

XXVI. PURCHASING RESPONSIBILITIES

The Purchasing Agent is charged with the responsibility of assuring fair and equitable treatment to all vendors without regard to political pressure or ethnic background.

The responsibility of purchasing ultimately rests with the Commissioners' Court. The Purchasing Agent aids in the purchasing process but is subject to the Court's direction as to reasonable specifications and maximum prices on items to be purchased.

In order for the County to maintain its position of leadership, it is imperative that we continually strive to balance cost, delivery, and quality in every area of our business operation. A large cost element is purchased material and services. These costs provide an excellent opportunity for cost reduction and control.

It is mandatory in purchasing that the responsibility for buying materials and services be assigned to particular individuals, in each department, skilled in negotiating, value analysis, and other purchasing techniques.

To achieve these overall objectives, the responsibilities, authorities, and controls set forth in this policy, and related policies, must be adhered to by all employees.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Only those persons to whom authority has specifically been delegated by department heads are authorized to commit County funds for materials, equipment, supplies and services.
- Each purchaser has the responsibility for the procurement of all goods and services and to provide the services for all such procurements.
- All purchasers are responsible for initiating and maintaining effective and professional relationships with suppliers, actual and potential.
- All purchasers have the responsibility for obligating the County and for making the determination of source of supply (if not required to quote or bid), quantities purchased, delivery schedule, and price negotiations.
- All negotiations are to be handled by the appropriate purchases within their delegated authority.
- All employees involved in purchasing activities will work to maintain and enhance the County's image by their personal conduct and method of doing business.
- All employees engaged in purchasing activities will recognize and practice good public relations by giving all callers and visitors courteous treatment.
- Supplier selection and products purchased are to meet the basic policies and standard practices of the County. The order replacement of non-standard products "by attrition" is to occur when cost-effective and operating commitments can be met.
- All purchasers are to seek to obtain and purchase all goods at the lowest possible total end-use cost, considering the guidelines of prices, service, quality and delivery.
- All purchasers must work to establish and encourage punctual delivery of specified goods and services in correct quantities.
- All purchases will negotiate the return of rejected equipment or supplies to suppliers.
- The Purchasing Agent will advise management of economic conditions and changes significant to the County's long and short-term interests.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PURCHASING DEPARTMENT AND REQUESTING DEPARTMENTS

This section of the Procedures Manual outlines the responsibilities of the County's departments when requesting purchase orders through the Purchasing Department. It should be used as a guide to help departments do their part in purchasing.

1. Purchasing Department's Responsibilities are to:

- (a) obtain information about and to assist the various departments of the County when bid assistance is required.
- (b) issue purchase orders to all departments for its needs.

2. Requesting Department's Responsibilities are to:

- (a) make requests early enough to allow sufficient time for the vendor to make delivery or the Purchasing staff to respond based on scheduling and legal requirements.
- (b) prepare specifications if needed.
- (c) supply a written list to the Purchasing Department of any department's personnel (besides the department head or county official) who are authorized to prepare and sign requisition forms.
- (d) supply a written list to the Purchasing Department of any department's personnel (besides the department head or county official) who are authorized to request purchase orders by telephone.
- (e) inform the Purchasing Department or Commissioners' Court of any or all unusual demands.
- (f) take no action which might be viewed as obligating or committing the County, except in an emergency.
- (g) make no commitments regarding commodities or services in the name of the County. Such commitments will be VOID unless they are made by the issuance of a purchase order by the Purchasing Department, the Commissioners' Court or other agents of Commissioners' Court.