**HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE CITY OF VALDOSTA, GEORGIA**



PURCHASING DIVISION

Mr. Greg Brown, CPPO, CPPB, MPA

Purchasing Agent

P.O. Box 1125

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Valdosta, GA 31601

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Office Hours 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM, M-F

HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE CITY OF VALDOSTA

Thank you for your interest in conducting business with the City of Valdosta. The provision of vital services to our citizens are ultimately the result of a partnership between the departments of City government and the vendor community which provides the goods and services needed to support the City’s operations. The purpose of this manual is to guide your company on how to effectively conduct business with the City of Valdosta.

Conducting business with the government can be a very rewarding experience. However, without a clear understanding of how the particular government agency operates, it may seem like a tedious endeavor. Due to the expending of tax monies, there are more complexities involved in the procurement process for a governmental agency.

It is the mission of the Purchasing Division to provide fair and equal treatment to all persons, both the City departments and our vendors involved in the procurement process. All contracts for the purchase or lease of goods, services, or construction projects are awarded through competitive bidding or negotiations, or through other processes established by Federal statues, Georgia law, and City code and ordinances.

The following information should enhance your understanding of the process to be followed to do business with the City of Valdosta. The City reserves the right to not do business with suppliers that are currently or have been debarred from other governmental agencies.

# HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE CITY

The first step in doing business with the City of Valdosta is to complete the necessary vendor application which can be downloaded at our website, www.valdostacity.com. Please return the completed form to the Purchasing Division by fax, mail, or email. Vendors are also required to include a W-9 form as well as an E-Verify form which is available online at the United States Homeland Security website. Once the Purchasing Division receives the completed application, it will be entered into our vendor database. It is the responsibility of the vendor to keep their information current at all times. The City will not be responsible for any errant information provided by the vendor or keying errors. The current procurement system can only store vendor data.

**THE BASIC METHODS OF PURCHASING:**

# Competitive Sealed Bid

The City utilizes a competitive bidding process with awards made to the lowest responsible and responsive bidder meeting the specifications. This process is called the Invitation to Bid (ITB) which is a formal process that is required to be advertised in the legal organ of

the City at least seven days prior to the bid opening, posted on the City and Georgia Procurement registry website, and awarded by Mayor and Council for amounts over $25,000. This requirement is exempted if only one source of supply exist, a state or cooperative contract, or in cases of the utmost urgency as decided by the City Manager, his or her designee, or Mayor and Council.

Construction projects may bypass the ITB process if the City Manager or his designee approves purchase orders up to $50,000 after the receipt of competitive pricing. Typically, major construction projects will surpass the $50,000 threshold which requires the Engineering or Utilities Department to use the competitive sealed bid process or contract with an architecture firm utilizing their services for this requirement of the procurement process.

# Competitive Sealed Proposal or Request for Proposal (RFP)

The competitive sealed proposal or RFP method is used for the purchase of all goods and services where the competitive sealed bid is neither practical nor advantageous and that cost is not the primary consideration. Generally, competitive sealed proposals or RFP’s are used for the procurement of professional services, service contracts, highly technical equipment, and commodities or services of this nature. Advertisement requirements are the same as the competitive sealed bid as are the award requirements. An evaluation committee evaluates all proposals submitted according to criteria specified in the proposal document created by the City.

# Informal Written Bid

The informal written bid method is used for the purchase of goods and services between $1,000 and $24,999. Quotations are solicited informally and do not require formal advertising or approval from Mayor and Council. Written documentation can be provided through mail, facsimile, hand delivery, or email to the Purchasing Division.

# Small Purchases

Purchase amounts less than $1,000 are at individual department discretion.

# PRE-BID and PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE

The nature of certain bids and proposals may require a pre-bid or pre-proposal conference to be conducted. These conferences are sometimes mandatory and held in order to clarify specifications, answer supplier questions, or to allow the supplier an on-site review and inspection. Any changes to the ITB or RFP after a pre-bid or pre-proposal conference will be in writing in the form of an addendum and will be mailed, emailed, or faxed to all suppliers who originally received or requested the solicitation. The only exception being if the supplier did not attend a mandatory pre-bid or pre-proposal conference.

# HOW TO SUBMIT A BID OR PROPOSAL

The supplier must follow all of the instructions set forth in the ITB or RFP. All solicitations contain instruction to bidders or 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 particular procurement.

In order to submit a bid or proposal, the supplier must be able to responsibly meet the minimum requirements set forth in the solicitation. The supplier should submit a “No-Bid” at a minimum if you cannot meet these requirements. Failure to respond to multiple solicitations may result in a supplier being removed from the vendor list.

All bids of proposals must be submitted in a sealed envelope or package clearly marked on the outside with the bid or solicitation number and description, the date and time of the public opening, and company name. All solicitations are to be delivered to:

City of Valdosta Purchasing

Attn: Greg Brown, CPPO, CPPB

P.O. Box 1125

216 E. Central Ave., 3RD Floor

Valdosta, GA 31601

Sealed documents may be hand delivered, mailed, or other type of express delivery service. The City of Valdosta will not accept bids or proposals that should be sealed through a facsimile machine transmission or bids that are deemed late by the Purchasing Division. The clock of record is the City of Valdosta phone system and will be used in all cases of timeliness. In cases of utmost emergencies, proposals may be taken in another form but this is not typical. The City reserves the right to make this determination.

