

**“Information on how
to do business with
Camden County
Government”**

**Camden County
Board of Commissioners**

VENDOR GUIDE



**CAMDEN COUNTY
PURCHASING
OFFICE**

200 East 4th Street
PO Box 99
Woodbine, GA 31569

**“Creating a partnership
with industry”**

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Section I: Introduction

A. About Camden County

Camden County is served by a Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) representing each of the county's five districts. Elected by the county at large, each Commissioner serves a four-year term and the terms are staggered. The multiple county wide services of the Board of County Commissioners are provided by various departments and divisions under the direction of the County Manager. The Board of County Commissioners is the legislative branch of the county and the fiscal representatives of the county. Acting in good faith and within their statutory authority, the Commissioners have wide discretion in the execution of their duties.

B. Purchasing Office

The Purchasing Office provides services that include the purchase of goods and services, construction and capital improvement projects, professional services, capital equipment, inventory management, and fixed assets management. The office strives to provide quality service through effective communication and a cooperative working relationship with all departments and vendors; to fulfill the needs of the County for goods and services in a professional, responsive, timely and cost effective manner; and in accordance with all legal requirements and ethical standards,

Information including title, phone numbers, email address and functions can be viewed on our web site www.co.camden.ga.us. We are located on the 2nd floor of the Government Service Building at:

Camden County Board of Commissioners
200 East 4th Street
Woodbine, GA 31569
Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

In order to ensure an adequate amount of time to introduce your firm and/or product, we ask that you make an appointment before visiting the purchasing office.

1. Mission:

The mission of the Purchasing Office is to provide for fair and equitable treatment of all persons involved in public purchasing by the county with the highest level of customer service, to strive to maximize the purchasing value of public funds in procurement and to provide safeguards for maintaining a procurement system of quality and integrity.

2. Vision:

Knowledgeable and professional personnel working together in trust and with open, honest communication to maintain the integrity of purchasing and to provide good, effective customer service in procuring products and services at the best value.

3. What We Buy:

The County purchases supplies, equipment and services (including public improvements and professional services) necessary to operate. The demand for goods and services within the County results in a continuous need for items of every nature and description. In an effort to stimulate competition, we want to provide all interested vendors an opportunity to offer their product and services to Camden County. We are constantly looking for new sources of supply and encourage vendors to register.

C. E-Procurement

www.co.camden.ga.us

- Vendor Registration
- Current Procurement
- Past Bid Tabulations
- Personnel
- Vendor Guide
- NIGP Commodity Codes
- Purchasing/P-Card/Travel Policy
- Customer Satisfaction Survey

Section II: Vendor Information

A. The Competitive Process

It is the intention of the Purchasing Office to obtain the “Best Value” for the County and its citizens through a competitive process. The procurement of all goods, materials, equipment, services and combinations of goods and/or services on behalf of the Board in excess of \$25,000 are procured via a formal competitive process, unless otherwise authorized for a different method in the Camden County Administrative Code. Formal and informal quotes are obtained for goods or services ranging from \$1,500 to \$24,999.99.

B. Vendor Database

The County utilizes E-procurement initiatives in the vendor registration and notification process. This registration and notification service is through Public Purchase at no cost to all vendors. There is a simple registration that must be completed and you must select the *commodity class category* listing of the goods and services that you can provide. The County will notify the registered companies automatically through e-mail of upcoming procurement opportunities. If you do not have e-mail capability, a procurement package can be mailed for a nominal fee. If you have any questions, would like to request a bid package or need assistance in registering, please contact the Purchasing Office at 912-576-6684. Vendors without computers may access the internet by visiting the Camden County Library or visit the Government Services Complex where a computer station is available in the Human Resources Department.

C. Purchasing Thresholds

1. Purchases \$249.99 and under

Purchases \$249.99 and under are considered small purchases and do not require quotes or a purchase order. There are two preferred methods of payment for small purchases, County issued Purchasing Card (P-card) or account billing.

2. Purchases \$250.00 to \$1499.99

Purchases totaling \$250.00 to \$1499.99 require a Field Purchase Order. A Field Purchase Order has a six (6) digit number and should be obtained from the county employee PRIOR to making the purchase. The one exception when a field PO is not required for this dollar amount is if the employee is paying by P-card. County employees must obtain two (2) quotes for this threshold, the chosen quote and one additional quote.

3. Purchases \$1500.00 and up

Purchases totaling \$1500.00 and up require a Standard Purchase Order. A Standard Purchase Order has an eight (8) digit number and should be obtained from the county employee PRIOR to making the purchase. Purchases made with the P-card for this dollar amount will require a Standard Purchase Order number. County employees must obtain three (3) quotes for this threshold, the chosen quote and two additional quotes.

