

Beaufort County



VENDOR GUIDE



BEAUFORT COUNTY COUNCIL
Purchasing Department
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Beaufort, South Carolina 29906-4291
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www.bcgov.net



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to make available to vendors basic information for obtaining and participating in the purchasing processes of Beaufort County, South Carolina. The Purchasing Department serves as the County's central procurement office for processing the County's goods and services; and its **mission is to maximize the value of public funds in procurements, by contracting and management of efficient services, capital equipment, and material investments, while upholding tenets of integrity, responsiveness, and fairness to both internal and external customers.**

ABOUT BEAUFORT COUNTY

Beaufort (*pronounced bu-FERT*) County is one of South Carolina's fastest growing counties and is nationally recognized for its historic downtown, expansive waterway views, and lush landscapes. The County sits along the Atlantic Ocean and is comprised of hundreds of barrier and sea islands; its warm climate, pristine beaches, world-class golf, great boating, dining and shopping options, historic sites, Gullah traditions, and Southern hospitality make it a top place to *live, work, and play.*

The area is rich with history, culture, and natural beauty, and has seen significant growth in the past few decades. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, between 2000 and 2010 the population has grown 34.1% from 120,948 to 162,233.

The Winter 2008 edition of *Southern Business and Development* magazine listed **Beaufort County as the number one "great small town to operate a business"**:

"Beaufort County, with the historic waterfront town of Beaufort, the unique resort community Hilton Head Island, the lively port town of Port Royal, and tech-savvy Bluffton, is one of the hottest spots in the South for both business development and retirement. [Why is it a great small town to operate a business?] Located midway between Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina, maybe it's the infrastructure the region has to get businesses up and running. Then again, maybe [it's] the hassle-free turnkey support the community provides. Whether you're a young professional trying to escape the big-city rat race [or] a retiree just wanting to enjoy the Lowcountry lifestyle...Beaufort County has it all."

BUSINESS LICENSING

Beaufort County requires any business operating within its unincorporated boundaries to obtain a Beaufort County Business License. Applications for new business licenses may be obtained online at www.bcgov.net – Look under the **"About"** tab, then see **"Departments"**, **"Public Service"**, and **"Business License"**. Applications may be mailed to the Beaufort County Business License Department at Post Office Drawer 1228, Beaufort, SC 29901, or hand-delivered to one of two Business License Office locations. Call 843.255.2270 for more information.



ABOUT THE PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

As the County's main procurement office, the Purchasing Department seeks to provide fair and equitable treatment of all involved in purchasing by the County, to maximize the value of public funds in procurement, and to maintain a procurement system of quality and integrity.

PROCUREMENT CODE

The SC Consolidated Procurement Code requires the County to have a procurement code that is substantially similar. The County has developed such a code that governs the expenditure of all funds regardless of source; details of the code may be found within the Beaufort County Code of Ordinances, accessible online at www.bcgov.net under the tab "**Online Services**". The Purchasing Department adheres to and abides by this code.

SOLICITATION METHODS

Beaufort County uses competitive bidding to contract goods and services over \$25,000 unless exempted by law. The Purchasing Department makes every effort to continually seek sources that have the capability to meet the needs of the County at competitive prices.

Public Advertising

Purchases and contracts involving the expenditure of more than \$25,000 require public notice of time and place where sealed bids or proposals will be received. All public notices will be advertised on the County's website at www.bcgov.net and in local newspapers, as well as the South Carolina Business Opportunities Newsletter (www.mmo.sc.gov).

Invitation for Bids

Unless exempted by law, County purchases of goods and services exceeding \$25,000 must be solicited under the sealed bid process. This process shall include the advertisement of bids, receipt of sealed bids in accordance with plans and specifications, public opening of bids, and award to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

Requests for Proposals (RFP)

A written or published solicitation for proposals to provide supplies or services which ordinarily result in the award of the contract to the responsible bidder making the proposal determined to be most advantageous to the County. The award of the contract must be made on the basis of evaluation criteria.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Before soliciting bids, the County may issue a RFQ to prospective bidders which must contain, at a minimum, a description of the scope of work to be solicited, the deadline for submission of information, and how prospective bidders may apply for

consideration. The request must require information concerning prospective bidders and the product specifications, qualifications, experience, and ability to perform the requirements of the contract.

