

Welcome to the Purchasing Division. We appreciate your interest and hope this guide will be of benefit to you as a supplier to the City of Norwalk. Our aim is to be helpful to you in your sales effort and to promote a climate for good business relationships with the City of Norwalk. This guide will outline our procedures and policies affecting purchasing. Whenever you need more information, please ask us.

### PURPOSE

Purchasing is an important activity where it is mandatory that the responsibility for buying materials and services be assigned to people skilled in negotiating, cost reduction and other purchasing techniques. The primary responsibility is to provide for the purchase of materials, supplies and services with the objective that they will be available at the proper time, in the proper place, in quantity, quality and price consistent with the needs of the City. This balancing of several factors is critical. To achieve this overall objective, the responsibilities, authorities and controls set forth in this policy, and related policies and procedures, must be adhered to.

### ORGANIZATION

The City of Norwalk maintains a centralized system of purchasing. All departments of the City obtain supplies, services and equipment through this central Purchasing Division, headed by the Administrative Services Manager. Contractual services are also pursued and obtained through this Division.

The advantages of a centralized purchasing system are multiple; however, the Purchasing Division considers these to be of primary importance:

1. Centralized purchasing offers better control of purchases made by the City.
2. Purchasing costs are reduced while quality of product is assured.
3. Awareness is increased concerning the reliability of vendors for quality and service.
4. Purchasing can standardize and obtain commodities at lower prices while assuring the quality of the product remains consistent with the City's needs.

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**BIDS:** It is the policy of the City to obtain competitive bids whenever possible. Written bids are the primary means of obtaining prices; phone quotations are solicited when practical. All written bids are due on the date and time specified on the bid form. Emergency purchases may be made without the use of the public notice or sealed bid procedure.

Specifications prepared by City departments are carefully reviewed to eliminate undue restrictions and other limitations, which unnecessarily reduce competition. The purchase will eventually be made from the lowest responsible bidder meeting these objective specifications.

**BID LIST:** Lists of interested and responsible vendors are maintained by the Purchasing Division. Contact the Purchasing Division for a "Bidder's Mailing List Application:" form to add your company name to our bidders list.

**BID RESULTS:** After the due date, bid awards are a matter of public record. Records of written bids showing prices and awards are available for your inspection.

It should be understood that a formal bid constitutes an offer to enter into a contract with the City, which, if accepted, is binding. Do not promise deliveries you cannot fulfill. If your bid is accepted, your contract will hold you to all the terms of the Invitation to Bid.

**SPECIFICATIONS:** Written specifications are used in the bidding process to describe the level of quality required; unless otherwise specified, all merchandise purchased is new and unused.

In addition to the specifications, terms and conditions for purchases may also be outlined in the bid. Award is made to the vendor who meets the specifications and terms and conditions, including delivery requirements and offers the lowest price. Cash discounts are encouraged and may be considered in the award.

**SHIPMENT:** Deliveries in almost all cases are required to be made to the City, FOB: Destination.

**DELIVERY:** Requirements for delivery may be specified on bids and purchase orders. Failure to meet the specified date may cause cancellation of the order and will reflect on the vendor's performance rating.

### INSPECTIONS

City specifications define the quality and performance required of each purchase. Variations from the specifications make a shipment subject to rejection. In addition to quality condition checks at delivery, purchases are subject to inspection for conformity with specifications. Such inspections may be made at the supplier's plant, upon delivery, or when the items are later applied to their intended use. A vendor's record of compliance with specifications is an important factor in evaluating buying sources.

### OTHER REQUIREMENTS

**INSURANCE:** In all instances in which vendor personnel enter City of Norwalk property to repair, install, service, construct, etc., the City of Norwalk requires General Liability and Auto Liability Insurance for not less than \$1,000,000. The certificate required must also name the City of Norwalk as additional insured, and must include Workers' Compensation Insurance coverage. Whenever insurance is required, the vendor will be responsible to provide the necessary certificates. Some vendors have their carriers issue the certificate to cover "all operations: for the City of Norwalk. This eliminates the need to provide a certificate for each project. Contact the Purchasing Division for further information.

**BID AND PERFORMANCE BONDS:** Bid and Performance Bonds are required only when it is absolutely necessary to protect the interests of the City, and they may be required on certain purchases, depending on the complexity of the procurement and dollar value.

