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Introduction

Welcome to Renewable Water Resources (ReWa) Purchasing, a part of the Administrative Finance Division. The Purchasing Department is ReWa's purchasing agent for supplies, materials, equipment, and contracts for services. These goods and services are procured within the statutes of ReWa's Procurement Code, and certain guidelines and procedures as established by ReWa's Purchasing Department.

The goal of the Purchasing Department is to obtain and pay for quality goods and services at the lowest reasonable cost to ReWa's customers, while operating at the highest standards of ethical conduct and professionalism. Purchasing strives to treat suppliers and contractors fairly and equitably and to maximize competition whenever possible. We believe that an environment of competition is most beneficial to both buyer and seller, and it is our policy to foster this environment. Additionally, we believe that our suppliers are the greatest resource we have available for keeping us abreast of current products, services, updates, and new information; therefore, Purchasing welcomes meetings with suppliers.

ReWa's Purchasing Department is a member of the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP). Dedicated to continued growth in knowledge and skill. We thank you for your interest in the Purchasing Department, and we look forward to your participation in the purchasing process.

Conducting business with a public entity can be a very rewarding experience. However, without a clear understanding of how the particular agency operates, it may seem like a tedious endeavor. Conducting business with a governmental agency can be significantly distinct from operations associated with the private sector since there are more complexities involved in the procurement process.

The purpose of this manual is to assist you, a supplier of goods and/or services, on how to effectively conduct business with ReWa. Included is information on what ReWa expects from suppliers and the basic *How To's*... involved in dealing with ReWa.

The information contained in this booklet should be a helpful guide for potential suppliers in their efforts to sell their products and services to ReWa. If additional information is needed, please write, call, or fax your request to:

Purchasing Department

561 Mauldin Road

Greenville, SC 29607

E-mail: purchasing@re-wa.org

Phone: 864-299-4000

Fax: 864-299-4039

Website: www.rewaonline.org

Solicitation Center: [Current Solicitations](#)

Frequently Asked Question from Suppliers

Q: How do I get on the Vendor list for ReWa?

ReWa's user departments determine the need for a new vendor providing goods and/or services and goes through an internal approval process. Once approved the supplier needs to register online. Register by registering as a vendor on [ReWa PlanetBids](#) portal found on the Purchasing Department's pages on the website.

Note: Completion of this registration does not ensure that you will be placed on the ReWa Vendor List. Inclusion is not a binding assurance of solicitation.

Q: After I have registered does this mean I will automatically receive notifications of bids that pertain to my company?

No. However, ReWa now offers email notifications – automated e-mails referencing information on ReWa active solicitations. Sign up is available on the [ReWa PlanetBids](#) portal. Suppliers are still encouraged to visit the website or Current Solicitations weekly for new opportunities.

Q: I do not have access to the Web; how can I register my company?

Companies that wish to do business with ReWa must have internet access, all bids and proposals are handled electronically through the ReWa PlanetBids portal.

Q: I registered my company several months ago and have not yet heard anything nor received any solicitations. Can you tell me if my company is indeed registered?

Confirmation will be sent to your company once internally approved. Online registration does not ensure registration on the approved vendor list. If you have not received this confirmation please [contact](#) the Purchasing Department.

Q: Does ReWa have a MBE/WBE program?

Not at this time.

Q: My company has a new product that we would like to present to you. How can I get set up to do that?

Such requests can be set up with the User Department. If there is a desire/need to meet with the Purchasing Department, please [call or e-mail](#) the Purchasing department for an appointment.

Q: I am a small company and the projects/items in which I would be interested to supply are smaller in nature. How do I find out about these?

You may [call](#) the Purchasing Department and set up an appointment to present your company's information.

Q: Are pre-bid/pre-proposal conferences mandatory?

Occasionally they are mandatory. Every solicitation specifies if there is a pre-bid/ pre-proposal meeting, and if it is mandatory. Solicitations requiring advertisement are posted on our website at: [ReWaonline.org](#) and in [SCBO](#).

Q: How can I find out who the apparent low suppliers were?

This information can be accessed on the [ReWa PlanetBids](#) website. All solicitation information is subject to public disclosure upon contract execution unless noted as "Confidential" by the bidder/offeror.

