

How To Do Business With Your Cobb County Government



Cobb County...Expect the Best!

**Cobb County Government
Purchasing Department
1772 County Services Parkway
Marietta, GA 30008-4012
Phone: 770-528-8400
Fax: 770-528-8428**

www.purchasing.cobbcountyga.gov

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COBB COUNTY PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
1772 County Services Parkway
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4012
(770) 528-8400/FAX (770) 528-8428

Rick Brun
Director

Dear Vendor:

The Cobb County Government is recognized as one of the preeminent counties not just in the State of Georgia but among all of the counties of the Southeast and of the Nation by most standard measures. Cobb County Government is one of only 22 counties in the country that holds an AAA bond rating from the three primary New York rating agencies. The Cobb County Water System was the first and today remains one of only three public utilities that hold that same distinction. Such recognitions are the result of the county government's exemplary public management and conservative fiscal management as well as, for example, its public safety, recreational, roads and water utility programs. Cobb County Government strives to furnish the best services to its constituents and does so with the lowest tax millage rate in the Atlanta Region.

This County Government operation, with nearly 5,000 employees, furnishes important public services to its' more than 680,000 residents and to the many commercial establishments and their employees which call Cobb County home. Accomplishment of these services requires the continuous procurement of all imaginable products and services offered by firms ranging from the small supplier to international firms.

The Cobb County Purchasing Department has the responsibility for guiding all the various County agencies and department through the "buying" process. The process is meant to comply with all legalities while assuring the best value. This is ensured through obtaining multiple quotes for specified needs as well as conducting sealed bid opportunities when appropriate.

When more vendors are interested in being a supplier to Cobb County, everyone benefits. We welcome and encourage the participation of all qualified vendors, regardless of race, color, national origin, or gender, in our procurement opportunities.

Finally we hope the information presented here attracts you and assists you in doing business with the Cobb County Government.

**Rick Brun
Purchasing Director**

COBB COUNTY PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

The Purchasing Department is the central procurement organization for all departments under the jurisdiction of the Cobb County Board of Commissioners and other elected officials (i.e. Sheriff). The Department is responsible for buying all supplies, materials, and equipment necessary for the delivery of County services.

The Department also coordinates the selection of professional services for planning, design, and special consultation work for the County.

The Purchasing Department is the main entity of County Government authorized to issue bid invitations, discuss price and delivery commitments, and to issue purchase orders and master price agreements (annual contracts).

The purchasing function includes the following basic steps:

- Determine The Need (Value Analysis)
- Invite Vendor to Participate in Quotation or Bid Process
- Select The Vendor
- Structure Terms and Conditions (Specifications)
- Issue Contracts or Purchase Orders
- Procure Materials
- Ensure Timely Delivery and Completion of Services

QUALIFIED VENDORS

Cobb County will only procure goods and services from qualified vendors. The Purchasing Department and the Finance Department are responsible for maintaining the County's Master Vendor List. To become a qualified vendor, a Vendor Application form must be completed.

In 2005, the Purchasing Department launched **Vendor Self Service** (VSS), a new and convenient way for vendors to register with Cobb County and to search for current business opportunities. The Vendor Self Service System (VSS) allows a potential vendor to submit their application on line through the Internet to the Purchasing website and also permits an existing vendor to update their account information. A vendor may also review posted solicitations, award notices and view vendor solicitation comments through this system.

A **manual Vendor Application** also may be mailed at your request or downloaded from our web site: www.purchasing.cobbcountyga.gov.

All vendors must have a valid business license; a Cobb County Business License if your primary operation is located within the County boundaries.

Please be sure to complete the section of the application indicating which commodities and/or services your firm is able to supply. This information will allow your organization to be entered into the vendor database and be considered for bid invitations.

Cobb County Government encourages individuals/businesses to identify themselves, when making application to be a vendor, as certified and/or meeting the definition of a **Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)**. A Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) is defined as a Female, Black American, Hispanic American and any other minority owned business.

