



How to do Business with Houston Independent School District

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the HISD Purchasing Services Department is to ensure the uninterrupted flow of goods and services needed to efficiently operate the district cost effectively and to achieve the district's primary goal that is to increase student achievement.

The Purchasing Services Department is responsible for facilitating the processes governed by state and federal law to ensure best practices and a level playing field as well as fair and equitable treatment for all Vendors. Through this synergistic effort, both the Vendor and HISD will benefit from working as business partners to strengthen the social and economic foundation of the district and the community at large.

The Office of Purchasing Services is in the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center, 4400 West 18th Street, Level 2NE. You may contact us between the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., CST, Monday through Friday at 713-556.6515 or visit our Purchasing website at <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/178703>.

General information about HISD can be found in www.houstonisd.org, if you visit the Purchasing Services Department website you will be able to see the project calendar, bids/CO-OP Vendors, staff directory and other useful information. If you go to the general HISD website to be able to access our page please select "Directory," then "Purchasing Services".

If you are a prospective Vendor, and you want to receive a courtesy email from the District for those solicitations that are related to the type of goods/services your company offered, then register in the following link: <https://houstonisd.ionwave.net/Login.aspx>

It is important to update your information on regular basis or supply generic email that is monitored on a regular basis to avoid losing access should an employee leave your organization.

Your company can select as many spend categories as it applies to your type of business. The Category Specialist will then send to the email address included in the registration a courtesy email letting your company know of the new solicitation process.

GENERAL PURCHASING INFORMATION

The HISD Purchasing Team is committed to working with our Vendor Community. Our role is to follow District Policies (CH (Local) & CH(Legal), and Procedures, and the Texas Educational Code under Chapter 44, section 44.031, Chapter 2269, and Chapter 2254. We use the Strategic Sourcing Process to always be fair, transparent, and inclusive. Our Goal is to select Vendors that bring the best value to our District, and those most qualified to help us achieve the District's goals, vision and objectives.

All vendors must be selected under one of the Purchasing methods stipulated in Chapter 44, section 44.031 of the Texas Education Code and approved by the HISD Board of Education before HISD can begin using their goods and/or services. HISD requires all vendors to have an approved Purchasing instrument (i.e., purchase order, term contract, blanket purchase agreement, etc.) in place prior to providing goods or services. Entering into contracts verbally or

without appropriate authorization is prohibited and a violation of state law. Any vendor who delivers services or goods to HISD without a proper contract is doing so entirely at their own risk. HISD does not pay for goods or services that were provided without the benefit of a properly executed Purchasing contract.

Solicitation Process:

During each solicitation we want to make sure you understand our process:

1. All solicitations currently in process are in the following link: "See current bid proposals"
<https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/179249>
2. Solicitations will have a pre-proposal conference that will help the vendor community understand the scope of the project before answering the solicitation.
3. Any questions you send to us regarding a specific project will be answered as an addendum to the project.
 4. HISD Board of Education Policy requires all solicitations to be placed under a Code of Silence, we cannot provide an individual answer to your questions. Whatever information we do supply during the solicitation must be provided to all Vendors. Please check the list of projects under the Code of Silence at: <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/179159>
5. Please check our Purchasing website for all posted solicitation project addenda at <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/179249>
6. It is important to comply with the solicitation dates. Your proposal must be submitted by the day and time requested in the documentation. All sections of the solicitation must be also submitted in your proposal. Failure to comply with these requirements may cause your proposal to be considered non-compliance.
7. The District will evaluate each proposal to select the best value for the District. Those vendors selected will be brought to the Board of Trustees for approval.
8. After the solicitation process is over, if you would like to schedule a debriefing meeting for specific questions about your proposal, please send us an email at juan.kladis@houstonisd.org.

Our Vendors are very important to us, and with your support we can achieve our District's Goals.

Purchasing Services has the authority to commit district funds for the acquisition of goods and services. Purchasing Services is responsible for facilitating the processes governed by state and federal law to ensure best practices, and an equally competitive environment for the purchase of all goods and services. The district purchases a wide variety of goods and services including but not limited to:

- (1) Professional Services,
- (2) Construction/Repairs of Facilities
- (3) All other goods and services.

