

VENDOR GUIDE

Doing Business With Haywood County

Introduction

The purpose of this Vendor Guide is to acquaint prospective bidders and suppliers with the purchasing policies and procedures used by Haywood County. The County intends that its purchasing be conducted in accordance with State laws so that the taxpayer receives full value for each dollar of public funds spent. To that end, the County's procedures conform to open, ethical and sound procurement policies.

Qualified suppliers are invited to compete for the County's business, which consists of a variety of goods and services. This guide is intended to provide information about the necessary steps in doing business with Haywood County - including the bidding, award and payment processes. Please refer any questions you may have to the Haywood County Purchasing Manager at (828) 356-2612. See also the Haywood County Procurement Process Overview located on the county website.

Bid Opportunities

Notice to Bidders: It is the responsibility of all potential bidders to check the Bid Notices regularly and obtain all addenda that may be issued to bid specifications. Haywood County is not responsible for direct distribution of addenda posted on the website to all vendors who desire to submit a proposal. Acknowledgement of addenda shall be made on the bid form.

Pursuant to the North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS), proposals (sealed for formal bids) for any items or projects are invited and will be received by Haywood County until the Bid Opening date and time as listed. Per NCGS 87-15, prospective bidders on construction contracts must be properly licensed. Haywood County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. Bidders must comply with nondiscrimination provisions. The County is an equal opportunity agency and invites small and minority contractors to bid.

Purchasing Procedures

Communication with Vendors in Quotation/Bid Process: In order to achieve fair and equitable competition and to maintain the integrity of the purchasing process, vendor discussions with County personnel concerning a bid/quote request should be coordinated through the Purchasing Manager.

Document Solicitation

Request for Proposal (RFP): A Request for Proposal may be used in establishing contracts, which seek creativity or different ways of accomplishing a task. The RFP may be handled in the same manner as an Invitation for Bid, or it may be a two-step procurement process.

If the two-step procurement process is used, separate sealed technical and cost responses are requested; however, the cost response is opened only if the technical response is accepted. As with IFBs, responses to RFPs must be in writing and must be delivered "sealed" to the Purchasing Office. Faxed proposals are not acceptable.

Request for Quotation (RFQ): A Request for Quotation may be in the form of an emailed, written or faxed request.

Gifts and Favors from Vendors

North Carolina General Statute 133-32 addresses the legal implications of governmental employees accepting gifts and favors from vendors. Briefly summarized, this statute states it is unlawful for any vendor who has a current contract with a governmental agency, has performed under such a contract within the past year, or anticipates bidding on such a contract in the future to give gifts or favors to any employee of a governmental agency who is charged with preparing plans, specifications, or estimates for public contracts, awarding or administering such contracts, or inspecting or supervising construction. It is also unlawful for a governmental employee to willfully receive or accept such gifts or favors.

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Marketing Vendor Products and Services

Contacting Purchasing/Vendor Requirements: Prospective suppliers/contractors/vendors are encouraged to send a catalog, line card or other listing of products or services offered. All bidders and vendors for Haywood County are required to submit **an IRS W9**, located on the Haywood County website at www.haywoodnc.net.

All information should be sent to:

Donna Corpening, Purchasing Manager
Haywood County Finance Department
215 N Main Street
Waynesville NC 28786
Phone (828) 356-2612
Fax (828) 452-6725
donna.corpening@haywoodcounty.gov

If a vendor feels the need to make personal contact with the Purchasing Manager, appointments are required. Sales contacts with the Purchasing Manager are normally scheduled on Thursday or Friday.

Marketing to Individual Departments: Since County departments have authority to purchase certain items, vendors may want to consider marketing some products directly on the departmental level.

Additionally, since departments are instrumental in prescribing the specifications for the equipment/supplies they require, marketing contacts are recognized as a necessary part of educating users on the capabilities and varieties of products in the marketplace.

Responding to IFBs/RFPs

The Invitation for Bid or Request for Proposal provides all the necessary instructions and a complete description of the requirement with specifications and terms and conditions to enable the preparation of a bid.

Responsibility of Bidders: Prospective suppliers should be financially sound and able to perform fully according to the specifications, delivery requirements, services and other stipulations contained in the IFB/RFP at the price(s) bid. In cases where the contractor refuses to comply with the resultant contract, the County reserves the right to purchase on the open market and charge the contractor any excess costs incurred.

