing actions.

This guide is intended to provide an overview of how you can do business with Rockdale County Public Schools.

We look forward to establishing a mutually beneficial business relationship with your organization. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at (770) 860-4295 or use the e-mail capability to contact a staff member directly from our website.

Sincerely,

Marki Dixon
Purchasing Manager

Our mission:

To ensure student success for all through a world-class education with advanced opportunities and personalized support.

Our vision:

To be a world-class learning community where all student's graduate college or career ready in a progressive and interconnected society.

Number of Schools:

11 Elementary, 4 Middle, 3 High, 4 Non-Traditional Schools (including a Career Academy and STEM Magnet School), 1 Virtual Campus, and 14 Specialty and Choice Programs

Number of Students to Teacher Ratio –

Elementary 21:1

Middle 26:1

High 20:1

Number of Students: 16,500+

Operating Budget FY 2020: \$173,443,486.00

Our Beliefs at Rockdale County Public Schools

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We believe that:

- Students are at the core of all educational decision-making.
- Family is the most important factor in the development of the individual.
- A safe and orderly environment is essential to teaching and learning.
- Education is the most important asset in maximizing the opportunities of an individual and a community.
- Every person deserves a voice and is worthy of respect.
- All human beings have the capacity to learn.
- Every person deserves the opportunity to succeed.
- Each person is responsible for his or her own actions.
- Faith gives meaning and purpose to life.
- Diversity strengthens our community.

ROCKDALE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

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ROCKDALE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Mission & Goals

Mission: Our mission is to provide best practices in the purchase of goods and services through fair competitive processes and support to each school and central office department. We do this in accordance with Board policies and state laws governing educational procurement.

Goals: Our goal is to obtain the highest quality supplies, materials, services, and equipment at the lowest possible cost and in the shortest period of time from responsible vendors. This is accomplished through the issuance of Request for Quotations (RFQ), Invitation for Bids (IFB), and Request for Proposals (RFP), as well as local, federal, and State of Georgia contracts. Challenging goals have been established and progress is being measured to maximize mission performance. Our goals are:

Timeliness – We are committed to obtaining supplies and services for our schools and departments in the timeliest manner possible.

Quality – We are committed to obtaining quality goods and services that meet the needs of our customers.

Economy – We are committed to obtaining the best price, or in certain cases the “best value,” based on full and open competition.

User Friendly – We strive to make our purchasing system easy to use for both our customers and vendors.

Purpose of the Vendors’ Guide

The purpose of the vendors’ guide is to provide information to vendors that will make doing business with Rockdale County Public Schools Purchasing Department a positive and effective experience. While the guide does not encompass every detail of all regulations, policies and laws governing our purchasing practices, it does provide the basic principles of our procurement practices and methods.

Contact Us

Purchasing Department Bid Contact

The Purchasing Department - RCPS

Address: 1062 North Street
Conyers, GA 30012

Contact: Marki Dixon
Purchasing Manager

Phone: (770) 860-4289

Email: mdixon@rockdale.k12.ga.us

School Nutrition Bids Contact

The Nutrition Department – RCPS

Address: 954 N. Main Street
Conyers, GA 30012

Contact: Peggy Lawrence
Executive Director

Phone: (770) 860-4258

Email: plawrence@rockdale.k12.ga.us

Capital Improvement Bids Contact

The Facilities Department – RCPS

Address: 1062 North Street
Conyers, GA 30012

Contact: Bruce Stuart
Executive Director

Phone: (770)860-4215

Email: bstuart@rockdale.k12.ga.us

What We Buy

RCPS needs a wide variety of goods and services to support the educational requirements of our students. Some examples are:

Instructional Equipment, Materials and Supplies. Operations (facilities, nutrition, security and transportation) Maintenance, Repairs, Operations (MRO) Supplies Professional Services (financial, HR and instructional) Technology (hardware, software and services)

How We Buy

Purchase Cards:

Referred to as “P-Card.” Looks like and functions the same as a standard Visa card. Can be used for some contract items; most commonly small \$ items.

Purchase Orders (POs) Thresholds:

Purchases of **\$1,000 or less** shall be made based on best value and the least expense to the District.

Purchases from **\$1,001 to \$10,000** may be made at the school/department level provided two (2) written quotes are obtained and documentation of award justification is maintained by the school/department (purchaser) and available for periodic audit by the Chief Financial Officer (or designee).

