

Business Opportunities with Gwinnett County



Gwinnett

Welcome to Gwinnett County Purchasing, a division of the Department of Financial Services. The Purchasing Division is the County's central purchasing agent for supplies, materials, equipment, and contracts for services. These goods and services are procured within the statutes of the State of Georgia, the Gwinnett County Purchasing Ordinance, and certain guidelines and procedures as established by the Gwinnett County Purchasing Division.

The goal of the Gwinnett County Purchasing Division is to obtain and pay for quality goods and services at the lowest reasonable cost to the local taxpayer while operating at the highest standards of ethical conduct and professionalism. Purchasing strives to treat suppliers and contractors fairly and equitably and to maximize competition whenever possible. We believe that an environment of competition is most beneficial to both buyer and seller, and it is our policy to foster this environment. Additionally, we believe that our suppliers are the greatest resource we have available for keeping us abreast of current products, services, updates, and new information; therefore, Purchasing welcomes supplier contacts.

Gwinnett County Purchasing is a member of the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing at both the local and national levels. Dedicated to continued growth in knowledge and skill, many of the designated purchasing staff are professionally certified.

As further evidence of our commitment, the Purchasing Division has earned the prestigious National Purchasing Institute's Achievement of Excellence in Procurement award since 1999.

We thank you for your interest in Gwinnett County, and we look forward to your participation in the purchasing process.

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The information in this booklet is for potential suppliers in their efforts to sell their products and services to Gwinnett County.

If additional information is needed, please call or write your request to:

Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center
Department of Financial Services
 Purchasing Division
 75 Langley Drive Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Phone: 770.822.8720
 Fax: 770.822.8735 or 770.822.8728
 Website: **GwinnettCounty.com**
 TVGwinnett: Gwinnett County Government Access Cable Channel
 Solicitation Center: Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center, 2nd floor

Frequently Asked Questions from Suppliers

How do I get on the supplier list for Gwinnett County?

Register by completing an application found on the Purchasing Division's Vendor Login/Registration page on the County's website at GwinnettCounty.com.

After I have registered does this mean I will automatically receive notifications of bids that pertain to my company?

Gwinnett County cannot guarantee that every registered supplier will receive a notification. Visit the County's website or Solicitation Center weekly for new opportunities.

I do not have access to the internet; how can I register my company?

Contact the Purchasing Division for an application, which can be sent by mail or fax, or see page 15 of this handbook.

I cannot find commodity codes that match what my company does.

If you need assistance in determining what commodity codes best suit your company, contact the Purchasing Division for assistance. Vendors are encouraged to enter multiple applicable commodity codes.

I registered my company several months ago and have not heard anything nor received any solicitations. Can you tell me if my company is indeed registered?

An email confirmation will be sent to your company once approved. If you have not received this confirmation, please contact the Purchasing Division.

Does Gwinnett County Purchasing have an MBE/WBE preference program?

No. We encourage participation by all vendors in our solicitations.

When awarding a bid, are Gwinnett County suppliers given preference over suppliers from other counties or out of state?

Gwinnett County does not have a local supplier preference, except in cases of ties. In the event of a tie bid/quote, the award may be to a local firm if only one of the suppliers has an office located within the boundaries of Gwinnett County.

My company has a new product that we would like to present to you. How can I get set up to do that?

Such requests can be set up with the user department. If there is a desire/need to meet with the Purchasing Division, an appointment should be made with the responsible Purchasing Associate.

Are pre-bid/proposal conferences mandatory?

Occasionally they are mandatory. Please read the specific solicitation for this information.

I was unable to attend a bid opening. How can I find out who the apparent low bidders were?

The results are posted on GwinnettCounty.com the morning after the opening.

When and where are the Commission meetings held?

For most Purchasing related matters, the Board of Commissioners meet on the first and third Tuesday of each month in the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center auditorium at 10:00am (work session) and 2:00pm (business session). Complete information may be found on GwinnettCounty.com.