Section III: Types of Procurement

1. Single/Sole Source

Single Source procurements exist when the County has determined that there is only one item, source, or vendor available in the area for a particular item. Sole Source procurement exists when only one vendor possesses the unique and singularly available capability to meet the requirement of the solicitation, such as technical qualifications, ability to deliver at a particular time, services from a public utility or when there is a situation where a particular supplier or person is identified as the only qualified source available. While similar products may exist, the particular product may be proprietary. A written justification documenting the basis for this determination must accompany the request to procure.

2. Emergency Procurement

Emergency procurements may be expedited by using limited competition. An emergency procurement is defined when conditions might adversely affect the life, health, safety, and welfare of its citizens, employees, or when County property or equipment are endangered, situations which may cause major financial impacts to the County should immediate action not to be taken.

3. Local Preference

When written quotations are received, and if the lowest price is offered by an entity located outside of Camden County, and the next lowest price is offered by an entity located within Camden County, it is best practice to ask the local vendor to match pricing.

4. Cooperative Purchasing

In an effort to leverage the buying power of the County, Purchasing may join with other units of government in cooperative purchasing ventures, when it is in the best interest of the County to do so. The County may also purchase from contract let by other government entities without initiating its own bid. In order to do so, the contract must have been competitively bid and the bid solicitation legally advertised.

5. State Contract

When available, the use of Georgia State contract is allowed. Quotes may be used without having to obtain other quotes. However, other quotes are still encouraged periodically.

Section IV: Vendor Invitation to Bid/Request for Proposals

Camden County makes every effort to increase business opportunities for all firms through full and open competition. According to Ken Babich, BCom, CPPO, in *Sourcing in the Public Sector*, “competition lowers prices and supports the goal of economy” (19). The County utilizes Invitations to Bid (ITB) and Request for Proposals (RFP) when procuring professional services (architects, engineers, consultants, health insurance, etc) or for large transactions where other factors, in addition to cost, are considered in the evaluation process. (Section C, 171) The competitive bidding process allows greater flexibility in selecting the most qualified and experienced firm to provide these specialized services for the County. Invitations to Bid (ITB) and Requests for Proposals (RFP) are advertised as defined by Georgia State Law. The Board prohibits entering into contracts or making purchases for the purpose of evading requirements of competitive bidding. According to John Miller, CPPO in *Contracting for Public Sector Services* “governments have contracted for public services for decades” (13).

A. Bidding Methods

Purchases or Projects/Services exceeding \$25,000 may be made utilizing either of two methods:

1. **Invitation to Bid** – The bid documents and specifications are definite and specific. Awards shall be made to the bidder offering the lowest cost, who is responsive to the

requirements of the bid documents, without material exception, and who is responsible and capable of providing the item(s) or service to be purchased/contracted. Evaluation and award are limited to cost, determination of compliance with the specifications and conditions specified in the bid documents, and the responsibility of the bidder. Negotiations are not permitted. The Purchasing Officer may use judgmental consideration to determine if the bidder's offer complies with the specifications and conditions if such considerations can be demonstrated to be reasonable, appropriate, and fairly applied. This method does not permit comparison of the relative specifications of competing bidders, but only comparison to the specifications contained in the bid documents.

2. **Request For Proposal** – This method can be used whenever detailed specifications cannot be determined, whenever several possible methods may satisfy the County's requirements, or whenever the nature of the requirements is such that subjective evaluation of criteria other than cost is necessary. A scope of work is required, which makes comparison of competing proposals relative to each other appropriate. This method permits negotiations and discussion with competing vendors to determine the best solution to the County's needs. Proposals may be revised or modified at the request of the County. Subjective criteria shall be used in the evaluation of competing proposals. The relative value of evaluation criteria and method of evaluation shall be established in the Request for Proposal documents published by the County. While proposals are opened publicly, only the names of the officers are read aloud. Neither prices nor other information is public until after a Notice of Intent to Award is posted or all proposals have been rejected.