The **Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act** (GSICA) became effective on July 1, 2007. A primary provision is the requirement of employers providing services, through contract or subcontract, to the state or local governments to verify legal U.S. residence of newly hired employees through the Federal on-line BASIC Pilot program.

Cobb County requires a contractor and any subcontractor providing services to furnish a completed affidavit demonstrating compliance with this state law (O.C.G.A. Section 13-10-91) before a contract is executed.

VENDOR PERFORMANCE

The Purchasing Department establishes vendor performance and information files for all vendors doing business with the County.

Two (2) areas are of particular importance:

1. **Delivery Dates**: Failure to meet a specified delivery date reflects on performance and could be a factor in subsequent award determinations. It is the vendor's responsibility to notify the appropriate purchasing agent or County department when a delay in the delivery schedule is anticipated or occurs. At that time, the vendor should indicate the new anticipated delivery date and the reason for delay.

Failure to deliver within contractual delivery schedules may result in the vendor being declared in default and cancellation of the purchase order.

2. **Quality of Service**: Unsatisfactory product quality or service performance also reflects on a vendor and could be a factor in subsequent award determinations

as well as removal from the active vendor list. Such performance can increase the County's operating costs and must be considered when complying with the policy of awarding to the "lowest responsible bidder".

PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Requisitions for all goods and services are received in the Purchasing Department from all departments of Cobb County Government.

Once requisitions are received, Purchasing personnel will generate either:

Telephone or Written Quotations, or

Formal Sealed Bids or Request for Proposals.

As mandated by state law, the total purchase amount of the requisition dictates whether a quotation or formal sealed bid will be required.

Monetary Limits for Quotation Procedures are:

⇒ \$ Less than \$2,000.00 (Goods/Services)	Department Purchase Order
⇒ \$ Less than \$1,000.00 (Office Supplies)	Department Purchase Order
⇒ \$2,000 to \$9,999.99	Three (3) Telephone Quotes
⇒ \$10,000.00 to Formal Sealed Bid Limit	Three (3) Written Quotes
⇒ Formal Sealed Bid Limit - \$50,000 or more	Sealed Bids are solicited through a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Invitation to Bid (ITB).

Vendors are encouraged to inform the Purchasing Department of the commodities they sell and their desire to be called or receive written requests for bids. (Phone 770-528-8400)

SEALED BID PROCESS

Bid solicitations for commodities or services estimated in value to exceed \$50,000.00 and/or the establishment of the County's Master Agreements (Annual Contracts) requires legal notices to be published in a newspaper. Cobb County uses the ***Marietta Daily Journal*** as its advertising medium. A brief description of the item(s)/service(s) intended to be purchased is advertised for minimum of two (2) consecutive Fridays prior to bid opening. Public works construction projects are advertised for four (4) weeks. The legal advertisement states the date, time, and location of the bid opening.

Bid advertisements may also be seen on the Cobb County Website at www.purchasing.cobbcountyga.gov.

Bid openings are generally held on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 2:00 PM. Location of Bid openings are identified in each in Bid/RFP package.

Bids/RFP's will be received at the Cobb County Purchasing Department, 1772 County Services Parkway (formerly 1772 County Farm Road), Marietta, GA 30008-4012, **until 12:00 PM on the bid opening date**. Any bids received later than 12:00 PM **will not be accepted** for consideration. Bids are to be mailed or hand delivered.

Sealed bid specifications are mailed to vendors selected from the Master Vendor files and those vendors requesting bids via facsimile, electronic mail, or other ground mail services.

Inclusion in the Vendor Master files does not guarantee receipt of a bid invitation. Vendors are encouraged to monitor the Cobb County Purchasing Department Website and the *Marietta Daily Journal* for bid advertisements. (Some vendors may be required to pre-qualify with the user department, i.e. Department of Transportation, Property Management, and Water System).

