

Q: Are buyers being instructed to ask suppliers about cooperative contracts that are available to them? Often an agency asks for a quote using a specific regional or state contract but there may be other contracts with a better value

A: Orange County doesn't rely on suppliers to advise which contracts they hold. We conduct our own research of available cooperative contracts to identify which is most advantageous for us to consider using. Our research includes state contracts, as well as other government agency contracts. (Answer provided by Carrie Woodell)

Q: Can you offer any advice of what a small entity should do when a coop expires without a replacement in place such as FedEx for small packages?

A: Research other contracts that might be available for interim use, or handle by way of an emergency purchase order until you secure contracted pricing. Reach out to other governmental agencies, such as your local county to inquire if they've got a contract you can utilize. Take advantage of any list serves, such as nsite to inquire about contracts that you could consider using. (Answer provided Carrie Woodell) You might want to ask the vendor if there are other government or cooperative contracts they might hold, that you might be able to research the viability of using in the future. (Answer provided Tammy Rimes)

Q: Do you look to coops to help achieve WMBE targets?

A: Orange County does not, because we have our own M/WBE program and we track against our goals through our formal solicitations. (Answer provided Carrie Woodell) Cypress-Fairbanks ISD does not have a Board approved MBE policy. (Answer provided Matt Morgan)

Q: How do you procure law enforcement vehicles? do use co-ops for this? is it a turnkey? or do you by the equipment separately?

A: The County of San Diego does not use Cooperative Agreements to acquire law enforcement vehicles. Our quantities and requirements are such that vehicles are mostly acquired by our own competitive Bid solicitations. Depending on the type and nature of the vehicle, we often include equipment in the original Bid solicitation. For specialized equipment we solicit and install via a separate solicitation. (Answer provided Jack Pellegrino)

Q: How is it determined which contracts to renew vs soliciting new bids when a contract is up?

A: Many of our contracts contain multiple option years in the original solicitation and contract. Depending on performance and market factors (e.g. there is better technology or services available; and more advantageous pricing), we may decide that it is in the best interest of the County to re-compete early and go out to the market rather than exercising an existing contract option. When a contract expires (e.g. there are no option periods remaining in the contract) we will issue a new solicitation. (Answer provided Jack Pellegrino)

Q: I am aware that Amazon can be purchased using a special link on the PACE Co-Op. Has anyone used this service and has any experiences they can share?

A: Sorry, the County of San Diego does not use this cooperative. (Jack Pellegrino). I am unfamiliar with this service. (Answer provided Carrie Woodell) Cypress-Fairbanks ISD is a member of the PACE Co-op and we use their on-line retailer contract. The only department currently allowed to use Amazon is technology. They primarily use Amazon to purchase Kindles. (Answer provided Matt Morgan)

Q: What is the typical process for an ISD to approve the use of a Coop contract? What is a normal step by step process?

A: The purchasing department reviews the terms and conditions of the contract and, if federal funds are used, ensures compliance with EDGAR procurement guidelines. (Answer provided Matt Morgan)

Q: What software is each agency using for requisitions, PO, and contracts?

A: The County of San Diego uses its Oracle financial system for its requisitioning and Purchase Order/Contract Awards. (Answer provided Jack Pellegrino) Orange County uses an ERP from CMI called Advantage. (Answer provided Carrie Woodell) We use eFinancePlus 5.0 from Sungard. (Answer provided Matt Morgan)

Q: What would you think about a coop that requires the using agency to submit a monthly report of purchase orders?

A: I understand that a Cooperative would want to track agency usage in order to confirm purchase volumes and discount levels. (Answer provided Jack Pellegrino)

Q: When utilizing a cooperative, do you also attach your organizations terms and conditions or do you just utilize the terms and conditions already in place and negotiated through the cooperative?

A: Orange County does attach our terms and conditions which are automatically printed on any purchase order we generate. (Answer provided by Carrie Woodell)

Q: Which documents to you check to validate the competitive process?

A: Orange County reviews the original formal solicitation to validate that it was competed through a lead agency or a governmental organization. We also review the contract documents, terms and conditions, evaluation documents and award notices. Upon receipt of a quote, we ensure the quote references the contract number and then we validate that the pricing is consistent with contract pricing. (Answer provided by Carrie Woodell)

Q: Is a leasing option ever a consideration?

A: No, leasing was not one of the options that we pursued. (Answer provided Matt Morgan)

Q: Matt, why buy buses with the liability associated with transportation? Wouldn't it be more efficient (and less expensive) to sub-contract? Was this for the same buses?

A: The District already had a large fleet of buses. New buses were purchased to accommodate growth and implement a replacement plan for older buses. Our transportation services are very efficient compared to similar school districts and we have an excellent management team. I believe outsourcing this service would be a higher risk option. (Answer provided Matt Morgan)

Q: Do you find that departments will spec work so only one vendor (the current vendor) will be able to submit prices?

A: End users definitely demonstrate preferences for service providers and products. All procurement documents are prepared by the purchasing department. We ensure specifications are written in a manner that encourages open and fair competition. (Answer provided Matt Morgan)

Q: How do you track on-line purchasing, i.e. PO's, receivers, invoice processing, accuracy, approvals, etc.?

A: The County of San Diego uses its Oracle financial system for real-time and on-line tracking and reporting of its requisitioning, Purchase Order/Contract approvals. All County Departments have view access to this information and each establish its own review and audit practices to ensure accuracy. Appropriate system level check and balance user controls are implemented to ensure accuracy of Oracle information. (Answer provided Jack Pellegrino)

Q: How did Jack transfer the concept/service of the private sector with supply chain given the culture in gov't/education?

A: The key knowledge and fundamentals of purchasing and contract administration field are the same whether in a private company or public administration setting. Although some of the terms and some practices may be different, the concepts of full-and-open competition for goods and services; development of quality and clear specifications, statement of works, solicitations, and contracts; and effective contract monitoring and management after award, are the same in order to achieve positive results in both private or public organizations. Transfer of procurement knowledge and experience begins with a full understanding the specific needs of your current organization, and appropriate application of these fundamental concepts in a way that best fit and support the mission and objectives of your organization. Procurement staff's continual commitment to the improvement of their education and knowledge of these fundamental concepts is critical for the successful application within your organization. (Answer provided Jack Pellegrino)

Q: Is it the vendor or the bid that dictates whether you can negotiate T's and C's or is your agency rule?

A: The Agency dictates the Terms and Conditions, which are often listed in the initial solicitation. While some negotiation might occur during final contract negotiation, they often do not change from contract to contract. (Answer provided Tammy Rimes)

Q: What is the impact of the MBE requirement in making the cooperative contract decision?

A: Each Agency needs to make a decision whether a cooperative decision is the correct one based on MBE/WBE participation, local preference or any other agency requirements or goals. There might be an opportunity for the Agency to require and the company may subcontract out a portion of the contract (i.e. transportation and delivery) to accommodate an MBE requirement). (Answer provided Tammy Rimes)

Q: Have they estimated how much it "costs" in dollars to put out a large or small RFP?

A: No one on the panel has produced this type of study or documentation. (Answer provided Tammy Rimes)