**BLANKET PURCHASE ORDERS:** A Blanket Purchase Order allows a vendor to sell goods to the City on an as-needed basis at specific prices or under a specific pricing formula, for a specified period of time (*one fiscal year or less*). A vendor holding a Blanket Purchase Order does NOT ship goods until an authorized City employee issues a written or verbal release for specific goods to be supplied pursuant to the Blanket Purchase Order. *Only items which are described on the Blanket Purchase Order may be purchased.* The vendor should reference the Blanket Purchase Order number on all invoices.

**CHANGE ORDERS:** The Purchase Order is the City's contract with the vendor. Therefore, *any change to that contract must be in writing and authorized by the Purchasing Division.* Department personnel may NOT make changes to the Purchase Order.

**TAX:** The City is exempted from federal excise tax by Federal law. Prices quoted by vendors shall include sales or use tax, unless otherwise requested; all applicable taxes should be included on invoices. Use tax is paid directly to out-of-state vendors, if the vendor is licenses to collect such tax.

**BILLING:** The Purchase Order number must appear on all invoices, shipping tags, and all correspondence relevant to the order.

**PAYMENT:** Payment is made to the vendor after receipt of invoice and delivery and acceptance of material on the Purchase Order. The Accounts Payable Section of the Finance Department will process invoices and issue checks for payment to the vendor. Issuing departments are not responsible for payment to vendors, and all invoices are to be sent to Accounts Payable.

**MINORITY, SMALL & LOCAL BUSINESSES:** The City is vitally interested in promoting minority, small and local businesses. We see new and small businesses as an important part of a competitive bid process.

**GIFTS AND GRATUITIES:** The City of Norwalk maintains a strict policy prohibiting the acceptance by its employees, of gifts and/or gratuities from any supplier or potential supplier.

#### **SALES CALLS AND CONTRACTS**

Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, open alternate Fridays until 5:00 p.m. We will try to see you even if you have not called for an appointment. In order to conserve your time, we request that you make a definite appointment before coming to the Purchasing Division.

All sales representatives should deal directly with the Purchasing Division. No one outside the Purchasing Division can commit the City to a purchase without a Purchase Order. Do not ship materials or initiate any services without a Purchase Order number. Doing so puts the vendor at risk of not getting paid for unauthorized sales.

**EXCEPTION:** There are obviously times during emergencies when an order must be placed by City personnel after hours or on weekends. Emergency purchases may be made for items which are immediately necessary for the continued operation of the office or department involved, or which are immediately necessary for the preservation of life or property. Be assured that true emergency purchases at such times without Purchase Order numbers will be approved.

**BUY LOCAL:** For the purpose of calculating the lowest responsible bidder, vendors whose business or sales office or place of manufacture is located in the City of Norwalk shall be given a five (5%) percent credit in their bid in order to reflect the advantages that accrue to the City by the award of a bid to a local vendor.

#### **SUMMARY**

We hope this brief outline has helped you in understanding our Division and its purpose.

*We know that we can assist you by:*

- Directing your attention to our present and future needs.
- Consolidating our requirements.
- Arranging for demonstrations before the proper people.
- Aiding in obtaining the greatest yield for your time and effort.

*We hope you will help us by:*

- Keeping us informed concerning new items and trends.
- Remembering that contractual commitments may only be made by the Purchasing Division.
- Checking with us before leaving demonstration or loaner equipment or supplies with departments.
- Aiding us in obtaining the greatest yield for our time, effort and the taxpayer's dollars.

When we do conduct business with you, it is our desire to have you feel that each transaction has been satisfactorily concluded.

#### **STANDARDS OF PURCHASING PRACTICE**

- To consider, first, the interests of his company in all transactions and to carry out and believe in its established policies.
- To be receptive to competent counsel from his colleagues and to be guided by such counsel without impairing the dignity and responsibility of his office.
- To buy without prejudice, seeking to obtain the maximum ultimate value for each dollar of expenditure.
- To strive consistently for knowledge of the materials and processes of manufacture, and to establish practical methods for the conduct of his office.
- To subscribe to and work for honesty and truth in buying and selling, and to denounce all forms and manifestations of commercial bribery.
- To accord a prompt and courteous reception, so far as conditions will permit, to all who call on a legitimate business mission.
- To respect his obligations and to require that obligations to him and to his concern be respected, consistent with good business practice.
- To avoid sharp practice.
- To counsel and assist fellow purchasing agents in the performance of their duties, whenever occasion permits.
- To cooperate with all organizations and individuals engaged in activities designed to enhance the development and standing of purchasing.

## **VENDOR'S GUIDE TO SELLING TO THE**

# **City of Norwalk**



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