Q: When awarding a bid, are South Carolina suppliers given preference over suppliers from out of state?

Every solicitation identifies bidders'/offeror' eligibility and is explicit if specific consideration is given to "locality".

Q: After a bid or proposal is awarded, is it possible to get a copy of the winning bid or proposal?

Yes, the request must be submitted in writing. All solicitation information is subject to public disclosure upon contract execution unless noted as "Confidential" by the bidder/ offeror.

Q: What should I do if I would like to protest a bid/proposal award?

Protests should be submitted in writing to the Purchasing Manager. Only contracts with anticipated or actual value equal to or exceeding Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000) are subject to protest.

Q: If I submitted a bid on a multi-year contract, will I automatically be sent a bid the next time it comes up for bid?

While we strive to notify as many qualified vendors of published solicitations as possible, we encourage vendors to sign up for email notifications to receive timely alerts of published solicitations. Please visit our website and sign up for email notifications on the [ReWa PlanetBids portal](#).

Q: I would like to meet and introduce myself to the Purchasing Agent/Manager. Do I need an appointment?

Yes, please contact the Purchasing Department for an appointment at 894-299-4000.

Q: I would like to get a plan holders list for a particular bid. Can you provide me with this?

There is no "plan holders" list, the list of the contractors/vendors that attended the Pre-Bid meeting will be posted within 24 hours of the meeting on the [ReWa PlanetBids](#) website. However, if you are a vendor and would like the list in order to make your product/services available to the plan holders, the Purchasing Department will be happy to contact the plan holders and provide them with your contact information for their consideration.

Q: After a bid/proposal was opened how long does it take before it is awarded?

Every attempt is made to award within 60 days of the opening date.

Q: If I am submitting a bid on a project can I be supplied with the bid tab from the previous award?

Yes, a written request for the information is required. The solicitation information is subject to public disclosure upon contract execution.

Q: After I have registered my company, how long does it take before we will be in your system?

It usually takes three to five business days, if the vendor addition is internally approved.

Q: How can I correct or update my company information once I have registered?

Once you are registered, you may correct/update your company information by [contacting](#) a member of the Purchasing Department to update. You will also need to update your company information in the [ReWa PlanetBids portal](#) to receive new project information.

Q: As a ReWa vendor, why do I have to comply with Title 8, Chapter 14, Pursuant to Section 8-14-60?

It is SC Law adopted as a policy by ReWa that unauthorized aliens shall not be employed to perform work on contracts involving the physical performance of services. Therefore, all contractors and subcontractors are required to document all such employees and are subject to audits and inspections by ReWa.

The Basics of Purchasing

Competitive Bid

The use of competitive bid method is required where the estimated cost of commodities and services is greater than \$50,000.00, where there are clear and defined specifications available and where cost is the primary basis of award. Bids are advertised in SCBO (South Carolina Business Opportunities).

Competitive Proposal

The competitive proposal method is used for the purchase of all goods and services where the competitive bid method is neither practical nor advantageous and where cost is not the primary consideration. Generally, competitive sealed proposals are used for procurements such as professional services, service contracts, financial services and highly technical equipment. Competitive sealed proposals are advertised in [SCBO](#) for two weeks. An evaluation committee evaluates proposals according to criteria specified in the proposal document.

Competitive Bid/Proposal/Quotes may also be used for the purchase of goods and services estimated at \$50,000.01 or more.

Small Purchases

Any ReWa user department may purchase up to \$10,000.00 per line item from established vendors with appropriate managerial approval at the department's discretion. Purchases of goods and services \$10,000.01 to \$50,000.00 require three written quotes.

Multi-year Contracts

ReWa has various multi-year and/or annual contracts in place for frequently used items and services. The contracts are results of a bid, proposal, quotes or other method of procurement allowed by the Procurement Code. Contracts allow ReWa to order products or services directly from the awarded suppliers at already established prices and terms on an "as needed, when needed" basis. The length of acceptable terms for a multi-year contract can be up to a total of seven years.