Purchasing Services primarily handles the acquisition of goods & services. This procedure is intended to aid with acquisitions made by the Purchasing Services Department, in which a purchase order will ensure the timely payment of goods/services rendered.

The standard methods utilized for the acquisition of goods and services from Vendors are the HISD Purchase Order and the HISD Purchasing Card (PROCARD).

GOODS & SERVICES REQUIRING A PURCHASE ORDER

The district is required to competitively bid any/all expenditures greater than \$50,000.00 in the aggregate; meaning just about every purchase made by the district.

The Purchase Order is an official document that may serve as the contract between HISD and the Vendor for the Purchasing of goods and services.

A Purchase Order is also a binding commitment for HISD to remit payment to the Vendor after the item(s) and an invoice are received by the district according to the terms and conditions as stated on the purchase order.

Vendors may not change or modify what is stated specifically on the purchase order. If a change is necessary, it will only be made by a formal change order issued by Purchasing Services. Any changes made that do not adhere to the terms outlined in the purchase order will not be honored.

Each purchase order with the Vendor will be confirmed by a member of the Purchasing Services Department prior to issuance. This is necessary to ensure the accuracy of pricing, availability and the required due date, and also to ensure that prompt payment follows an accurate invoice. The unit of measure, the unit price, the description and the total cost must all be verified and must match before an invoice can be paid; therefore, it is extremely important that this dialog takes place prior to the issuance of the purchase order and invoicing process.

The delivery date specified on the purchase order is in fact the date the goods or services are due at the district. This is not a ship date or a start date, but rather a completion date and Vendors will be graded by their ability to deliver goods or services timely. This grading may adversely affect future district business with the Vendor.

If third party freight is ever required and it is the district's responsibility to pay, it should be prepaid by the Vendor and added to the invoice, as a separate freight line item listed on the purchase order. Third party freight invoices will not be paid by the district.

Contracts are issued for a specific requirement (goods or services) for a specific period of time. Contracts do not automatically renew. If there is a "compelling" reason for the district to renew a contract, it must be done formally. Likewise, if there is a compelling reason for the district to solicit new competitive proposals, it must do so.

The PROCARD is a professional credit card issued to HISD employees. The PROCARD must be used only with approved HISD merchants/Vendors, and it will be accepted by any merchant/Vendor who accepts MasterCard. The PROCARD allows authorized district employees to procure goods and services that cost less than \$1000 with a maximum dollar-spending limit of \$7500 per month.

BIDS AND PROPOSALS

All expenditures (district-wide) must be competitively bid by the Purchasing Services Department, only.

Competitive bids are generally solicited either by means of a Request for Proposal (RFP), or a competitive sealed bid (or proposal) or as defined under Chapter 44, section 44.031. While RFP's may result in additional negotiations before a contract award takes place, all bids/proposals should always be prepared with utmost care, providing the bidder's best offer. Contracts awarded as a result of an erroneous offer may result in serious financial loss or other hardship for the bidder.

Before preparing an offer, Vendors are encouraged to pay particularly close attention to the district's requirements and the intent to which a contract is awarded. Study the specifications to be sure that all requirements are met. These are the only goods/services that may be contracted for.

Current bid/proposal solicitations are announced in local newspapers of mass-distribution for two consecutive weeks. They are also posted on the district's Purchasing Web site at: <https://www.houstonisd.org/Page/179249> Specific attention should be given to the instructions to offerors and to the conditions of purchase, delivery due date, payment terms and conditions.

When determining the amount of the offer, the Vendor should be especially careful to include all costs of material, labor, overhead, packaging, and delivery.

If a firm wants to change or withdraw a bid, it may send a letter to this effect to the Category Specialist leading that solicitation in Purchasing Services. However, the notification must reach the Purchasing Services office prior to the time set for the bid opening.

When preparing a proposal in response to an RFP, the same care should be taken as with a sealed bid/ proposal; however, because the RFP procedure is more flexible than the sealed bid procedure, there is greater opportunity to seek clarity of specifications, conditions of purchase, or delivery and payment.

If negotiations are necessary, the process will begin with the proposal submitted by the Vendor as a starting point and the results are contingent upon obtaining final Board of Education approval.