All bid openings are public and vendors are encouraged to attend. Bid openings are also broadcast live on the Cobb Government Channel – TV23 and on the Internet at the TV23 Link on the County Website, www.cobbcounty.org .

Most Bids are available for review by appointment the day following the bid opening. Apparent low bidders and bid recommendations may be available seven (7) to ten (10) days after the initial bid opening or immediately following publication of the award recommendation in the meeting agenda of the Board of Commissioners whichever comes first.

BID AWARD CRITERIA

The basis for selection of a vendor for an award is generally the lowest responsible, responsive bid. The lowest responsible and responsive bidder is defined as the company or individual whose product best meets the bid specifications at the lowest price.

Professional services (architects, engineers, etc.) are selected on the basis of the Board approved selection process where a number of qualitative factors are considered and price may or may not be a factor. Qualitative factors considered in the evaluation process are typically: Staffing, Performance, Experience and Expertise, Availability, and Financial Stability.

Cobb County's **insurance requirements** must be met by any vendor awarded a service contract. In addition, any vendor awarded a contract over \$50,000.00 may be required to provide the appropriate payment and performance bonds.

Cobb County reserves the right to reject any and all bids or any portion thereof.

Awards are made with the following criteria being taken into consideration:

- ✓ Total Cost (Lowest Bid)
- ✓ Vendor Capability
- ✓ Service/Parts Availability
- ✓ Dependability
- ✓ Requirements of Specifications Upheld

In the case of a tie bid, all things being equal, the award will be given to the vendor located in Cobb County. Should both or neither be located in Cobb County, the County may, at its sole discretion, choose to award certain bids to more than one bidder.

MASTER AGREEMENTS/ANNUAL CONTRACTS

Cobb County has several Master Agreements or Annual Contracts in place. These agreements are term contracts initiated by the Purchasing Department for commonly used supplies or services. These agreements are for estimated quantities at fixed unit prices for a specified term, typically one year.

Individual orders against master agreements are placed directly by employees of County departments, and each order will have a unique order number beginning with the letters "DO" (Delivery Order). This order number must appear on your invoice to

ensure prompt payment. A listing of master agreements will be provided upon request.

Award of Master Agreements may be made to multiple suppliers on the basis of successful quotes for individual items within the bid request. When submitting a bid for a Master Agreement or Annual Contract item, prices quoted shall be firm for a period of one (1) year or otherwise stated. When an award is made on a Master Agreement or Annual Contract, the vendor will be notified with a "Letter of Acceptance" and purchases against this agreement or contract will be confirmed by issuing a "Delivery Order" (DO Document). **The DO number must be indicated on each invoice that is presented to Cobb County for payment.**

RETENTION OF BIDS

The original bid, along with the original tabulation sheets which are generated at the time of sealed bid openings, by law must be retained for public inspection for at least three (3) years from the date of opening. This information is available through the Purchasing Department. Please contact the Purchasing Department at 770-528-8400 to schedule an appointment to review Bid/RFP files.

PURCHASE ORDERS

The Purchasing Department will not issue a purchase order before funds have been pre-encumbered. It is very important for vendors to remember that **no office or department in Cobb County can authorize items or services to be delivered or performed prior to the vendor's receipt of a purchase order.** The only exception to this rule applies to orders of less than \$2,000.00, which may be made by Departments through the use of Departmental Purchase Orders (PD's).

TERMS OF PURCHASE ORDER CONTRACT

1. This Purchase Order form and the Cobb County Purchasing Department's written or oral solicitation with addenda, and contractor's/vendor's bid, proposal, or quote constitute a contract between Cobb County and the contractor/vendor.
2. The contract/vendor is required to deliver the commodities, quantities, and/or services exactly and in strict accordance with this purchase order. Substitutions of commodities and over shipment of quantities ordered are strictly prohibited.

