

HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH FORSYTH COUNTY



www.forsythco.com

ABOUT FORSYTH COUNTY

The Forsyth County Procurement Department is excited to introduce the "Vendor Manual: How to Do Business with Forsyth County." We believe this Manual will assist you in establishing a successful and long-term business relationship with us.



Forsyth County has consistently remained one of the fastest-growing counties in the nation. As we continue to expand, handling a diverse range of commodities and services, it is important for us to maintain a roster of vendors who can meet the demands of our rapidly growing county.

Our goal is to conduct procurement activities with the highest standards of professionalism, ensuring impartiality and fairness while achieving the best value for goods and services at the lowest cost. We invite you to join us in our commitment to excellence as we strive to provide the quality service our citizens deserve.

We value the dedication you have shown in the past and look forward to navigating the challenges of our growth and budget constraints together. Thank you for your interest in doing business with Forsyth County.



****NON-BINDING NATURE OF THE PUBLICATION****

This publication is intended solely to offer general information for those interested in conducting procurement business with Forsyth County. All procurement activities are governed by the relevant laws of the State of Georgia, Forsyth County Ordinances, and other applicable rules and regulations.

Please note that this publication does not carry the force of law, rules, or regulations and should not be relied upon by Vendors or Bidders when making decisions or determining their conduct.



FORSYTH COUNTY VENDOR MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

Conducting business with the government can be highly rewarding, but without a clear understanding of how a particular agency operates, it can also seem challenging. Working with a governmental agency differs somewhat from engaging with the private sector.

This Manual is designed to help you, the Vendor, navigate the process of doing business with Forsyth County effectively. It includes information on what to expect from the County, what the County expects from Vendors and Bidders, and the essential steps for working with the County.



The contents of this Manual are intended to guide potential Vendors and Bidders in their efforts to offer products and services to Forsyth County.



“Vendor” is defined as anyone who has entered their info into the Vendor Self-Service portal.



“Bidder” is defined as someone who has prepared a bid, proposal, or quote in response to a solicitation from Forsyth County.

BASIC METHODS OF PROCUREMENT

1 COMPETITIVE SEALED BID

This procurement method applies when the cost of goods and services is \$50,000 or more, with a clear and defined scope available and cost being the primary factor for award. The final approval for awards of \$50,000 or greater is granted by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners.

2 COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSAL

This procurement method is used for acquiring goods and services costing \$50,000 or more when competitive sealed bids are not practical or advantageous. It is commonly applied to procurements such as professional services, service contracts, and highly technical equipment. Additionally, competitive sealed proposals may be used for purchases under \$50,000. A Review Committee will assess these proposals based on specific criteria. For purchases of \$50,000 or more, final approval is granted by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners.

3 WRITTEN QUOTATION

This procurement method is used for acquiring goods and services valued between \$10,000 and \$50,000. Quotations are solicited informally without the need for formal advertising. Although most quotes are posted on the County website or online solicitation platform (Bonfire), documentation is collected from the Vendor via Bonfire or email delivery to the Procurement Department. The final approval for the award is made by the Forsyth County Procurement Department.

4 TELEPHONE AND EMAIL QUOTATIONS

This procurement method is used for purchasing goods and services ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000. Quotations are solicited informally via telephone or email by the Forsyth County Procurement Department. The final approval for the award is made by the Forsyth County Procurement Department.

5 PURCHASES FROM \$0 TO \$2,500

For purchases not exceeding \$2,500, the Procurement staff will use their best judgment to determine the source and the number of pre-purchase estimates required before finalizing the purchase.



PROCUREMENT AND VENDOR RELATIONS

MEETINGS

Vendors are encouraged to schedule meetings with members of the Procurement Department for legitimate reasons. However, appointments should be made in advance with the appropriate staff member. During peak periods, it may not be possible for Procurement staff to meet with Vendors, or meeting times may be limited. Nonetheless, information such as catalogs, line cards, and new product details is always appreciated and welcomed.

REQUESTED EVALUATIONS /CONSULTATIONS

Occasionally, Vendors may be asked to provide information before an official request for purchase or solicitation is issued. It is important to understand that performing this initial work does not guarantee that the Vendor will be awarded the contract. Dollar thresholds may necessitate that the commodity or service be bid or quoted, resulting in an award to the lowest responsive and responsible Bidder, regardless of which Vendor/Bidder provided the initial evaluation or consulting. If the initial evaluation or consulting services are substantial enough to warrant monetary compensation, the Vendor must receive a purchase order for the work before beginning any tasks.