After a bid or proposal is awarded, is it possible to get a copy of the winning bid or proposal?

Yes, please refer to the Open Records Act O.C.G.A. Section 50-18-70 et. seq. Requests can also be made through the open records portal on the County website.

If I submitted a bid on an annual contract, will I automatically be sent a bid the next time it comes up for bid?

Great effort is made to send the solicitation to all the previous suppliers. It is recommended to regularly visit the County's website to stay informed of new solicitations.

I would like to meet and introduce myself to the Purchasing Associate who handles my commodity. Do I need an appointment?

Yes, please contact the Purchasing Associate for an appointment.

I would like to get a plan holder's list for a particular bid. Can you provide me with this?

Yes, contact the Purchasing Associate handling that particular bid.

After a solicitation has opened, how long does it take before it is awarded?

Every attempt is made to award between 90-120 days of the opening date.

If I'm submitting a bid on a project, can I be supplied with the bid tab from the previous award?

Yes, contact the Purchasing Associate handling that particular bid.

Where can I look on the website to learn about bid opportunities?

On the Purchasing page, select *Annual Contracts* and *Bids & RFPs*.

Are bids and RFPs and related addenda posted on your website?

Yes. On the Purchasing page, select Bids and RFPs. Addenda are posted under each solicitation.

Is award information posted on your website?

Yes, award information is posted on the Purchasing page. Select Award Tabulation from the menu. Award tabulations remain posted for approximately 30 days after the award.

Do Bidders have to be prequalified or on a pre-approved list to submit bids?

Some solicitations do require prequalified or pre-approved vendors. If this is a requirement, it will be clearly stated in the solicitation document.

After I have registered my company, how long does it take before my business is in your system?

It usually takes one business day.

How can I correct or update my company information?

Once you are registered, you may update your company information by logging into the County's system using your unique ID and password.

Do I have to provide insurance to do business with Gwinnett County?

In some cases, yes. Where required, insurance requirements are included in the solicitation document and are specific to each solicitation.

The Basics of Purchasing

Competitive Sealed Bid

The competitive sealed bid method is used where the cost of commodities and services is greater than \$100,000.00, where there are clear and defined specifications available, and where cost is the primary basis of the award. Bids are advertised in the Gwinnett Daily Post for a minimum of two weeks. The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners make the final award for bids greater than \$100,000.00.

Competitive Sealed Proposal

The competitive sealed proposal method is used for the purchase of all goods and services where the competitive sealed bid method is neither practical nor advantageous and where cost is not the primary consideration. Generally, competitive sealed proposals are used for procurements such as professional services, service contracts, and highly technical equipment. Competitive sealed proposals are advertised in the Gwinnett Daily Post for a minimum of two weeks. The competitive sealed proposal method may also be used for the purchase of goods and services \$100,000.00 or less. An evaluation committee evaluates proposals according to criteria specified in the proposal document. The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners make the final award for proposals greater than \$100,000.00.

Informal Written Quote

The informal written quote method is used for the purchase of goods and services between \$10,000 and \$100,000.00. Quotations are solicited informally and do not require approval by the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners. Written documentation is required from the supplier through mail, email, fax, or hand-delivery to the Purchasing Division.

Telephone Bid

The telephone bid method may be used for purchases of goods and services between \$5,000 and \$10,000. Quotations are solicited informally by telephone, email, or fax.

Small Purchases

The Purchasing Division and user departments may purchase less than \$5,000 at their discretion from any supplier not on the Ineligible Source List.

Annual Contracts

Gwinnett County has various annual, semi-annual, and quarterly contracts in place for frequently used items and services. The contracts are results of a bid, informal quote, proposal, or other legal methods of procurement. Annual contracts allow the County to order products or services directly from the awarded suppliers at already established prices and terms on an "as needed" basis.

