
LOOKING UP COOPERATIVE CONTRACTS

What some of the cooperative contracts the College utilizes are; and how to look them up on the web.

WHAT IS A COOPERATIVE?

- A Cooperative contract is one that has been set up to contain specific language that will allow others to also utilize the contract for their own organization.
- While this is usually done by government or non-profit agencies, you will also find a form of it being utilized in the public sector among chain stores.
- Big Box stores for example can demand much better deals than a smaller chain due to the sheer volume of what they purchase, and the fact that their buyers also often purchase for Club Stores.
- While an Agency may not be large enough to buy in large quantity, that does not mean they can't join with others to increase the volume they will purchase as a group, thus increasing their own buying power.

RESTRICTIONS

- It is important to note that the entities working together must ensure that the laws and regulations covering each one allow for participation in cooperative procurements, and that the contract language takes their individual restrictions into account so that all users are in compliance in their use of the contract.
- In many cases a Memo of Understanding (MOU), Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) or similar cooperative agreement must be signed by all parties involved in the contract use prior to using it.
- It is vital that a due diligence be conducted prior to utilizing any cooperative.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COOPERATIVES AVAILABLE?

- State of Arizona SPIRIT
<https://procure.az.gov/bsso/external/advsearch/advancedSearch.sdo>
- City of Tucson
http://www.tucsonprocurement.com/bidders_bidopportunities.aspx?Orderby=ContractNum
- Maricopa County http://www.maricopa.gov/materials/Awarded_Contracts/search.asp
- HGAC Cooperative Houston/Galveston Area Council
<https://www.hgacbuy.com/login/>
- Mohave Educational Services Coop <http://www.mesc.org/>
- SAVE http://www.maricopa.gov/materials/SAVE/save_list.asp
- U S Communities <http://www.uscommunities.org/>

- And others not listed here.

USING THEM

- Some of the listed cooperatives require you to register with them before you have access to the contract lists. It is not difficult and only takes a moment.
- Most anyone in a purchasing capacity can gain access to these lists simply by registering.
- Many Agency sites do not require registration to view what they have awarded, though a few do.
- Most Agencies find that by consolidating needs, purchasing entities can better utilize their limited resources while securing better deals for all.

WHY IT WORKS

- Logic tells us that if we could get all of our neighbors to march down and purchase the same model car from the same dealer at the same time, we could collectively demand, and get, a better deal than we could get when buying on our own.
- This is the general concept behind most cooperative purchasing and why it works.
- You, as a group are showing the vendor that you have buying power that is worth his interest.

VALUE

- There are significant value-added benefits offered by cooperative procurements. There is no use in multiple agencies repeatedly reinventing the wheel when one agency could do the inventing for the benefit of all.
- With the economy in it's current state, we will likely continue to see resources, both people and monetary, be reduced. The ability to keep up with the constant demands of end users will require being creative and looking for ways to get the most value for taxpayer dollars. Cooperatives, are just such a way when used properly.

CAUTIONS

- Many vendors will tell you that they are part of a cooperative when in fact they may not be. Or they may have been in the past, and not realize the contract has ended, or that their company did not choose to renew.
- It is imperative to verify with the lead agency on the contract, that the vendor you intend to use is in fact a part of the contract you intend to utilize.
- Always get a copy of the signed final contract and verify all information that has been put forth by the vendor, especially contract expirations.
- Make sure the contract you intend to use is still valid. Most contracts available for download will have the contract dates printed on the front page.

IF YOU FIND ONE

- If you locate a contract you want to use, you'll need to contact purchasing as soon as possible. A due diligence check will be done to ensure that the contract meets all Agency requirements, and that there is an agreement in place between the contract's issuing agency, and Arizona Western College.
- The sooner purchasing is made aware of the need the better. In the event no acceptable cooperative can be located, your purchasing staff will need time to create a bid process to obtain the required goods or services.
- Even if a cooperative contract will be used and the procurement will not require a solicitation be done, it may still need to go to the Board for approval and award before a PO can be created.
- Any purchase that will result in a spend of \$50,000.00 or more requires Board approval prior to proceeding.

CHANGING LEGISLATION

- As with everything else involving public funding, the rules have and often do change frequently. There has recently been new legislation introduced that will govern what products and services may be obtained through cooperative contracting.
- Senate Bill 1235 is an example of a bill signed into legislation by the Governor which redefined some of the descriptions dealing with Cooperative Purchasing, which in some peoples opinions placed additional restrictions on what types of service can be obtained through cooperatives. It is a good idea to be familiar with the statutes involving purchasing to avoid any conflicts that may arise, or at the least, consult Purchasing when unsure.

- QUESTIONS?

- Feel free to contact the Director of Purchasing at

- Peggy.Hayes@AzWestern.edu