GRATUITIES

The Procurement Department policy is to decline any gifts from Vendors, regardless of their value.



HOW TO BE A PART OF FORSYTH COUNTY VENDOR/BIDDER'S SYSTEM



To participate in Forsyth County solicitations, vendors and interested parties should first register through the Vendor Self-Service (VSS) Portal. Access the VSS Portal by visiting the Forsyth County webpage at <https://www.forsythco.com/Departments-Offices/Procurement> and selecting the Vendor Self-Service Portal link. Once on the VSS Portal, you'll find detailed, step-by-step instructions to guide you through the registration process. The Vendor Self-Service Portal offers a convenient way for vendors to register with Forsyth County.



All formal solicitations are managed through Bonfire, our online solicitation platform. Vendors can bid on our projects at no cost.



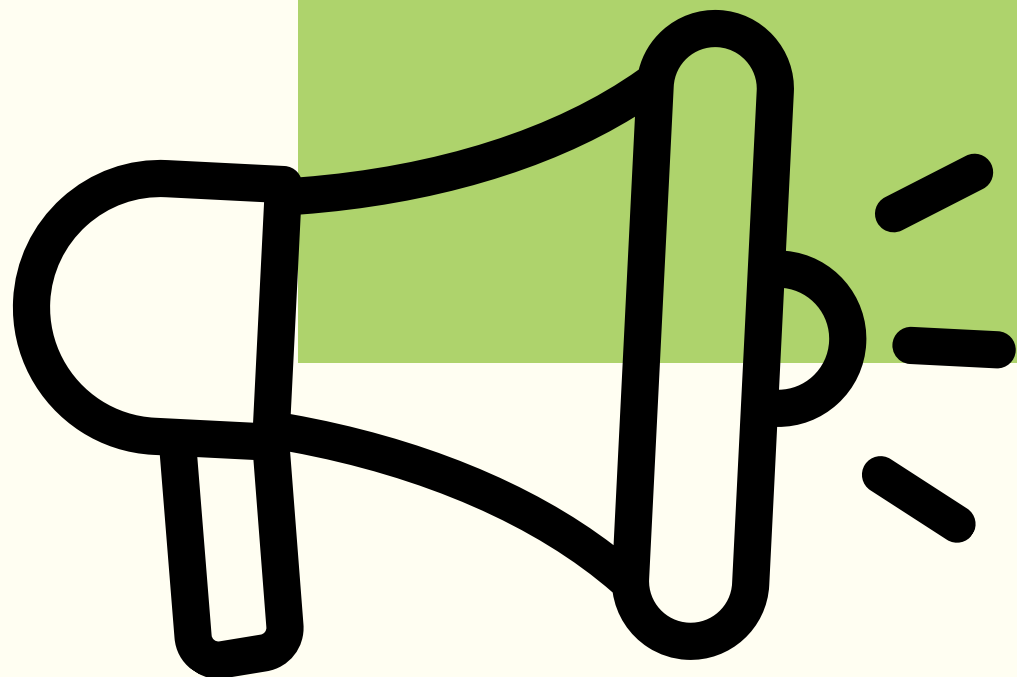
Please note that all vendors are required to have a valid business license. If your primary operations are based in Forsyth County, you must obtain a Forsyth County Business License. Ensure that you specify the commodities and/or services your firm provides.

HOW BIDS/PROPOSALS/QUOTES (“SOLICITATIONS”) ARE ADVERTISED

Vendors are urged to review the various methods of advertisements, listed below, that the County uses in the solicitation process.

Forsyth County Web Page – Solicitations are posted on the Forsyth County webpage. It is the Vendor’s responsibility to check the webpage for current opportunities

Newspapers and Other Publications Advertising – Solicitations for projects, commodity purchases or services which are defined under State of Georgia law as public works projects, or services in conjunction with public works projects, with a cost of \$100,000 or more require public advertising in a legal organ, which currently is the Forsyth County News and Georgia Procurement Registry.