Bid Requirements: Each responding vendor is responsible for carefully reading the IFB/RFP and understanding its contents. Vendors who have previously submitted bids for the same commodity or service should not presume that the specifications, terms and conditions are necessarily the same. There may be slight differences that would only be realized after carefully reading the entire bid document. Any questions related to the bid should be directed to the Purchasing Manager.

Some standard requirements include the following:

Bid Delivery: Bids will be received at the address cited in the IFB/RFP on or before the date and exact time specified. The bid will not be considered for evaluation if delivered after this time. It is the vendor's responsibility to make sure that the bid is submitted on time and to the proper location.

Invitation for Bid (IFB): The Invitation for Bid is generally used in establishing contracts for equipment, materials and supplies \$90,000.00 and above. Responses must be in writing and must be delivered "sealed" to the Finance Office. Faxed bid documents are not acceptable.

Signature: All solicitation documents must be properly signed and executed in the designated place(s). Signature in ink is a requirement in properly executing the bid. Failure to properly execute a bid will result in that bid not being considered for award.

Changes to Bids Before Opening: Any price corrections on bids should be individually initialed in ink. Price corrections may only be made on a bid withdrawn prior to opening. In order to make corrections or withdraw a bid, proper identification must be presented.

Additional Information: For those bids requiring price lists, product literature or other information, such material must be provided in accordance with the instructions outlined in the IFB/RFP.

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Conferences/Site Inspections: Such requirements are intended to supply vendors with valuable information or visual inspection, which can help to ensure completeness and accuracy of all bids.

Terms and Conditions: All solicitation documents are subject to the specified terms and conditions. Please read these terms and conditions carefully. The bidder specifically agrees to terms and conditions specified in the IFB/RFP by signing the "execution" page.

Bid Bonds and Deposits: Formal bids or proposals will not be considered or accepted unless accompanied by a deposit of equal to no less than 5 percent of the proposal amount. The bid deposit may take the form of cash, cashier's check, certified check or a bid bond by a surety licensed in North Carolina and must be included in the bid. The deposit will be retained if the successful bidder fails to execute the contract within the specified number of days after the award. Bid deposits of unsuccessful bidders will be returned following an award of the specific contract.

Questions about the IFB/RFP: If you have any questions prior to submitting a bid, contact the Purchasing Manager. Once the bid opening has occurred, no changes by the vendor will be permitted unless through County originated negotiation.

Bid Evaluation, Award, Performance and Payment

Bid Opening: Responses to Invitations for Bid and Requests for Proposal are opened and the names of the bidders, manufacturers and catalog number(s) of the item(s) they have offered, prices, delivery and payment terms they have submitted become public record.

Evaluation: During the period of evaluation and prior to award, possession of bids and accompanying information is limited to County personnel involved in the evaluation process. At the discretion of the Purchasing Manager, vendors may be contacted where clarification of a proposal is necessary for proper evaluation; however, in doing so, no improvement in a bidder's competitive position is permissible. Being the "low bidder" does not necessarily mean that an award will be made to that vendor. The purpose of the evaluation process is to determine the "best buy" for the County. Some factors considered in addition to price are: quality, adherence to specifications, delivery, service, warranty and other factors depending on the intended use of the commodity or service required.

Award: After completion of the evaluation process, recommendations for award for purchases bid through the formal bidding procedures are presented to the Haywood County Board of Commissioners for award. Awards for purchases valued at less than the amounts under formal procedures are made by the Purchasing Manager or Department Head, and purchase orders/contracts are generally issued immediately.

Purchase Order and Shipment: A purchase order will be issued to the winning vendor. Shipment of goods should not be made until receipt of the official Haywood County purchase order, which gives shipping and billing instructions. All deliveries should be F.O.B. destination, vendor expense.

Invoicing and Payment: All invoices should be submitted in accordance with the "bill to" instructions included on the purchase order. Applicable sales and use tax should be added to the invoices as a separate line item. Payment terms are normally "net 30 days".

Complaint to Vendor: County departments are encouraged to directly contact the vendor in an effort to resolve any dissatisfaction with product, warranty or service performance. When problems are not resolved to the user's satisfaction, the department contacts the Purchasing Manager. The Purchasing Manager then contacts the vendor immediately to resolve the complaint. Vendors who do not act responsibly to quickly resolve legitimate complaints may be removed from contracts and/or prohibited from bidding on future contracts with Haywood County.

Procedure for Filing Protests: Vendor protests regarding contract awards should be addressed to the Purchasing Manager as soon as possible. All protests must be submitted in writing.