B. Bidding Process

1. The process begins when the requesting department submits a detailed scope of work and evaluation criteria to Purchasing. The department may also submit a cost estimate for the project list to Purchasing. The bid documents may contain a basic contract that may be used, if appropriate, for a particular service. Parts of the contract may be modified (insurance requirements, bonding requirements, etc.) depending on the type of service. The Purchasing Officer will assist the requesting department in determining the need for a contract and, if so, the necessary elements of the contract. Based on the information provided, Purchasing will formalize the ITB or RFP and submit the document to the requesting department for approval prior to issuance. (NIGP Section C, 17m, Section E 27) The Department Head, or designated representative, shall establish an Evaluation Committee consisting of an odd number of participants, prior to the date proposals are due. The Purchasing Officer will chair the Evaluation Committee and assist throughout the review process.
2. According to Georgia Code 50-22-3, public notice of each proposed project requiring professional services may be given at least 15 (fifteen) days prior to the selection of the three or more most highly qualified vendor. Prior to entering into a Public Works contract, the request shall be posted conspicuously in the governing authority's office and shall be advertised in the legal organ of the county (Tribune & Georgian) OR by electronic means on an Internet website of the county per O.C.G.A. 36-91-20 a minimum of two times, with the first advertisement occurring at least 4 (four) weeks prior to the opening of the sealed bids or proposals. The second advertisement shall follow not earlier than two weeks from the first advertisement. (Section C, 17s)
3. Vendors must develop and provide a solution in response to the Scope of Services. The Bid/RFP must be sealed, properly identified on the outside, submitted to the proper place and received no later than the time stated in the public notice. Faxed or emailed

responses are not permitted and will be deemed non-responsive. To ensure fairness, all questions must be presented in writing per the bid document. At the time of the public opening of an RFP, only the names of vendors are read; no pricing or other data is revealed to avoid conflicts during possible negotiations. During the public opening of an ITB, amounts may be read aloud since negotiations are not possible with an ITB. The committee, selected by the requesting department, bases evaluation on variables outlined in the request. Purchasing Officer will assist with the evaluation process.

4. The Committee reviews and ranks all proposals individually on their technical merits and according to the criteria established in the bid documents. The Committee may contact vendors, if any clarification is needed on the proposal. Vendors whose proposals are ranked the highest by the Evaluation Committee (short listed) may be asked to participate in an interview process to ensure a mutual understanding of both the County's requirements and the vendor's proposal. Interviews may be conducted either in person or by telephone. However, the Committee may decide that interviews are not necessary and make recommendations for award based on the information provided in the proposal.
5. If deemed necessary in a Request for Proposals, the Evaluation Committee may enter into competitive negotiations with the firm or firms ranked highest after evaluations. This is a formal process that entails a written request for Best and Final Offers (BAFO) to be issued through the Purchasing Office. The Committee will review the BAFO response(s) and make a final recommendation based on this information.
6. The Vendor that provides the County with the most reliable, cost effective services which best fits the needs of the County along with established evaluation criteria will be recommended to the Board of Commissioners for approval. The award will be based on the best overall value, *not necessarily the lowest price*.
7. The County reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids.
8. Upon approval by the Board of Commissioners in an open meeting, the Purchasing Officer will issue a purchase order, if applicable, send a Notice of Award/Notice to Proceed and will execute the contract when appropriate.
9. Once the Notice of Award has been issued, all information submitted in response to the solicitation will be available for public inspection in compliance with federal, state, and local laws.
10. Non-Responsive or Unacceptable Bids - The Purchasing Officer shall reject any bid or proposal, which is materially non-responsive to the requirements set forth in the bid documents. The Purchasing Officer may re-solicit bids or proposals if, in his/her discretion, bids received as a result of a solicitation for bids or proposals are not acceptable for any reason. Such re-solicitation shall not be for the purpose of directing the award to a particular bidder.
11. Certification of Appropriated Funds – The Board of Commissioners requires the Director of Finance to certify that funds are appropriated and unencumbered for any contract entered into by the County, and that such contract is valid and binding.
 - a. Any contract amendment, addendum, or change order that increases the amount of any contract shall be certified thereon by the Director of Finance that there are sufficient funds appropriated and unencumbered to pay for such increase.