How to Register with Gwinnett County

Suppliers interested in participating in the bidding process may register online on the County's website. Suppliers will be required to list commodity codes relating to the type of material and/or service they provide. A supplier may submit a bid without being a registered supplier. Gwinnett County sends most of its purchase orders to our contracted suppliers via e-mail. Therefore, suppliers must keep their information updated. Suppliers are responsible for updating their contact information. This may be done by logging into the County system after registration or by submitting a written request to the Purchasing Division.

How Gwinnett County Advertises Its Solicitations

- 1. Email:** Bids and proposals may be emailed to registered suppliers on Gwinnett County's supplier lists and those suppliers suggested by the user departments. However, Gwinnett County cannot guarantee that every registered supplier contained on the supplier list will receive a copy of every bid or proposal opportunity for a particular commodity. Suppliers are urged to review the various methods of advertisements that the County uses in the bid process.
- 2. Newspaper and Other Publications:** Bids and proposals greater than \$100,000.00 will be publicly advertised in the Gwinnett Daily Post. Additionally, other forms of advertising such as trade journals, other newspapers, and the internet, may be used to provide maximum competition for specific projects, purchases, or services.
- 3. Purchasing Division Solicitation Center:** All formal solicitations are posted on the Purchasing Division's Solicitation Center. This center is located on the second-floor atrium of the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center and is updated weekly.
- 4. Gwinnett County Television (TVGwinnett):** Another source of solicitation information may be viewed via the County's government access cable channel. Please check with your cable provider for channel information.
- 5. Gwinnett County Website:** Bids and proposals are available for viewing on the County's website at **GwinnettCounty.com**. If the purchase of specifications and/or plans is required, it will be stated in the bid or proposal.
- 6. Georgia Procurement Registry:** Bids and proposals are available for viewing on the Georgia Procurement Registry website at **SSL.DOAS.state.ga.us/GPR/**

Pre-Bid and Pre-Proposal Conferences

The nature of some bids and proposals requires a pre-bid or pre-proposal conference to be held. Pre-bid and pre-proposal conferences are held to clarify specifications, answer supplier questions regarding the specific bid or proposal, or allow the supplier to perform an on-site review and inspection. Most pre-bids and pre-proposals are voluntary. Occasionally some pre-bids and pre-proposals are mandatory. Any changes to the original bid or proposal will be made in writing in the form of an addendum and will be e-mailed to all suppliers who originally received or have requested the solicitation. All questions and information requests must be directed to the appropriate Purchasing Associate to ensure that all suppliers have the same information. Addenda for formal solicitations will also be posted on the County's website. It is the vendor's responsibility to obtain any and all addenda before submitting a bid or proposal.

To protect the integrity of the solicitation process, individuals, firms, and businesses seeking an award of a Gwinnett County contract may not initiate or continue any verbal or written communication regarding a solicitation with a County officer, elected official, employee, or any other County representative without permission of the Purchasing Associate named in the solicitation between the date of the issuance of the solicitation and the date of the final contract award by the Board of Commissioners. The Purchasing Director will review violations. If determined that such communication has compromised the competitive process, the offer submitted by the individual, firm, or business may be disqualified from consideration for the award.

How to Submit a Bid or Proposal

1. Follow the instructions outlined in the bid or proposal. All bids and proposals include a copy of the General Instructions for Bidders/Proposers that list certain instructions pertaining to all solicitations. In addition, there are specific instructions included in the bid and proposal documents that are unique to that procurement.
2. Any questions regarding the bid or proposal should be directed to the appropriate Purchasing Associate named in the solicitation.
3. To submit a bid or proposal, the supplier must be able to responsibly meet the minimum requirements outlined in the solicitation.
4. Suppliers who are unable to meet the requirements of the solicitation should complete the appropriate form included in the bid package indicating a "No Bid." The form should be returned to the Gwinnett County Purchasing Division. The supplier needs to submit a response, even if it is a "No Bid." Failure to submit a response may result in the supplier being removed from the supplier list for that specific commodity.
5. Gwinnett County reserves the right to make an award determined to be in its best interest, which would include splitting a multi-item bid between suppliers. Therefore, if the supplier is submitting prices that are based on

receiving all of the items contained in the bid, the solicitation response should be clearly marked as "all or nothing," or similar wording. However, such clarification of a supplier's response may result in the bid being deemed non-responsive.

