

College Procedure: 730.5 – Competitive Bidding

Policy Reference: 730 – Purchasing
Responsible Department: Finance
Approval Authority: Cabinet
Procedure Owner: Vice President, Finance
Effective Date: 10/18/2019

Version Number: 3
Legal Counsel Reviewed (yes/no): No
Scope: College-wide

Reason for Procedure

A Request for Proposal (RFP) and Request for Quotation (RFQ) are used to solicit bids from qualified vendors and identify which vendor might be the best qualified to complete the project. For non-construction purchases RFPs and RFQs are not legally required but may be used by the initiator of the purchase when soliciting bids is deemed to be advantageous to the college.

Quotes/Bids/Requests for Proposal (RFPs)/Requests for Quotation (RFQs)

When quotes/bids/RFPs/RFQs are pursued, each vendor contacted will receive complete specifications and requirements. In certain circumstances, information is obtained online through vendor websites or online price comparison sites. Specifications and requirements will be submitted consistently to ensure valid vendor comparisons.

In some circumstances, vendors and contractors might have existing State of Iowa Master Agreements (MA). This is a competitive statewide contract that establishes pre-negotiated pricing, terms, and conditions for commonly purchased goods and services. These agreements allow for state agencies, local governments, and educational institutions to make purchases directly from approved vendors without conducting their own competitive bidding process, provided the agreement falls within the scope and spending limits of the agreement. Check State of Iowa MA website for more information.

In limited circumstances, it may be determined that the specifications of services or goods/equipment required can only be provided by one vendor (i.e. availability, specialty services, government contract utilization). Expectations with regard to fair pricing and quality of work remain intact for the qualified vendor.

- For costly and/or complex purchases, especially when there are a variety of factors you need to evaluate and consider when selecting the right vendor and solution.
- When the request requires technical expertise, specialized capability, or where the product or service being requested does not yet exist, and the proposal may require research and development to create whatever is being requested.
- When re-bidding a good or service that has not been bid for five years or more.

The Procedure

The RFQ for purchases between \$100,000 and less than \$200,000:

- A good faith effort to get quotations from at least two contractors regularly engaged in the work before awarding a contract.
- Notify all contractors who have requested notice of projects.
- Quotations should be based on a description of the work provided by the college, plans and specifications, if required, and an opportunity to inspect the work site.
- Quotations must include prices for labor, materials, equipment, and supplies.
- If no quotations are received after a good faith effort, the governmental entity may negotiate a contract with a qualified contractor.
- The purchase decision will be made based on all factors. If all other factors are equal, the lowest RFQ may be awarded the purchase.
- Sole sourcing of materials and services require additional justification
- All quotations can be rejected.

The Bid, Quote, or RFP for non-construction purchases over \$200,000:

- Informs vendors that the organization is looking to procure goods or services and encourages them to make their best effort.
- Requires the College to specify what it proposes to purchase.
- Alerts vendors that the selection process is competitive.
- Allows for wide distribution and response.
- Ensures that vendors respond factually to the identified requirements.
- Is generally expected to follow a structured evaluation and selection procedure, so that an organization can demonstrate impartiality - a crucial factor in public sector procurements.
- If RFP is required by law, contract terms, or advantageous to the College, the following additional measures are necessary:
 - Purchase request must be approved by the Board of Trustees before issuing the notice to bidders.
 - Once approved by the Board, a notice to bidders must be published within 10 business days in a newspaper of general circulation.
 - Sealed bids are required and will be reviewed on the published due date and at a location open to the public.
 - The purchase decision will be made based on all factors. If all other factors are equal, the lowest RFP will be awarded the purchase.

- Once the selection is made, the purchase is authorized and a purchase order may be generated. Board approval of the selection is not necessary prior to the purchase order being issued.
- The Board will be advised of the result of the bids and winning vendor at the next board meeting following the selection of the winner.
- To begin the RFP process and receive more in depth step by step instructions please contact rfp@kirkwood.edu.

Chapter 26 Public Improvements over \$200,000

- Applies to **construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, or improvement of buildings or structures** paid for wholly or partly with public funds.
- Public notice must be published via newspaper and college website.
- Sealed Public bids are required.
- Award must go to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder.
- The governing board may reject any or all bids.
- All actions must be approved and recorded in official minutes by the Board of Trustees.
- Dividing public improvement into separate parts to avoid the competitive bid threshold is prohibited.

Self-performance is allowed but needs to stay below the \$200,000 threshold cannot be used to avoid bidding. The total combination of self-performance and contracted services determines bidding requirements.

References

- RFP PROCESS
- RFP SEALED BID FORM
- RFP NON-SEALED BID FORM

Revision Log

Table 1 Revision Log

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved by	Description of Change
1	10/22/2019	Cabinet	New procedure
2	10/13/2020	Cabinet	Procedures updated re: Purchases \$100,000 or greater

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved by	Description of Change
3	04/07/2026	Cabinet	Update of bidding language and purchase thresholds.