- b. No contract made by the Purchasing Officer shall be revised or modified in any manner unless and until such modification is approved by the County Attorney, Finance Director or County Administrator. The contract will be amended in writing by the Purchasing Officer.
- 12. Correction or Withdrawal of Bids – Correction or withdrawal of erroneous bids after opening, or cancellation of awards or contracts based on such bid mistakes, shall not be permitted. Bids shall indicate the unit price extended to indicate the total bid; in event of an error in extension, unit price shall govern, except when the bidder clearly indicates that total price is based on consideration of being awarded the entire lot. (NIGP Section C, 17u)
- 13. Competitive Bidding not Required – In the following cases, competitive bidding shall not be required:
 - a. Purchases from federal, state or other local governmental units. (NIGP Section J, 65)
 - b. Recurring payments such as utilities, postage, telephone, principal and interest on debt
 - c. Sole source items, as determined by the Purchasing Officer.
 - d. Purchases under \$250 – The Department Head or designee can make purchases without competitive bids if the total of each purchase is less than Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250).
- 14. Tie Bids - The Election Committee will make a recommendation of award in the event two or more bids are equal in cost. The Purchasing Officer may also, unless the terms, conditions and specifications of the Invitation to Bid state to the contrary, elect to divide the contract award between two or more bidders, if the Purchasing Officer deems such action to be in the best interest of the County. Items that will be used to determine a tie break include, but are not limited to delivery time frame, prompt payment discounts, location of vendors' place of business.
- 15. Bid Security
 - a. Requirement for Bid Bond – Bid security may be required for competitive sealed bids, proposals and for other items as determined by the Purchasing Officer. Bid security shall be a bond provided by a surety company authorized to do business in the State of Georgia, or the equivalent in cash, or otherwise supplied in a form satisfactory to the County. Failure to provide security when requested in the bid documents will result in rejection of the bid. If the bidder fails to honor the bid for any reason, then such bid security may be retained by the County and deposited to the General Fund.
 - b. Withdrawal of Bids – Bids or proposals may be revised, modified, or withdrawn by the bidder at any time **prior** to opening. Any such revision, modification, or withdrawal shall be in writing. After the bids are opened, they shall be irrevocable for the period specified in the bid documents. Bids or proposals may not be withdrawn or revised after opening, except as permitted with regards to negotiations. Once a bid or proposal is opened, all documents shall become the property of the County.
 - c. Receipt of Bids – Bids or proposals will not be accepted after the deadline for submission regardless of the reason for such lateness, except for Acts of God. Bids or proposals received after the submission deadline may be returned to the vendor unopened.

- d. Performance, Maintenance and Payment Bonds – Performance, maintenance and payment bonds may be required for competitive sealed bids, proposals and for other items as determined by the Purchasing Officer. Bid security shall be a bond provided by a surety company authorized to do business in the State of Georgia, or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to the County, in an amount up to 100 percent of the price specified in the bid or proposal.
16. Right of Protest – Any bid protest must be filed within seven (7) business days of the date of Notification of Award. Protests must be received in the office of the Purchasing Officer via mail, email or fax and must contain the following information:
- a. Company name, address, phone number and signature of the authorized representative.
 - b. Solicitation Number
 - c. Detailed statement describing the grounds for the protest
 - d. Supporting evidence or documents to substantiate the claim.

The Purchasing Officer will review the information provided and render a decision within five (5) business days. If this decision is not satisfactory, the protest will then be forwarded to the County Administrator. The County Administrator has the right to either make a final decision or forward to the Board for a final decision. (NIGP Section C, 17y)

Section V: Solicitation Information

A. Copies of Solicitations

If you wish to receive copies of solicitations you should visit our website at www.co.camden.ga.us to download free of charge or you may visit the address below for copies:

Camden County Board of Commissioners
Government Services Complex
200 East 4th Street
Woodbine, GA 31569
(912) 576-6684 Phone

B. W-9 Form: A W-9 form is included in our solicitation packages. The completed W-9 must be returned with the Vendor's bid/proposal. This form is needed from all vendors doing business with the County.

C. Public Notice/Advertisement and Solicitations: The Purchasing Office posts projects, advertisements, solicitations, addenda and all pertinent documents for projects on the County website under the Purchasing Department click "Bid Opportunities".

D. Pre-Bid and Pre-Proposal Conference: The County may conduct pre-bid or pre-proposal conferences on many construction projects and specialized services. These meetings offer contractors and vendors the opportunity to meet County personnel for a firsthand presentation of the project and to ask any questions or clarify and concerns on the bid conditions, specifications and project schedule. Any comments which would need the modification of plans, specifications or contract documents will be responded by writing in the form of an addendum issued to all potential respondents.

Section IV: E-Verify Requirements

The Georgia E-Verify law requires contractors, all sub-contractors and sub-subcontractors on Georgia public contracts for services over \$2,499.99 in value to enroll in E-Verify, regardless of the number of employees. A contractor or sub-contractor may be exempt from this requirement if the contractor or sub-

contractor has no employees and does not hire nor intend to hire employees for the purpose of completing any part of the public contract. Certain professions are also exempt.