6. Suppliers entering into a service contract with the County for the physical performance of services greater than \$2,499.99 shall provide an executed affidavit verifying their compliance with O.C.G.A § 13-10-91 (stating they have registered with and are participating in a federal work authorization program).
7. Suppliers shall disclose, in an affidavit, the name of all elected officials whom it employs or who have a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in their business as defined by the County's Code of Ethics.
8. Each supplier shall certify in writing that such supplier has not engaged in any collusive or anti-competitive practices in responding to a solicitation for bids or proposals. A declaration of non-collusion is simply a statement made by the supplier which states that the bid submitted is a bona fide bid that has been prepared independent of other suppliers and is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud (i.e., price fixing, bid rigging, rotation of award).
9. All formal bids or proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope or package clearly marked on the outside with the solicitation number and description, the date and time of the public opening, and company name addressed to:

Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center
Department of Financial Services
Purchasing Division
75 Langley Drive Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Documents must be submitted via hand-delivery, mail, or other type of express delivery service. Formal bids and proposals may not be faxed or emailed. Late responses will not be considered.

NOTE: Security measures are in place in the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center. Such measures may well impede the personal deliveries of bids and proposals to the Purchasing Office. Please plan accordingly. Regardless of the circumstances, late bids and proposals will not be accepted.

How Bids and Proposals are Received

The envelope or package will be time and date stamped and placed in a secure location until the date and time of the opening.

How Bids and Proposals are Opened

1. Bids and proposals shall be opened publicly in the presence of one or more witnesses on the date, and at the time, and place specified in the solicitation documents. Suppliers and interested parties are invited to attend.
2. During the opening of bids, the following information shall be made public: the name of each supplier submitting a sealed bid, pricing information, and any other relevant information. Bids are not considered open record until after an award has been made.
3. During the opening of proposals, only the name of each supplier shall be made public. No other information will be disclosed, nor shall the proposal be considered an open record until the proposal is awarded.
4. Once the bid or proposal is opened, copies of the documents are forwarded to the user department(s) for their evaluation and recommendation.

Late Bids, Withdrawals, and Corrections to Bids

Late Bids

Bids or proposals received after the date and time stated in the Invitation to Bid will not be accepted. The Purchasing Division must receive all bids and proposals on the date and time specified in the document. Late bids will not be considered and will be returned unopened to the supplier. A delay in delivery or failure to deliver by a third-party delivery service (i.e., USPS, UPS, FedEx) is not an acceptable reason for late responses.

Withdrawals

Bids may be withdrawn at any time prior to bid opening. A supplier wishing to withdraw their bid after the bids have been opened will be required to submit a letter with documented facts supporting the reason for withdrawal within two business days after bid opening. The supplier must present clear and convincing evidence that an unintentional error was made. The Purchasing Division will review the withdrawal request and a judgment will be made. Requests to withdraw are not automatically granted after bid opening. See the Penalties section of this brochure for possible actions of recourse.

Modification/Correction

If an error is discovered before the opening, the supplier can submit a corrected sealed bid or proposal. The corrected document should be clearly marked that it supersedes the bid or proposal originally submitted. If an obvious clerical error is discovered after the bid or proposal has been opened, the supplier may submit a letter to the Purchasing Division requesting that the error be corrected within two business days. Final determination as to whether an error is clerical rests with the Purchasing Division. Generally, modifications to opened bids or proposals for

reasons other than obvious clerical errors are not permitted.