# HOW BIDS ARE RECEIVED

Bids and proposals must be in sealed envelopes or packages in order to be eligible for consideration. The Purchasing Division must receive all bids and proposals on or before the date and time specified in the document. Late bids will not be considered and will be returned unopened to the supplier at the discretion of the City. The solicitation must be in the required office as specified in the document with no exceptions or valid excuses. As stated above, the clock of record is the City of Valdosta phone system and will be used in all cases of timeliness.

# HOW BIDS AND PROPOSALS ARE OPENED

Bids and proposals shall be opened with at least two witnesses present as close to the date and time specified in the solicitation. Suppliers and interested parties are invited to attend. During the opening of bids, the name of each supplier, pricing information, and other relevant information will be read aloud and tabulated. At this time, these bids are public records.

During the opening of proposals, only the name of each supplier and how many copies were provided shall be announced. No other information will be disclosed nor shall the proposal be considered open record until the proposal has been ranked by the evaluation committee and a recommendation is formally awarded by Mayor and Council.

# HOW BIDS AND PROPOSALS ARE EVALUATED

Bids are evaluated by the Purchasing Division and the using department. The requesting department then prepares an agenda item for the Mayor and Council meeting where formal approval is granted, rejected, or another alternative is approved by the Mayor and Council. The recommendation is based on the lowest responsive and responsible bidder but formal approval is granted only by Mayor and Council.

Proposals are evaluated by an evaluation committee which can vary in size depending on the complexity of the good or service required. Proposals are scored based on the criteria listed in the RFP. The top firms may or may not asked to do a presentation on their proposal. Once a recommendation by the evaluation committee is made, the requesting department prepares an agenda item for the Mayor and Council meeting for formal approval or rejection.

# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE AWARD IS MADE

When an award of a bid or proposal is made, a purchase order is issued (a form of contract), a contract is prepared, or a price agreement is established. The City sometimes will pay with a procurement card if the supplier agrees. Suppliers awarded annual contracts will sometimes be issued weekly, monthly, or yearly purchase order numbers. Typically, payments are made in full within 30 days of delivery.

**PENALTIES FOR NON-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 which cannot be resolved with the intervention of the Purchasing Division, a recommendation may be submitted to de-bar the supplier from future activities with the City. Examples of persons or companies who may be placed on the de-bar list are

1. Any person who submits a bid or proposal in bad faith.
2. Any person who willfully or repeatedly breaches a contract with the City.
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 practice.
5. Any company required to have an E-Verify number that does not.
6. Any person convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude; and;
7. Any business that is owned, operated, or controlled in whole or part by any other person described in (1) through (5) or any other situation the City deems necessary to protect the City’s or citizens interest.

# PROTEST

All protests concerning proposals, bids, or quotes should be made in writing to the Purchasing Agent including specific reasons for the protest. Please refer to the purchasing policies and procedures manual for more information. Failure to follow the formal process may result in the protest being deemed invalid.

# MEETINGS

Suppliers are encouraged to meet with purchasing staff members for legitimate reasons. However, suppliers are encouraged to make an appointment in advance. It may not be feasible to meet at peak times during the fiscal year. If this is the case, the supplier is asked to make arrangements after this time frame. Information such as catalogs, line cards, and new product information is not only acceptable but encouraged.

# REQUESTED RESEARCH

From time to time, using departments or the Purchasing Division may request suppliers to perform specific research prior to the official request for purchase. It should be understood that the supplier has no guarantee of receiving the award as a result of providing research or other information. Drawings, specifications, and other information provided to the City will become the property of the City and any further usage of this information shall be permitted by the supplier unless it is legally deemed proprietary information and can be documented and proved by the supplier.

# GRATUTIES

It is the policy of the Purchasing Division and other City Departments to refuse gifts from supplier. Please refer to the purchasing policies and procedures manual for more information. Examples of acceptable gifts includes but is not limited to pens, pads, envelope openers, and items of this nature. Any gift received by mail will be returned to the sender. If returning item will result in a significant charge, the item will be donated to a charitable organization.

# COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS

Question or comments can be made to:

City of Valdosta Purchasing

P.O. Box 1125 216 E. Central Ave.

Valdosta, GA 31603

P 229-259-3525

F 229-259-5460

Email gbrown@valdostacity.com

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**VENDOR INFORMATION FORM**

(Please print or type)

DATE: BUSINESS LICENSE NO:

COMPANY NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY: STATE: ZIP:

REMITTANCE ADRESS:

CONTACT/TITLE:

PHONE: FAX: EMAIL:

TAXPAYER ID NO. OR SS NO: E-VERIFY NO:

**LIST THE COMMODITIES OR SERVICES YOU CAN SUPPLY:**

**Place an “x” beside the description that best describes your organization:**

 Minority Women Dealer Sole Prop

 Valdosta Jobber Retail Incorporated

 VSEB Individual Partnership Mfg.

**Name, Title, and Signatures or persons authorized to sign bids, proposals, and contracts:**

**Name Title Signature Printed Name**

I certify that the information stated above is factual and true and the taxpayer identification, social security number, and E-Verify number is correct. I also affirm by signing this document I have read the entire “How to do Business With the City of Valdosta” guide:

Signature: Printed Name:

**Return this form to:**

**City of Valdosta Purchasing**

**P.O. Box 1125**

**Valdosta, GA 31603-1125**

Fax: 229-259-5460

**Include a current copy of your W-9 and E-Verify Form with your vendor form.**