Buying Through Purchasing Services

OVERVIEW
A department processes purchases through Purchasing Services in one or more of the following cases:

- The department wants assistance with a purchase.
- The total amount of a purchase exceeds the current direct buy limit ($10,000) (RCW 28B.10.029, RCW 39.26).
- The purchase may not be processed with a Department Order (see BPPM 70.07) or a purchasing card (see BPPM 70.08).

DEPARTMENTAL REQUISITION
Prepare a Departmental Requisition to initiate a purchase through Purchasing Services. See BPPM 70.10 for Departmental Requisition instructions.

PURCHASING SERVICES
Upon receipt of a Departmental Requisition (see BPPM 70.10), the appropriate Purchasing Services buyer is assigned to the procurement process.

The Buyer's Role
The Purchasing Services buyer determines the applicable purchasing procedure. The buyer uses the best method to fill the Departmental Requisition within the limitations of state laws and regulations and WSU policies.

BIDDING PROCEDURES

Competitive Bidding
The buyer must competitively bid or quote purchases that exceed the direct buy limit. The quote process is used for purchases from $10,000 to $100,000. The sealed bid process is used for purchases of $100,000 or more. Both quotes and sealed bids are competitive bidding processes.

State law requires the buyer to post public notice of all sealed bid opportunities on the state's online vendor registration and bid notification system, Washington's Electronic Business Solution (WEBS). (RCW 39.26.150, -160)

State law requires the buyer to solicit at least one certified minority-owned business and one certified women-owned business for each quote or bid. (RCW 39.26.245) Purchasing Services accesses the current listing of these certified businesses from the WEBS system.

Submission of Bids and Quotes
Vendors must submit all bids to WSU Purchasing Services in written or electronic form and conform to state purchasing rules. (RCW 39.26) Purchasing Services does not accept responses to sealed bids by fax. Sealed bids submitted by fax or delivered to offices other than Purchasing Services are nonresponsive and are not considered.
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Submission of Bids and Quotes (cont.)

Purchasing Services prefers that vendors submit quotes in written or electronic form. Purchasing Services accepts quotes by fax for informal competition for purchases between $10,000 to $100,000. Vendor quotes must conform to state purchasing rules.

Time Allowed For Bidding

Bid or quote processing may require seven or more working days depending on the complexity, length, and urgency of the request. Purchasing Services determines the length of time allowed vendors to submit bids or quotes.

For sealed bid processing, a specific date is established for the bid opening. Bids may not be opened before this date.

Department Review

The Purchasing Services buyer tabulates the offers and routes the tabulation and bids or quotes to the requesting department.

The requesting department accepts the low bid or quote or recommends award of the sale to one of the other bidders. The requesting department must provide written justification to Purchasing Services for rejection of any bid or quote lower than the awarded price.

Bid Award

Generally, Purchasing Services awards the contract to the vendor submitting the lowest bid unless:

- The lowest bidder is not qualified for documented reasons of capacity, reputation, time requirements, or inability to meet written bid specifications.

- The lowest bidder is from a state with a currently-active in-state preference rule for procuring goods and services. A specified percentage penalty (usually two to five percent) is added to bids submitted by vendors from such states. Purchasing Services maintains a list of states and percentage penalties. *(WAC 200-300-075) NOTE: This stipulation applies to bids for purchases of $100,000 or more only.*

Complaints and Protests

Bidders may submit complaints regarding the bid solicitation requirements and evaluation through the University's complaint process. The complaint process provides for complaints to be submitted and response provided before the deadline for bid submissions. *(RCW 39.26.170(1))*

Bidders who submitted a response to the solicitation document and participated in a debriefing conference may submit protests regarding the choice of successful bidder through the University's protest process. The protest process includes a protest period after the apparent successful bidder is announced but before the contract is signed. *(RCW 39.26.170(2))*
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Complaints and Protests (cont.) Guidelines regarding the complaint and protest processes are available by selecting the **Complaint and Protest Process** link on the Purchasing Services Vendor Resources website at:

purchasing.wsu.edu/VendorResources.html

**PURCHASE ORDERS** Purchasing Services prepares and sends a Purchase Order to the vendor submitting the successful bid or quote. In certain cases, a contract is sent to the vendor. The Purchase Order or contract directs the vendor to proceed with the transaction (*BPPM* 70.20).

Purchasing Services sends a copy of the purchase order to the requisitioning department.

Purchasing Services enters information from the Departmental Requisition into the PAPR AIS computer application. After the order is entered, the requisitioning department can monitor the progress of the transaction online in PAPR. See *BPPM* 85.33 for more about accessing PAPR.

PAPR encumbers the transaction in the WSU accounting system.

**CHANGE ORDERS** After a Purchase Order has been issued, it may be modified with a Change Order. This may occur under the following conditions:

- When a vendor notifies WSU of a price change.
- When a department requests a quantity change.
- When one party, the vendor or the department, indicates a need for change in delivery or any other specification.
- If either party wishes to cancel all or part of the contract prior to shipment.
- At any time the buyer's judgment indicates that a change materially alters the contractual responsibility of either party.

There are exceptions to the need for a Change Order. If in the buyer's judgment, a trusted vendor will accommodate a minor change, a Change Order may not be necessary.