How Bids and Proposals are Evaluated and Awarded

1. Bids are evaluated by the user department(s), who submits a letter of recommendation to the Purchasing Division. The bid recommendation is reviewed thoroughly by the Purchasing Division. The Purchasing Division presents the bid to the Board of Commissioners for its approval. The recommendation is made to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. "Responsive" means the supplier conforms in all material respects to the requirements set forth in the solicitation. "Responsible" refers to the ability to perform as specified.
2. Proposals are evaluated by an evaluation team. The proposals are scored based on the criteria set forth in the proposal. The committee may create a shortlist from proposals received, based on the criteria. The top firms may be interviewed and the price, terms, or the scope of work may be negotiated with the highest scoring firm. Once the firm has been selected, the user department submits a recommendation to the Purchasing Division, who in turn presents it to the Board of Commissioners for its approval.

Responsibilities of Bidders

1. An apparent low bidder may not be recommended for the award of a bid or contract if the bidder is found to be non-responsible or non-responsive. The Purchasing Division, setting forth the reasons for non-responsible or non-responsive, shall inform the supplier in writing.
2. Reasons a supplier(s) may be deemed non-responsive or non-responsible may include:
 - a. Previously documented supplier performance problems
 - b. Failure to meet contractual obligations after the award has been made
 - c. Failure to conform to required delivery, specifications, or detailed requirements
 - d. Submission of a bid or offer in such a manner that 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, market conditions, or minimum order quantities.
 - e. Submission of a bid that is contingent upon receiving the award of another bid
 - f. Failure to provide a bid surety or meet insurance requirements when specifically required in the bid
 - g. Submission of solicitation exceptions not acceptable to Gwinnett County
 - h. A record of financial difficulty and/or business instability
 - i. Criminal sanctions, civil sanctions, and/or tax delinquency

A supplier performance rating system has been established to monitor suppliers who fail to perform or perform unsatisfactorily. Ratings are determined by such factors as the severity of the offense or a reoccurrence of similar problems over

a short period of time. The rating system may be used for the evaluation of the award of bids and contracts.

Disqualification of Bids

Bids may be disqualified by the Purchasing Director because of, but not necessarily limited to, the following reasons:

1. Failure to use the County bid schedule
2. Failure to return applicable compliance and or specification sheets
3. Failure to return applicable addenda
4. Submission by an individual, firm, or business who has pending litigation against the County
5. Failure to provide information on alternates or equivalents when allowed
6. Failure to provide a bid bond, when required, will result in automatic rejection
7. Failure to sign all requested bid documents
8. Failure to submit a bid by the deadline will result in automatic rejection
9. Failure to submit Ethics Affidavit
10. Failure to submit E-verify Affidavit
11. Failure to hold pricing firm
12. Failure to meet specified delivery requirements
13. Prices for services or items exceed the departments budgeted amount

What Happens When the Award Is Made?

1. When an award of a bid or proposal is made, a purchase order is issued, or a formal contract is prepared for execution.
2. Suppliers awarded annual contracts receive an award notice followed by orders from the user department (end user) in the form of a purchase order.
3. When formal contracts are issued for projects or services, the supplier returns two original signed contracts along with any required insurance and bonding documents. A copy of the executed contract, along with a Notice to Proceed, is sent to the successful supplier so that work may begin.

Supplier Performance

Performance problems documented by the user department and forwarded to the Purchasing Division will be reviewed and every effort will be made to resolve the issue(s). Should a performance problem exist that cannot be resolved with the intervention of the Purchasing Division, a recommendation may be submitted to the Purchasing Policy and Review Committee that the supplier be placed on the Ineligible Source List.