If the contracting officer decides to negotiate on a firm's proposal, a complete cost analysis may be required including all cost drivers.

Therefore, the firm should be prepared to support their proposal with documented facts and figures. Usually, all contracts that require Board of Education approval (\$50,000. or greater) will result in a Master Agreement (contract), against which, one or more purchase orders may reference.

When necessary a "Letter of Intent" will be sent to the Vendor(s) stating the intent of the district to seek Board of Education approval to execute a contract/agreement and a general outline of the proposed agreement.

It is important to note that the contract or Master Agreement contains all contractual terms and conditions governing the business relationship and any purchase orders written as a result of the contract or Master Agreement do not supersede the terms and conditions contained within the contract or Master Agreement.

All literature including pamphlets, catalogs, brochures etc. must be approved by the Category Specialist prior to distribution to any school and or department or facility.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS – FACILITIES

The District follows CV(Local) and CV(Legal) for all Facilities Construction projects. HISD considers a construction contract using a method authorized by Government Code Chapter 2269 other than competitive bidding must, before advertising, determine which method provides the best value for the district. Gov't Code 2269.056(a)

- If the anticipated expenditure is greater than \$20,000, the service will require a licensed Engineer.
- If the anticipated expenditure is greater than \$25,000, a payment bond is required.
- If the anticipated expenditure is greater than \$100,000, a performance bond is required.

How do I receive payment for an issued HISD Purchase Orders?

ACCOUNTS PAYABLES - PAYMENT PROCESS

HISD is an educational institution, a political subdivision of the state of Texas and as such, is tax exempt. All invoices must only be sent to the HISD Accounts Payable Department by using the following email addresses:

Inquires/Statements: AccountsPayable@houstonisd.org
PO Related Invoices: HISD_VendorInvoices@houstonisd.org

INFORMATION NEEDED ON INVOICES:

Date (Of service)

Amount

PO# (need to match contract)

Address (Match system)

Reference Number (No more than 16 characters)

Vendor address updates send to Purchasing – MasterData@houstonisd.org

WHAT WILL CAUSE A DELAY IN PAYMENT?

No purchase order(s)

Invalid purchase order

Incomplete date

No address

Purchase order does not match billing

Substitutions without Purchasing Approval

Only invoices that refer to a specific purchase order and line item, that precisely match the purchase order in detail will be accepted.

The district's standard payment terms are Net 30 days, from the receipt of the invoice, in the Accounts Payable Department. If additional discounts are offered for early payment, please include those discounts in the offering.

Invoices will only be paid after the goods or services are received, therefore, prepayments in any form are not acceptable.

BUSINESS ASSISTANT OFFICE - MINORITY AND WOMEN BUSINESS ENTERPRISES (M/WBE) PROGRAM

The Houston Independent School District established the Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) Program in 1988 in order to advocate fair and equitable opportunities for the participation of M/WBE firms, in the areas of procurement, construction, and professional services. Our objectives are to increase and utilize M/WBE companies in as many HISD projects as possible, to create an atmosphere of inclusiveness, and to deliver what we promise to all of our business associates.

In order to advocate fair and equitable opportunities for the participation of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises, HISD is committed to providing opportunities in the areas of purchasing, professional services, and construction. We define an M/WBE firm as a business enterprise that is at least 51% owned by one of the following socially/economically disadvantaged groups – African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American, Native-American, and Women. HISD accepts certification as an M/WBE firm from the following agencies: City of Houston, the Houston Minority Vendor Development Council, and/or the Women's Business Enterprise Alliance.

HISD's minimum MWBE goal is 20% of all purchasing and construction contracts over \$50,000, and 25% for professional services. At the very least, good faith efforts in the use of MWBE's are required by policy in the purchase of:

- Goods and Nonprofessional Services
- Construction Contracts (General and Subcontractors)
- Professional Services

All district Vendors are asked to commit to the same goals when doing business with their Vendors.

The District offers workshops on the first Wednesday of each month at the CFS/Bond Administration Building located at 3200 Center Street, Houston, TX 77007 from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM. If the first Wednesday should fall on a scheduled holiday, the workshop will move to the next Wednesday of that month. Please call Business Assistant offices at (713) 556-7273 for the scheduled dates, times and topics for these events.