

**Doing Business  
With  
Dutchess County**

**Vendor Guide**

**Marcus J. Molinaro**  
County Executive

**Glenn Marchi, Ph.D.**  
Commissioner

**Christopher G. Barclay**  
Director

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## **Introduction**

Thank you for your interest in doing business with Dutchess County Government. This Vendor Guide will serve as a valuable tool for your company and includes some general information on how we procure goods and services for the County. Familiarizing yourself with this guide will increase your possibilities to partner with Dutchess County on future business opportunities.

Prospective bidders should especially note the procedures for submitting a bid and complying with its specific requirements. These procedures include local policies and those required under New York State General Municipal Law 103 and 104-b. Additional general procedural information is also included to assist any prospective vendor in doing business with the County of Dutchess.

The County seeks to achieve an effective procedural agreement, which will benefit both parties. If you have any questions concerning the policies and procedures set forth in this guide, please contact Dutchess County, OCIS, Division of Central Services.

## **Contact Information**

The Division of Central Services has two main components for the purchasing function: the buying unit which handles purchases from contracts and all items not requiring a formal bid; and the contract unit that handles all processes required for bidding and awarding formal bids and request for proposals.

All formal quotes are the responsibility of the buying unit, as well as the sourcing of goods and services under the bidding threshold.

### **OCIS**

#### **Division of Central Services**

378 Violet Ave, Suite 2  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601  
845-486-3670

**Chris Barclay**

Director

**Angela Romano**

Purchasing Agent

**Ellie Theohary**

Assistant Purchasing Agent

**Michael Menton**

Buyer

## **New York State Law**

New York State General Municipal Law requires a formal bid for all purchases in excess of \$20,000 and Public Works contracts in excess of \$35,000.

New York State General Municipal Law also requires municipalities to establish procedures for purchasing goods and services that fall below the monetary bid limits.

Goods and services which are not required by law to be procured pursuant to competitive bidding must be procured in a manner to assure the prudent and economical use of public monies in the best interests of the taxpayers of Dutchess County, to facilitate the acquisition of goods and services of maximum quality at the lowest possible cost under the circumstances, and to guard against favoritism and extravagance.

## **County Procurement Policy**

The County's policies and procedures for purchases that fall below the limits set by New York State law are as follows:

### **Goods and Services:**

\$1 - \$4,999 No formal quotation required. The purchase method shall be at the discretion of the Director of Central Services who may determine that a formal quote could reduce costs and increase competition.

\$4,999 - \$19,999 At least three formal written or automated (Empire State Municipal Purchasing Group) quotations, from responsible vendors (if available). The method of quotation used will be at the discretion of the Director of Central Services. When applicable, the local business consideration policy shall apply.

### **Public Works:**

\$1 - \$9,999 No formal written quotations. The procurement shall be at the discretion of the Commissioner of Public Works.

\$10,000 - \$34,999 Formal written quotations from at least six responsible vendors (if available). A public works project shall be defined as one where labor is a substantial component, 50% or more, of the cost.

Please review the County's Procurement Policies and Procedures on the Dutchess County website for detailed information regarding exceptions to bidding and quoting (i.e. emergencies).

## **Local Business Consideration**

Dutchess County utilizes a local business strategy when allowable by law. Specifically, when a formal written quotation is used, and the lowest responsible and responsive bidder is not a local business, then the lowest responsible and responsive local business bidder (if applicable or available) who is within ten percent (10%) of the lowest bidder, shall be provided with notice and an opportunity to reduce its bid to match that of the lowest.

The local business shall have three business days to match the lowest bid in writing. Should the local business match, it will be deemed the lowest responsible and responsive bidder and receive the award. Should the lowest local business bidder decline to match, the next lowest local bidder who is within ten percent (10%) of the lowest bidder will be given the same notice and opportunity.

This process shall continue as necessary until an award is made either to a local business bidder who is within ten percent (10%) or the lowest bidder itself.