Any supplier who is determined to be placed on the Ineligible Source List by the Purchasing Policy and Review Committee will not be eligible to provide any commodities and/or services to the County during the time period such firm remains on the list. The length of time a supplier remains on the list is dependent upon the severity of the performance problem(s) but will not exceed three years. The following are persons or companies who may be placed on the Ineligible Source List:

1. Any person who submits a bid or proposal in bad faith
2. Any person who breaches a contract with the County, or who has poor contract performance that has been documented by the County
3. Any person who repeatedly refuses to accept a bid or proposal award
4. Any person who has established a pattern or practice of unethical or immoral business practices
5. Any person who has been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude
6. Any person or company that is owned, controlled, or managed, in whole or in part, by any other person described in #1 through #5 above
7. Any person who establishes a pattern of knowingly employing unauthorized aliens to work on any contract with the County or any subcontract to perform work on a County contract for the performance of physical services in violation of the County's Purchasing Ordinance
8. Any person or company who is non-compliant with the E-verify program

Penalties for Non-Performance

Suppliers who do not deliver as promised or deliver unacceptable merchandise may be penalized. If a supplier fails to comply, comparable replacement merchandise may be purchased in the open market. The supplier shall reimburse the County within a reasonable time specified by the Purchasing Director for any expense incurred in excess of original contract prices or the County shall reserve the right to deduct such amount from monies owed the defaulting supplier/contractor. If performance problems cannot be resolved or there are performance problems on a continual basis, a recommendation may be made to the Purchasing Policy and Review Committee that the supplier be placed on the Ineligible Source List.

Requested Research

From time to time, user departments may request suppliers to perform specific research or consulting services prior to the official request for purchase. The supplier has no guarantee of receiving the award as a result of providing research or other information. Dollar limits may require the commodity or service to be bid, which will result in an award to the lowest responsive and responsible supplier regardless of which supplier did the initial research or consulting. If the initial research or consulting services are significant enough to require some monetary reimbursement, the supplier should notify the requesting user department upfront.

Gratuities

It is the policy of the Purchasing Division to refuse any gift from suppliers, regardless of the monetary value of the item. Any gift received by mail will be returned to the sender. If returning the item will result in a significant charge, the item will be donated to a charitable organization.

Contract Compliance

It is the policy of Gwinnett County that unauthorized aliens shall not be employed to perform work on County contracts involving the physical performance of services. Therefore, the County shall not enter into a contract for the physical performance of services unless the contractor provides an executed copy of the County's E-verify Affidavit.

Responsibility of Suppliers

1. Be sure that your company is registered with Gwinnett County. Companies are responsible for maintaining their registered contact information.
2. Regularly review bid and proposal advertisements in the Gwinnett Daily Post, Georgia Procurement Registry, and on the Gwinnett County website and visit the Purchasing Solicitation Center found in the second-floor atrium at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center.
3. Read and review bid and proposal documents thoroughly. Failure to follow the instructions and conditions contained in the bid or proposal documents could result in the rejection of your bid.
4. Allow yourself enough time to submit your response before the specified deadline.
5. Familiarize yourself with the bidding and proposal requirements of Gwinnett County.
6. Introduce yourself to appropriate County staff and familiarize yourself with the needs of the various County departments.
7. Establish and maintain a good reputation for providing goods and services in a reliable manner to Gwinnett County.
8. Submit competitive pricing and innovative approaches.

The information contained in this manual is provided for general informational purposes only. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to modify, amend, override, or nullify any statute, policy, or procedure of Gwinnett County or the State of Georgia, or any specific provision of any given solicitation used in any competitive procurement.

**GWINNETT COUNTY
Financial Services | Purchasing Division
Supplier Application**

In lieu of online registration



Please type or print in black ink

1. Business: _____
Complete name of business

Mailing address

City, State, Zip

Telephone number

Fax number

Website address

County

2. Representative(s): *(Definition: Whom in your company would Gwinnett County contact?)*

Title

Name (Last, First)

Telephone Number

Telephone number

Email address

3. Commodity Codes: _____

4. Tax ID: _____ **OR Social Security Number:** _____

I certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct statement of

Signature of authorized

Personnel date

Title



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**Proud award winner of the
Achievement of Excellence in Procurement
since 1999**