Purchases from **\$10,001 to \$25,000** require three (3) written quotes secured by the school/department and approved by the Purchasing Department.

Purchases exceeding **\$25,000** and not already under contract- Require formal solicitation issued by the Purchasing Department.

The Solicitation Process

- A. **Formal Solicitation:** The solicitation will follow four basic formats:
- (1) **Invitation for Bid (IFB)** - Bids will be opened in public and award will be made to the lowest priced, responsible, responsive bidder.
 - (2) **Request for Proposals (RFP)** - Proposals are evaluated by a committee and award of a contract is based on “best value.” (See Appendix A for more detail on the RFP process)
 - (3) **Requests for Qualification (RFQ)** - Submittals are evaluated, usually by a committee and award of a contract is based on “best qualified”.
 - (4) **Requests for Quotes (RFQ)** - Quotes will be received an award will be made to the lowest priced, responsible, responsive quoter.
- B. **Notification of Solicitations:** - RCPS posts all Invitation for Bids, Request for Proposals, Request for Qualifications and addenda on our website www.rockdaleschools.org/departments/financial_services/purchasing where you can also register as a vendor by completing the vendor application. It is suggested that vendors monitor the website on a frequent basis. Vendors registered are notified by e-mail when a solicitation within their commodity group is posted.
- C. **Late Bids, Proposals, Quotes and Submittals:** Bids, proposals, quotes and submittals must be received by the time and date stated in the solicitation or they will not be accepted. No exception will be made to this policy.
- D. **Pre-Bid/Proposal Conference:** Pre-bid/proposal conferences are held to clarify specifications, answer vendor questions, and in some cases perform an on-site inspection.
- E. **Addenda:** Addenda may be required based on many factors, including but not limited to, written questions submitted, questions asked at pre-bid/proposal conferences or changes to the RCPS requirement. Changes to the solicitation will be made by addenda posted to the RCPS Purchasing Department Department’s website www.rockdaleschools.org/departments/financial_services/purchasing It is the vendor’s responsibility to monitor the site for addenda to solicitations for which they have an interest.

Registering for the RCPS Bidder's List

Vendor Application: Vendors desiring to provide goods or services to RCPS will be setup at the time RCPS will do business with a vendor.

Limited Commodities: Vendors are only permitted to sign up for ten commodities on their application for which they are sure to submit a bid, a proposal or a submittal. If RCPS' Purchasing Department does not receive a response (to include a written "no bid") for three consecutive solicitations, the vendor will be removed from the appropriate commodity on the Vendors List.

Changes to Vendor Status: Changes to the vendors' status, such as change of address, phone number, etc. should contact our accounts payable department.

Submitting Bids, Proposals, Quotes or Submittals

The specific solicitation will give specific instructions for submitting a bid, a proposal, a quote or a submittal. The following provides general guidance:

- A. **Bid Openings:** Public bid openings occur at 1062 North Street, Conyers, GA 30012-4480 per the date and time specified in the solicitation. Vendors are encouraged to attend; however, it is not mandatory.
- B. **Revision or Withdrawal of Bid:** A bid may be revised or withdrawn by the bidder prior to the bid opening date and with the permission of the RCPS Purchasing Manager. Requests to withdraw a bid, along with supporting documentation, shall be made in writing to the Purchasing Manager. After the bid opening, the RCPS Purchasing Manager will permit withdrawal only when the best interest of RCPS would be served. Generally, withdrawal will only be allowed in cases where there has been an honest mistake made in preparing the bid not resulting from negligence and the mistake is clearly ascertainable. If withdrawal is allowed, RCPS reserves the right to disqualify the withdrawing bidder from bidding on RCPS solicitations up to one year.
- C. **Schedules (Bid, Proposal, Quote & Qualification):** All prices and related correspondence shall be submitted on the Solicitation Schedule furnished by the RCPS Purchasing Department or attached to said schedule or on a facsimile of such containing information required by solicitation documents. Extra copies of the solicitation documents are available in the Purchasing Department

All documents shall be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to the Purchasing Manager, Attention: Marki Dixon, 1062 North Street, Conyers, Georgia, 30012 plainly marked on the envelope as a bid (nomenclature, date, time of opening/submission, and the solicitation number) for the work as set forth in the solicitation.

D. Examination of Solicitation Documents: Bidders are notified that they must thoroughly examine solicitation documents which may include: Cover Sheet, Table of Contents, Advertisement, Bid Conditions, Additional Conditions, Specification, Bid Schedule, Drawings, General Conditions, and Technical Specifications together with Addenda thereto issued prior to the receipt of solicitation.