How to Register with ReWa

Please also refer to [vendor registration](#) information above. Suppliers interested in participating in the bidding process may register online on [ReWa's website](#). Please contact the Purchasing Department if you cannot register online. ReWa sends most of its purchase orders to our contracted suppliers via fax and email. It is vital, therefore, that suppliers keep their information updated. Suppliers are responsible for maintaining their contact information. This may be done by contacting a member of the Purchasing Department after registration or by submitting a written request to the Purchasing Department. However, a supplier may submit a bid/proposal without being a registered supplier.

How ReWa Advertises Its Solicitations

PlanetBids

ReWa posts solicitations on the [PlanetBids](#) website and receives bids, quotes, proposals and qualifications packages electronically through this site. Requests for bid and proposal may be emailed to registered suppliers, ReWa's approved suppliers list and to those suppliers suggested by the User Departments. However, ReWa cannot guarantee that every registered supplier contained on the suppliers list will receive a copy of every bid or proposal opportunity for a particular commodity. Suppliers are urged to review the various methods of advertisements that ReWa uses in the solicitation process, as outlined below. You can also sign up for e-notifications to be kept abreast with information on ReWa active solicitations.

Publications

Bids and proposals with estimated value in excess of \$50,000.00 will be publicly advertised in [SCBO \(South Carolina Business Opportunities\)](#) and on [ReWa's PlanetBids website](#). Additionally, other forms of advertising such as plan rooms, trade journals, newspapers, and the Internet, may be utilized in order to provide maximum competition for specific projects, purchases, or services.

Current Solicitations on ReWa's PlanetBids Website

All formal solicitations are posted on ReWa's PlanetBids website with access on ReWa's website under [Current Solicitations](#). We encourage all interested suppliers to view this information often, as it does indicate all active formal solicitations. You can also sign up for email notifications and register your company on the PlanetBids portal to be kept abreast with information on ReWa active solicitations.

Solicitation Process

Pre-Bid and Pre-Proposal Meetings / Conferences

The nature of some bids and proposals require a pre-bid or pre-proposal conference to be held. Pre-bid and pre-proposal conferences are held in order to clarify specifications, answer supplier questions regarding the specific bid or proposal, or to allow the supplier to perform an on-site review and inspection. Most pre-bid and pre-proposal meetings are mandatory. Any changes to the original bid or proposal as a result of questions and/or discussions at a pre-bid/pre-proposal meeting will be made in writing in the form of an addendum and will be posted on our website. Notices will be e-mailed to all suppliers who originally received or have requested the solicitation. All signed up to receive e-notifications will be notified electronically of the update.

All questions and information requests must be directed to the appropriate Purchasing Agent to insure that all suppliers have the same information. To protect the integrity of the solicitation process, individuals, firms, and businesses seeking an award of a contract may initiate or continue any verbal or written communications, regarding a solicitation only with the Purchasing Agent named in the solicitation. The Purchasing Manager will review violations. If determined that such communication has compromised the competitive process, the offer submitted by the individual, firm, or business may be disqualified from consideration for award.

Bond Information

Construction/Public Works projects where cost is greater than \$100,000.00 requires a five percent (5%) bid bond and one hundred percent (100%) performance and payment bond. Construction contracts greater than \$50,000.00 requires one hundred percent (100%) payment and performance bonds as well.

Bonding may also be required for other purchases when deemed necessary. Any bonding requirements will be specifically stated in the solicitation.

The bonding company should be licensed to do business by the South Carolina Secretary of State, authorized to do business in South Carolina by the South Carolina Insurance Department, with an "A" minimum rating as stated in the most current publication of "Best's Key Rating Guide".

How to Submit a Bid or Proposal

1. Follow the instructions set forth in the request for bid or proposal. All requests for bids and proposals include the following sections – Submittals, Due Dates and Inquiries, Terms and Conditions and Instructions to Respondents that are unique to the solicitation.
2. Any questions regarding the bid or proposal should be directed to the appropriate Purchasing Agent named in the solicitation.

3. In order to submit a bid or proposal, the supplier must be able to responsibly meet the minimum requirements set forth in the solicitation. Suppliers who are unable to meet the requirements of the solicitation should not submit a bid/proposal package.