For a public contract, contractors must sign the Contractor E-Verify Affidavit, all sub-contractors must sign the Subcontractor E-Verify Affidavit and all Sub-Subcontractors must sign the Sub-Subcontractor Affidavit. The government is required to ensure that the Contractor E-Verify Affidavit is part of the contract; however, the contractor is responsible for all subcontractor affidavits and the subcontractors are responsible for the sub-subcontractors affidavits. Affidavits are included in all ITB/RFP packages.

- Vendors who respond to RFP/Bids (formal solicitations) for services that are physically performed within the State of Georgia must submit proof of their registration and participation in the E-Verify program.
- Physical performance of services' means the building, altering, repairing, improving, or demolishing of any public structure or building or other public improvements of any kind to public real property, including the construction, reconstruction or maintenance of all or part of a public road; or any other performance of labor for a public employer under a contract or other bidding process.
- Contractors are required to submit a Georgia Security & immigration Contractor Affidavit and when utilizing subcontractors and Georgia Security & Immigration Subcontractor Affidavit must be submitted.
- To find out more information and to enroll in the E-Verify, please visit E-Verify website at: <https://e-verify.uscis.gov/enroll>

Section VII: Gratuities

Acceptance of gifts by County employees at any time, other than advertising novelties, is prohibited. Employees must not become obligated to any supplier and shall not participate in and County transaction from which they will personally benefit, either directly or indirectly, including meals.

Section VIII: Supplier Performance

Supplier performance is constantly evaluated according to timeliness of delivery, quality or performance of goods/services supplied, accuracy of quantity delivered, accuracy of billing and safety. A record of the vendor's/contractor's performance in fulfilling the terms of the contract will be kept on file in the Purchasing Office. A poor performance record may cause a vendor/contractor to be banned from doing business with the County for an indefinite period of time at the discretion of the County Administrator and/or Finance Director.

Section IX: Conflict of Interest

Any elected official, appointed official, employee or relative of any of these, who is in position to influence the procurement process whether directly or indirectly, shall not do any business with the County except in accordance with Georgia Code Section 16-10-6 and any other Georgia law(s) that may apply in the future. As stated in *Legal Aspects of Public Procurement*, by Kirk W. Buffington, CPPO, C.P.M., MBA, The genesis for public contract law is a statute or ordinance setting forth specific procedures that the government must follow in purchasing the goods, services, and construction that it needs (38). Any such transaction(s) that is in violation, unless approved in advance by the Board of Commissioners, shall make any contract or other transaction(s) null and void. Officials or employees of the County shall remove themselves from the decision making process when there is an apparent or actual conflict of interest.

Section X: Ethics

The Purchasing Office subscribes to the Code of Ethics of the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) and believes that the following ethical principles should govern the conduct of every person employed by a public sector procurement or materials management organization.

1. Seeks or accepts a position as an employee only when fully in accord with the professional principles applicable thereto and when confident of possessing the qualifications to serve under those principles to the advantage of the Camden County Board of Commissioners.
2. Believes in the dignity and worth of the service rendered by the organization, and the societal responsibilities assumed as a trusted public servant.
3. Is governed by the highest ideal of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships in order to merit the respect and inspire the confidence of the organization and the public being served.
4. Believes that personal aggrandizement or personal profit obtained through misuse of public or personal relationships is dishonest and not tolerable.
5. Identifies and eliminates participation of any individual in operational situations where a conflict of interest may be involved.
6. Believes that members of the Board and its staff should at no time or under any circumstances accept, directly or indirectly, gifts, gratuities, or other things of value from suppliers, which might influence or “appear” to influence purchasing decisions.
7. Keeps the governmental organization informed, through appropriate channels, on problems and progress of applicable operations by emphasizing the importance of the facts.
8. Resists encroachment on control of personnel matters on a merit basis, and in compliance with applicable laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of politics, religion, color, national origin, disability, gender, age, pregnancy and other protected characteristics.
9. Seeks or dispenses no personal favors. Handles each administrative problem objectively and empathetically, without discrimination.
10. Subscribes to and supports the professional aims and objects of the National Institute of Purchasing, Inc.

Section XI: Additional Information

Additional information concerning procurement regulation and procedures may be obtained through the administrative code, policies and procedures posted on the website at www.co.camden.ga.us. For further assistance please visit us at 200 East 4th Street, Woodbine, GA 31569 or contact us at (912) 576-6684; email: kmoreland@co.camden.ga.us.

This publication is designed solely to provide general summary information to those wishing to do business with the County. As such, it is not binding in either a legal or regulatory sense. The procurement activity of Camden County is performed in accordance with the Purchasing Policy of Camden County and other applicable rules and regulations.