E. Compliance with Laws: All property or services furnished shall comply with all applicable Federal, State and Local laws, codes and regulations.

F. Protests: Protests dealing with the specification or the solicitation shall be filed not later than three (3) working days prior to proposal opening date. Other protests shall be filed not later than three (3) working days after proposal opening date, or if the protest is based on subsequent action of RCPS, not later than three (3) working days after the aggrieved person knows or should have knowledge of the facts given rise to the protest. Protests are considered filed when received by the Purchasing Manager. Protests which are not filed in a timely manner, as set forth above will not be considered. Contractor agrees to pay for the School District's reasonable attorney's fee and expenses of litigation for any protest arising out of this solicitation in which the School District is a prevailing party. Only Contractors who participated in the solicitation are eligible to protest.

G. Purchasing Policy: The RCPS Purchasing Policy, Purchasing Procedures and Regulations are incorporated into all RCPS solicitations by reference. By acceptance of a RCPS solicitation, a bidder, potential bidder or contractor agrees to be bound by the RCPS Purchasing Policy and Purchasing Regulations in any issue or action related to the solicitation or subsequent contract resulting from the solicitations.

H. Vendors Qualifications: RCPS, before Contract Award, may require potential vendors to document that they are "responsible" to the complete satisfaction of RCPS. They may be required to show they have the necessary facilities, technical abilities and financial resources to execute the work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified, that they have had experience in work of a similar nature, and that they have past history and references to verify their qualifications for executing the work. RCPS has the absolute right to determine vendor responsibility and responsiveness to any solicitation issued.

I. Tie Bids: In the purchase of supplies or services by RCPS, prices and quality being equal, the tie will be resolved by any Georgia made goods, which are documented and verified. If the foregoing does not resolve the tie, then a coin toss in a public forum will be used.

J. Rejection of a Bid: Failure to observe these instructions and conditions will constitute grounds for rejection of a bid or removal from the list of bidders.

Bids will be rejected if:

- 1) The bidder's acceptance period is less than required acceptance period in the solicitation.
- 2) The bidder fails to submit requested samples within the time specified by RCPS.
- 3) The bid contains a minimum order/ship quantity or dollar value (unless called for in the solicitation).
- 4) The bid contains a prepayment and/or progress payment requirement (unless called for in the solicitation).
- 5) The bid fails to include all appropriate elements of all addenda issued to the solicitation.

- 6) The bid contains terms and conditions, which conflict with the solicitation or RCPS regulations, or that otherwise, may be construed as qualifying the bid.
- 7) The bid does not meet the terms and conditions of this solicitation or Imposes terms and conditions not acceptable to RCPS.

K. Additional Terms: RCPS shall not be bound by any terms and conditions included in any bidder's packaging, service catalog, brochure, technical data sheet or other document which attempts to impose any conditions at variance with or in addition to the terms and conditions contained in the solicitation, the RCPS purchase order related to the solicitation or contract.

L. Taxes: RCPS is exempt from all state sales tax and Federal Excise Tax. These taxes shall not be included in bids.

M. Charges and Extras: Bids are to be firm net prices, F.O.B. destination to include all charges for delivery, unloading, placing in our buildings as directed by the authorities in the buildings, drayage, express, parcel post, packing, cartage, insurance, license fees, permits, costs of bonds and any other cost.

N. Solicitation Questions: If a contractor contemplates bidding and is in doubt as to the meaning of any part of these documents, he may request an interpretation. This should be submitted in writing and addressed to the Purchasing Department, RCPS at 1062 North Street, Conyers, Georgia, 30012.

O. Addenda: No oral interpretations will be made as to the meaning of any part of the solicitation documents. Interpretations will be made by addenda only. RCPS will not be responsible for any interpretations or explanations.

P. Reject and Waive: The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and waive technicalities and informalities. The judgment of RCPS on such matters shall be final.

Q. Insurance: The solicitation may require insurance. Proof of Insurance will be required prior to contract award. To be acceptable, Insurance shall be issued by a surety company licensed by, and in good standing with, the Commissioner of Insurance of the State of Georgia, to do business as an insurance company in the State of Georgia. The insurance company shall have an A.M. Best rating of not less than A and an A.M. Best financial size category of not less than Class VII. Types of insurance required will be listed in the specific solicitation.