“PRE” BID AND “PRE” PROPOSAL CONFERENCES



Certain solicitations may require a "Pre-Bid" or "Pre-Proposal" conference to clarify specifications, address Bidder questions about specific requirements, or permit on-site reviews and inspections. Any modifications to the original Bid, Quotation, or Proposal resulting from these conferences will be issued in writing as an addendum and posted within Bonfire. It is the Bidder's responsibility to obtain all issued Addenda.



Additionally, if Bidders have any further questions or require additional information about a specific procurement, they should send their inquiries via Bonfire. Responses to relevant questions will be provided in the form of an addendum.

BONDING AND INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

BID BONDS

For Construction/Public Works projects where the cost is \$100,000 or greater, a 5% bid bond is required. Other County projects may also require bid bonds; if so, this requirement will be listed in the Advertisement.



Bonding may also be required for purchases when deemed necessary by Forsyth County. Any bonding requirements will be specifically stated in the Advertisement.

PERFORMANCE BOND

Performance bonds are required as follows: Roads projects where the cost is \$5,000 or greater; Public works projects where the cost is \$100,000 or greater; Bonding will be listed in the Advertisement Requirements. The amount of the bond is 100% of the project cost.



The insurance and bonding company must be licensed to do business by the State of Georgia Secretary of State, authorized to do business in Georgia by the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner, listed in the Department of Treasury's Publication of Companies holding Certificates of Authority as Acceptable Surety of Federal Bonds, and as acceptable reinsuring companies.

PAYMENT BONDS

All projects require a payment bond in the amount of 100% of the project. Road projects where the cost is \$5,000 or greater, require a payment bond in the amount of 100% of the project. Bonding requirements will be listed in the advertisement.



HOW TO SUBMIT A BID, PROPOSAL OR WRITTEN QUOTATION

1

Follow the instructions set forth in the Bid, Proposal, or Written Quotation.

2

Any questions regarding the formal solicitation shall be directed in writing via Bonfire or if informal to the individual named in the solicitation from the Procurement Department.

3

In order to submit a Bid, Proposal, or written Quotation, the Bidder must be responsive to all requirements set forth in the solicitation documents and be responsible (capable) with respect to the fulfillment of all aspects of the contract, if awarded.

4

Forsyth County reserves the right to make an award determined to be in its best interest which could include splitting a multi-item Bid between individual low Bids if doing so would result in significant savings. Therefore, if the Bidder is submitting prices, which are based on receiving all items, or a specific portion of items, that Bidder must clearly mark their Bid as such. A word of caution, when submitting a response to a solicitation with changes or clarifications, it may result in the Bid, Proposal or a written Quotation being disqualified.

5

Each Bidder shall certify in writing that such Bidder has not engaged in any collusive or anti-competitive practices in responding to a solicitation. A declaration of non-collusion is simply a statement made by the Bidder that states the Bid submitted is a bona fide bid that has been prepared independently of other Bidders, and is in all respects, fair and without collusion or fraud (i.e., price fixing, bid rigging, rotation of award).

6

Current federal programs as well as Georgia State law, require that each Bidder submit an E-Verify (“EEV / Basic Pilot Program”) Contractor Affidavit when the firm will be providing a service at or exceeding \$2,500. Failure to submit the completed Affidavit may result in rejection of Bidder’s response to the County’s solicitation.

Documents must be submitted via Bonfire for formal solicitations. Forsyth County will not accept paper Bids, or Proposals.

HOW BIDS AND PROPOSALS ARE OPENED

All sealed Bids, Proposals, and Written Quotations, shall be opened publicly, in the presence of one or more witnesses, on the date and at the time and place specified in the Bid/Proposal/Quote documents. Bidders and interested parties are invited to attend the public opening.

During the opening of Bids, the following information shall be read aloud: The name of each Bidder submitting a sealed Bid; total Bid price; and any other relevant information. If a Bid Bond is required, it will be stated that it has been provided. If a Bid Bond is not included when required, the bid will not be read. At this time, all Bids and sealed Written Quotations are considered open records

During the opening of Proposals, only the name of each company submitting a Proposal shall be announced. No other information will be disclosed, nor shall the Proposal be considered an open record until the Board of Commissioners approves the Proposal award and a contract is signed. Once the Bid, sealed written Quotation, or Proposal is opened, the Requesting Department and Procurement Department will evaluate and make recommendations.