For the full details of this program and how to qualify please visit the Dutchess County website at [www.dutchessny.gov](http://www.dutchessny.gov) or contact the Division of Central Services at (845) 486-3670

## Vendor Notification

The County of Dutchess utilizes a regional bid notification system, known as the **Empire State Purchasing Group**. In conjunction with **BidNet** ([www.bidnetdirect.com/new-york](http://www.bidnetdirect.com/new-york)), this system is being used by 49 agencies within the Hudson Valley region, as well as agencies throughout New York State, to post all bids, quotes, request for proposals, construction notices, addenda, and award notices.

If you do not have Internet access or if you have questions when registering, you may call **BidNet** at **1-800-835-4603** and press option #2 for their Vendor Support Department. They will be happy to register you over the telephone. Once registered, you will have access to all current and future participating municipalities of the Empire State Purchasing Group.

You may register for free or pay the annual fee, in either instance, you have the same capability to download the bid documents. By paying, you will receive email notification of bid opportunities as well as any addendums to posted bids.

By working together in using this system, the County of Dutchess expects to improve service to vendors by providing instant access to bids, proposals, quotes and amendments online.

Dutchess County posts a listing of all open bids, quotes and RFP's on the County website. In order to review their content, you will need to access the online bid notification system.

Vendors may also sign up for **DutchessDelivery** to obtain information about current RFP's, bids and quotes. This is the County's online communication outreach program that allows residents to subscribe to topics of interest through the County's website. Bid notification is one of the topics you may subscribe to whereby that information will automatically be "pushed" out to you via e-mail. You will then need to go to the County's bid notification system to respond to the solicitation.

## **How Do I Compete for County Contracts?**

### **Solicitations:**

Upon learning of an upcoming solicitation you may obtain the bid package by going to **[www.bidnetdirect.com/new-york](http://www.bidnetdirect.com/new-york)**. This site provides the specifications and/or scope of work for the commodity or services being purchased and the terms and conditions governing the bid or proposal. Make sure that your submittal reaches Central Services before the time and date specified on the solicitation. Late submittals will not be accepted, and it shall be returned unopened to the firm. Request for bids are opened in public. All questions regarding the solicitations or scope of services are to be directed only to Central Services. You may not contact any other County Department

once the solicitation has been issued or you will be in violation of the County policy.

**Each bid packet contains:**

- Name and number of the bid
- Instructions and information for bidders
- Time and date on which the bid is due to the Division of Central Services
- Specifications
- Bid proposal form
- Non-collusion affidavit

**Specifications:**

These are detailed descriptions of the intended purchase, establishing the minimum acceptable standards.

**Bidder's Responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of the bidder to read all documents contained in the bid specifications carefully and follow the directions in the bid packet. Bidders are responsible for the timely submission of their proposal. Bidders are responsible for reporting any errors or omissions, in writing or by email, to the Division of Central Services.

## **Demonstration of Products**

Vendors are encouraged to show and demonstrate their products to the Central Service's staff. It is important to relieve any doubt or misunderstanding that could be corrected through a product demonstration. Demonstrations are also valuable to evaluate new products in their working environments. Any proposed demonstration to a County Department should be coordinated through Central Services. Any equipment left for trial purposes should be fully documented to allow for ease of removal.

## **Sales Calls**

Vendors are encouraged to visit the Central Services office at any time during normal business hours. No prior appointment is necessary; however, to assure that the necessary participants are available, calling ahead to schedule an appointment is strongly encouraged. If meetings are to include other departments, arrangements must be made in advance. Vendors are discouraged from contacting other departments or divisions directly without consultation with Central Services.

## VENDOR RELATIONS

It is the policy of the Dutchess County Division of Central Services to maintain and practice the highest possible standards of business ethics, professional courtesy and competence in all dealings. At all times, applicable laws must be scrupulously observed. In this regard, the following guidelines shall be observed by the Central Services Staff:

- Accord prompt and courteous reception to all suppliers and their representatives.
- Provide for and allow fair and equal treatment to all vendors.
- Assure the confidentiality of all quotations prior to the public opening or award.
- Remain free from obligation to any supplier or their representative.
- Avoid putting the vendor to unnecessary expense or inconvenience by showing consideration for seller's difficulties whenever possible.
- Provide clear and concise instructions and explain fully and reason for rejection.

**Dutchess County**  
**Office of Central and Information Services**  
Division of Central Services  
378 Violet Ave, Suite 2  
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845-486-3670



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