4. All formal bids or proposals must be submitted via the [ReWa PlanetBids](#) portal.

The Purchasing Department must receive all bids and proposals on the date and time specified in the document. Late bids/proposals will not be accepted. A delay in delivery or failure to electronically submit the bid is not an acceptable reason for late responses. Please login to the PlanetBids portal allowing yourself enough time to submit your bid.

How Bids and Proposals Are Opened

1. At the deadline date and time the bids/proposals are opened electronically.
2. The company name and bid total are posted on the PlanetBids website.
3. For the opening of proposals and qualifications packages, only the name of each supplier shall be made public. No other information will be disclosed.
4. Once the bid or proposal is opened, the documents are reviewed for responsiveness and responsibility.

Late Bids/Proposals

Bids or proposals submitted after the date and time stated in the solicitation will not be accepted. The bids/proposals are automatically closed on the PlanetBids website at the specified date and time of the deadline. Make sure you log onto the website with ample time to submit your bid/proposal.

Corrections/Withdrawals

Corrections or withdrawal of inadvertently erroneous bids before or after award, or cancellation of awards or contracts based on such bid mistakes, may be permitted where appropriate. After bid opening, no changes in bid prices or other provisions of bids prejudicial to the interest of ReWa shall be permitted. Except as otherwise provided by the Procurement Code, all decisions to permit the correction or withdrawal of bids, or to cancel awards or contracts after award but prior to performance shall be supported by a written decision made by the Purchasing Manager and approved by Chief Executive Officer but only upon a written request by a bidder and when documents will clearly evidence the error or mistake and which demonstrates the bidder will suffer substantial loss. Any correction causing the bidder to become low bidder must be clearly evident by an analysis of the bid documents.

How Bids and Proposals Are Evaluated

1. Bids are evaluated by plotting total bid amounts in a bid tabulation sheet after which the supplier with the lowest bid is checked for responsiveness (meets all required criteria) and responsibility (established as a reliable vendor).
2. Proposals are evaluated by an evaluation team. The proposals are scored based on the criteria set forth in the proposal. The committee may create a short list from proposals received, based on the criteria. The top firms may be interviewed and the terms or the scope of work may be negotiated with the highest scoring firm.

The Purchasing Department publishes project award for all formal solicitations on ReWa's website, and sends letters to all bidders/offerors notifying them of the final solicitation results. Award is tentative receipt of insurance (if applicable), bonds (if applicable), DHEC approval (if applicable), or any other prerequisite outlined in the solicitation. Upon meeting all requirements in a manner satisfactory to ReWa, contract terms and conditions are discussed. The agreed upon contract is signed by both parties and executed to commence work.

Bidders' Responsiveness and Responsibility

An apparent low bidder may not be recommended for award of a bid or contract if they are found to be non-responsive or non-responsible. The Purchasing Department, setting forth the reasons for "non-responsive or non-responsible," shall inform the supplier via written letter.

Disqualification of Bids

A bid/proposal should be rejected when the bidder/offeror attempts to impose conditions which would modify requirements of the invitation for bids or request for proposal, or limit his liability to ReWa, since to allow the bidder/offeror to impose such conditions would be prejudicial to other bidders/offerors. For example, bids/proposals should be rejected in which:

- a. the bidder/offeror attempts to protect himself against future changes in conditions, such as increased costs, if total possible cost to ReWa cannot be determined;
- b. the bidder/offeror fails to state a price and in lieu thereof states that price shall be "price in effect at time of delivery";
- c. the bidder/offeror states a price but qualified such price as being subject to "price in effect at time of delivery";
- d. the bidder/offeror when not authorized by the invitation/request for proposal, conditions or qualifies his bid/proposal by stipulating that his bid/proposal is to be considered only if, prior to date of award, bidder/offeror receives (or does not receive) award under a separate procurement;
- e. the bidder/offeror requires ReWa to determine that the bidder's/offeror's product meets specifications;
- f. the bidder/offeror limits the rights of ReWa under any contract clause;
- g. the bidder/offeror imbalances his bid/proposal (i.e., offering unreasonably low price on some items and compensating for them with unreasonably high prices on other items);
- h. the bidder/offeror attaches any condition or qualification that reduces the bidder's/offeror's legal liability or increases ReWa's responsibility;
- i. the Purchasing Manager determines in writing that the bid/proposal is unreasonable as to price;
- j. the bidder/offeror fails to furnish a bid/proposal guarantee when such guarantee is required in accordance with the requirements of the invitation for bids or request for proposals;

- k. the Purchasing Manager identifies a bid as incomplete or unsigned.