LATE BIDS, WITHDRAWALS, AND CORRECTIONS TO BIDS



LATE BID

Bids, Proposals, or sealed written Quotations will not be accepted.



WITHDRAWALS

A Bidder wishing to withdraw their Bid prior to the Bid opening may do so via Bonfire. A Bidder wishing to withdraw after the Bids have been opened will be required to submit a letter requesting to withdraw along with documented facts supporting the reason for withdrawal within 24 hours of Bid opening.



MODIFICATION/CORRECTION OF BIDS

If an obvious clerical error is discovered after the Bid has been opened, the Bidder may contact the Procurement Department requesting that the error be corrected; said request to be made within 24 hours of Bid opening. Final determination as to whether an error is clerical rests with the Procurement Department. Generally, modification to opened Bids, or sealed written Quotations, for reasons other than obvious clerical errors is not permitted.

HOW BIDS AND PROPOSALS ARE EVALUATED

The Procurement Department will carefully review all Bids, Proposals, and Quotes, including any Bonding Requirements and any changes or clarifications noted in the submissions. For amounts exceeding \$50,000, the item will be presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval. A recommendation will be made for the lowest responsive and responsible Bidder. "Responsive" means the Bidder meets all the required specifications in the solicitation, while "responsible" refers to the Bidder's capability to fulfill the contract as outlined.



Bids received from two or more Bidders, which are identical in price, delivery and meet the requirements of the bid specifications, shall first be awarded to a Local Business (if allowed by law) or, in the case of two (2) local businesses or no local businesses, by the toss of a coin.



A member of the Procurement Department shall break the tie with a single coin toss held in a public session. The Bidders involved will be invited to attend the coin toss at a stated date, time and place. One or more witnesses from the Procurement Department and the Requesting Department may be present. A single coin toss (called by the company listed first in the alphabet) will break the tie and decide the award.

RESPONSIBILITY OF BIDDERS

An apparent low Bidder may not be recommended for award of a bid or contract if they are found to be non-responsible. Written documentation shall be prepared setting forth the reasons for non responsibility.

The following are some reasons that a Bidder may be deemed non-responsible:

Previous Bidder performance as documented in the files maintained in the Procurement Department (e.g., failure to meet contractual obligations after an award).

Submission of a Bid/Proposal/Quote in such a manner which would prevent the establishment or determination of a firm bid price. Such qualifications would include refusing to hold firm prices or submitting bid prices subject to change due to manufacturer increases/decreases or market conditions, or minimum order quantities.

Submission of a Bid which is contingent on receiving the award of another Bid.

Failure to provide a Bid surety or provide one not meeting requirements or failure to meet insurance requirements (when specifically required in the bid).

Submission of exceptions to the specifications and/or contract terms that materially alters the procurement.

Evidence of collusion or bid rigging.

Evidence of collusion or bid rigging.

DISQUALIFICATION OF BIDS

Bids may be disqualified or deemed non-responsive by the Director of Procurement as a result of, but not necessarily limited to the following reasons:

- Failure to return all required documents.
- Failure to use the County bid schedule.
- Failure to return applicable compliance/specification sheets.
- Failure to acknowledge receipt of all applicable addenda.
- Failure to provide a bid bond when specifically stated that it will result in automatic rejection.
- Failure to provide information on alternates or equivalents when allowed.
- Failure of Bidder to sign all requested bid documents. Unsigned bids will not be considered except in cases where bid is enclosed with other documents which have been signed. Director of Procurement will determine this.
- Failure to submit Bid by deadlines will result in automatic rejection.
- Failure of the Bidder to extend prices.
- Failure to hold firm pricing. 11. Failure to meet specified delivery requirements.
- Prices of services or items exceed the departments budgeted amount allowed for these items.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE AWARD IS MADE

When an award to a Bid, Proposal, or written Quotation is made, a purchase order is issued, a contract is prepared, or a price agreement is established, and a Notice of Award is posted on the Forsyth County website. Bid tabulations are posted in Bonfire. When contracts are issued for projects or services, the Bidder returns a signed contract along with any required insurance and bonding documents. A copy of the executed contract and a Notice to Proceed is then sent to the successful Bidder.