3. If, for any reason, the vendor is unable to comply or supply in strict compliance with the order, the Purchasing Department must be notified immediately. Our telephone number is 770-528-8400; FAX number is 770-528-8428.
4. The Purchasing Department is the only authority for transactions under this order. The vendor is cautioned not to accept contrary instructions or conditions from any source other than the Purchasing Department, Buyer or her/his Supervisor. Should the vendor receive from any other source contrary instructions or conditions, the Purchasing Department should be immediately notified.
5. Vendor's invoices must describe the article and/or services exactly as shown on this order. **The order number must appear on invoices and delivery tickets related to this order.**
6. Prices shown on this order include all delivery costs to the delivery point shown on the order.
7. Invoices are not paid until items on the purchase order have been received, checked, and approved. Partial payments may be made.
8. The County is exempt from Georgia State Tax and Federal Excise Tax (#58-6000804). Exemption certificates will be issued upon request.
9. The vendor agrees to furnish Cobb County, Georgia with Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) on or before delivery for each hazardous chemical or substance purchased. Appropriate labels and MSDS sheets shall be provided for all shipments.
10. The vendor or contractor hereby guarantees Cobb County, Georgia that all material, supplies, services and equipment as listed on this purchase order meet the requirements, specifications and standards provided under the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, as amended and in force on the date hereof.
11. The payment terms of this purchase agreement shall be Net 30 days from receipt of invoice in the Cobb County Finance Department.

INVOICING

All vendors are required to submit invoices for both commodities and/or services. Your invoices must be sent directly to the Finance Department, **without exception**. Cash discount terms must be specified on your invoice. The name of the department where delivery of goods and/or services is to be made should also be included. The Purchase Order (PO) or Delivery Order (DO) and the vendor numbers must be

indicated as well. Back orders must also be indicated on invoices. Indication of items that will not be delivered must be clearly stated.

REMOVAL FROM MASTER VENDOR LIST

It may be necessary for the Purchasing Department to remove a vendor from the County's Master Vendor List for specific reasons. Vendors that are removed from the Master Vendor List will be notified in writing by the Purchasing Department and an explanation for the disbarment will be given.

Some of the reasons are:

- Collusion
- Bid Rigging
- Reneging on a Bid
- Poor Performance
- Non-Compliance with Specifications

Failure to respond to three (3) consecutive bid invitations in the same category may result in your company being removed from the Master Vendor List. A “**NO BID**” response is acceptable and will indicate your desire to remain an active vendor.

If no activity occurs within your vendor file for a period of three years, your file may be removed from the Master Vendor List. You would need to submit a new Master Vendor Application to again be placed on the Master Vendor List.

PAYMENT POLICY

Cobb County has established the following payment policy:

- ❖ Vendors will not be prepaid for goods and services. Exceptions to this rule do exist, such as subscriptions and organization dues.
- ❖ Checks must be made to the vendor of record and not to a factoring company or collection agency.
- ❖ All Accounts Payable checks issued by Cobb County must be mailed. The County does not allow vendors to pick up their checks.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Cobb County Purchasing Department: 1772 County Services Parkway
Marietta, GA 30008-4012

Central Phone Number (770) 528-8400

Primary Fax Number (770) 528-8428

E-mail Address: purchasing@cobbcounty.org

Department Web Site: www.purchasing.cobbcountyga.gov

Cobb County Finance Department: 100 Cherokee Street, Suite 410
Marietta, GA 30090-9610
(770) 528-1500
www.finance.cobbcountyga.gov/

Cobb County Government - Home www.cobbcounty.org

Provides links to all departments of Cobb County, cities in
Cobb County and other associated sites.

NOTE: All Cobb County employees under the Board of Commissioners are required to abide by a number of personnel conduct policies. These include the **Conduct and Performance** and **Gifts & Gratuities** policies.

Purchasing Department staff abides by these policies and, specifically, shall NOT accept entertainment or gifts offered by or on behalf of vendors, suppliers, contractors, businesses, or citizens currently or potentially serving the County. Purchasing Department staff will keep themselves free of obligation.

Vendors are expected to fully understand and to support this position.