R. Bonds: The solicitation may require bonding. If bid bonds are required, they must accompany the vendor's bid, or the vendor will be declared non-responsive. If payment, performance or other bonding is required, proof of bonds shall be furnished prior to contract award. To be acceptable, bonds will be issued by a surety company licensed by and in good standing with, the Commissioner of Insurance of the State of Georgia, to do business as an insurance company in the State of Georgia. The insurance company shall have an A.M. Best rating of not less than A and an A.M. Best financial size category of not less than Class VII. Bonding requirements will be in the specific solicitation.

S. **Options:** Often solicitations contain provisions for options. Failure on the vendor's part to fulfill obligations under the options clause contained in the appropriate solicitation will be viewed as a breach of contract. The contract will be terminated in whole or in part, at the discretion of RCPS, and the vendor will be liable for any increase in cost incurred by RCPS to secure the goods or services that were required by the contract. This obligation may be satisfied from funds owed to the vendor that become obligations of RCPS to the vendor, or by some manner of payment from the contractor to RCPS that is satisfactory to RCPS.

T. **Termination for Default:**

1) In the event any property or service to be furnished by the contractor under a contract or purchase order should for any reason not conform to the specifications contained herein or to the sample submitted by the vendor with the bid, the RCPS may reject the property or service and may terminate the contract for default.

Prior to a termination for default, a contractor will be given the opportunity to respond to a "cure" notice "and/or a show cause notice". In either case, the contractor will be expected to either correct the offending situation or provide an acceptable plan and time frame for correction within five days of receipt of either notice. Failure to do so will be cause for termination.

In such event, with specific instructions by the Purchasing Department, the contractor shall immediately remove the property without expense to RCPS and replace all rejected property with such property or services conforming to the specifications or samples.

2) If the contract is terminated for default, RCPS may procure such property or services from another source and shall have the absolute right to deduct from any monies due the contractor or that may thereafter become due to the contractor, the difference between the contract price and the actual cost of the property or service to be replaced or substituted. Price paid by the RCPS in such event shall be the prevailing market price at the time the substitute purchase is made.

3) Failure by a contractor to perform on delivery of goods or Services as specified may also result in the removal of the contractor from doing business with RCPS for a period of up to one year.

U. **Termination for Convenience:** RCPS reserves the right to terminate for convenience, at any time for any reason with no penalty, any contract awarded through this solicitation by providing the Contractor with thirty (30) days written notice.

V. **Delivery:** Time of delivery is a part of the solicitation and an element of the contract that is to be awarded. If the offeror cannot meet the required delivery date, a proposal should not be submitted. Offerors may provide alternative schedules and/or delivery dates in their proposals. Time shall be stated in "calendar" days. Failure to deliver in accordance with the contract awarded could result in the contractor being declared in default.

Types of Contracts

In general, there are two types of contracts used by the Purchasing Department at RCPS. The contract types are as follows:

Purchase Order: A one-time fixed price transaction.

Standard Contract: Provides for purchase of actual needs of supplies and services for a specific period. Terms, conditions and pricing are set based on RCPS estimates of need.

Appendix A

The Request for Proposal

Process

Request for Proposal Process

NOTES

In using the Request for Proposal (RFP) this method for solicitation we are asking the marketplace for its best effort in seeking a “best value” solution to our requirement. The offeror providing proposals will be evaluated by an evaluation committee. Offerors should make their best effort to satisfy the requirement at their best price because a contract may be awarded based on the initial evaluation. Often, however, it will be necessary to hold discussions with offerors about their proposals. This will be done after the initial evaluation. The results of the evaluation will be reviewed and a “competitive range” will be selected for discussions. Essentially, if a contractor’s proposal is not evaluated as having a chance for contract award because of the content of the proposal and/or the price, the proposal will be dropped from the competitive range to save time and money for both the contractor and Rockdale County Public Schools.

Offerors in the “competitive range” will be notified of the weaknesses in their proposals and given an opportunity, in discussions, to assure they understand the weaknesses. At the end of discussions with all offerors, Best and Final Offers (BAFOs) will be accepted from the offerors in the competitive range.

The BAFOs will be evaluated and the results reported to a selection official who will select the proposal that presents the best value to Rockdale County Public Schools. This selection will then be presented to the Rockdale County Board of Education for approval. If approved by the Board and other matters (insurance, bonds, etc.) are settled, a contract will be awarded.