What Happens When the Award Is Made?

1. When an award of a bid or proposal is made, a formal contract is prepared for execution.
2. Suppliers awarded annual contracts receive an Award Notice often followed by Purchase Orders from the ReWa User Department (end user). Suppliers who did not receive an award will also be sent a notice.
3. When formal contracts are issued for projects or services, the supplier returns the signed contract along with any required insurance and bonding documents.

A copy of the executed contract, along with a Notice to Proceed (as applicable), is sent to the successful supplier so that work may begin.

Supplier Performance

Performance problems documented by the User Department and forwarded to the Purchasing Manager will be reviewed and every effort will be made to resolve the issue(s). Should a performance problem exist that cannot be resolved with the intervention of the Purchasing Department, a recommendation may be considered that the supplier be placed on the *Debarment List*. Any supplier who is determined to be placed on the *Debarment List* will not be eligible to provide any commodities and services to ReWa during the time period such firm remains on the *Debarment List*. The length of time a supplier remains on the *Debarment List* is dependent upon the severity of the performance problem(s), as approved by the Chief Executive Officer and Board of Commissioners.

Penalties for Non-Performance

Suppliers who do not deliver as promised or deliver unacceptable merchandise may be penalized. If a supplier fails to comply, comparable replacement merchandise may be purchased in the open market. The supplier shall reimburse ReWa within a reasonable time specified by the Purchasing Manager for any expense incurred in excess of original contract prices or ReWa shall reserve the right to deduct such amount from monies owed the defaulting supplier/contractor. If performance problems cannot be resolved or there are performance problems on a continual basis, a recommendation may be made that the supplier be placed on the *Debarment List*. All protests concerning proposals, bids, or quotes should be made in writing to the Purchasing Manager, including specific reasons for the protest and in a timely manner.

Communication with the Purchasing Department

Meetings

Suppliers are encouraged to meet with Purchasing staff members for legitimate reasons. Suppliers are urged to make an appointment with the appropriate person in advance. During the busiest times of the year, it may be impossible for the Purchasing staff to meet with suppliers or time allotted for the meeting may be limited. Information such as catalogs, line cards, and new product information is always helpful and welcome.

Requested Research

From time to time, the Purchasing Department, as well as User Departments may request suppliers to perform specific research or consulting services prior to the official request for purchase. It should be understood that the supplier has no guarantee of receiving the award as a result of providing research or other information. Dollar limits may require the commodity or service to be bid, which will result in an award to the lowest responsive and responsible supplier regardless of which supplier did the initial research or consulting. If the initial research or consulting services are significant enough to require some monetary reimbursement, the supplier should notify the requesting Department up-front.

Gratuities

It is the policy of the Purchasing Department to refuse any gift from suppliers, regardless of the monetary value of the item. Any gift received by mail will be returned to the sender. If returning the item will result in a significant charge, the item will be donated to a charitable organization.

Responsibility of Suppliers

1. Regularly review bid and proposal advertisements in [SCBO](#) and on the [ReWa PlanetBids website](#)
2. Read and review bid and proposal documents thoroughly. Failure to follow the instructions and conditions contained in the bid or proposal documents could severely penalize your bid or even result in the rejection of your bid.
3. Allow yourself enough time to submit your response before the specified deadline. Bids or proposals submitted after the appointed deadline will not be accepted.
4. Familiarize yourself with the bidding and proposal requirements of ReWa.
5. Establish and maintain a good reputation for providing goods and services in a reliable manner to ReWa.

The information contained in this manual is provided for general informational purposes only. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to modify, amend, override, or nullify ReWa's Procurement Code, any statute, policy, procedure of ReWa or the State of South Carolina, or any specific provision of any given solicitation used in any competitive procurement.