Adequate public notice of both the RFP and RFQ must be given. After receipt of responses and evaluation by a committee, the rank of the respondents must be determined in writing, from the most to the least qualified, on the basis of the information provided. The Purchasing Director shall negotiate a contract with the respondent considered to be the most qualified.

BID SECURITY

Bid Security, in the form of a cashier's check, certified check, or bid bond is mandatory for bid submission for all construction bids of \$30,000 or greater in value.* Although the bid security is usually five percent (5%) of the bid value, the amount of the security may vary depending on the specifics of the bid documents.

* May be required on non-construction projects.

Contact Information

Staff

David L. Thomas, CPPO, CPPB, Director
dthomas@bcgov.net

Elizabeth S. Wooten, CPPB, Senior Buyer
ewooten@bcgov.net

Office Hours

Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Mailing Address

Post Office Drawer 1228
Beaufort, SC 29901-1228

Physical Address

102 Industrial Village Road, Building 3
Beaufort, SC 29906-4291



PURCHASING THRESHOLDS

Under \$500:

May be paid via Request for Payment (check) or p-card.

\$500 - \$2,500:

May be paid via p-card. If a p-card payment is not used a purchase order must be in place. No quotes are required as long as price is "fair and reasonable". May be approved by Purchasing Director or his designee.



\$2,501-\$5,000:

A purchase order is required. Two written or verbal quotes are required. May be approved by Purchasing Director or his designee.

\$5,001-\$10,000:

A purchase order is required. Three written quotes are required. Must be approved by Purchasing Director and CFO or their designees.



\$10,001 - \$25,000:

A purchase order is required. Three written quotes are required. Must be approved by Purchasing Director, CFO, Deputy County Administrator, and County Administrator or their designees.

\$25,001-\$50,000:

A formal solicitation is required if a prior solicited contract is not available. Requires approval by County Committee.



\$50,001 and up:

A formal solicitation is required if a prior solicited contract is not available. Requires approval by County Council.

VENDORS LIST

A list of vendors is maintained online at the County's website. Persons or business concerns interested in being added to the vendors list must complete and submit a "Vendor Application" to the Purchasing Department, which can be found online at: www.bcgov.net – Look under the "About" tab, then see "Administration", and "Purchasing".



LOCAL VENDOR PREFERENCE

A competitive procurement shall be made by the County from responsive and responsible local (resident) vendors in Beaufort County for procurement, if such bid does not exceed the lowest qualified bid from a non-local vendor by more than five percent (5%) or \$10,000, whichever is less of the lowest non-local bidder. The local vendor has the discretion to match the bid submitted by the non-local vendor and receive the contract award. A vendor shall be deemed to be a "local vendor", if such vendor is an individual, partnership, association, or corporation that is authorized to transact business within the state of South Carolina, maintains an office in Beaufort County, and maintains a representative inventory of commodities within Beaufort County and has paid all taxes duly assessed.



SMALL AND MINORITY BUSINESS PROGRAM

Beaufort County recognizes that the South Carolina General Assembly, in South Carolina Code of Laws Section 11-35-5210, has declared that businesses owned and operated by minority persons have been historically restricted from full participation in our free enterprise system to a degree disproportionate to other businesses; and that it is in the state's best interest to assist minority-owned businesses to develop fully as a part of the state's policies and programs which are designed to promote balanced economic and community growth throughout the state. Therefore, Beaufort County wishes to ensure that those businesses owned and operated by minorities are afforded the opportunity to fully participate in its overall procurement process for goods and services. Further, Beaufort County seeks to ensure that small businesses are likewise afforded the same opportunity as minority businesses to participate. Based on scope of work or services, solicitations may require bidders or proposers to meet certain compliance requirements of Beaufort County's "Small and Minority Business Participation Program", unless self-performing one hundred percent (100%), including specific **pre-award good faith outreach efforts and post-award subcontracting reporting**. Questions regarding this program can be e-mailed to: compliance@bcgov.net.



CONTACT WITH COUNTY OFFICIALS AND STAFF

Communication between vendors and potential users in County departments is acceptable on such subject matter as, availability of specified requirements, technical information, instructional information, requests for literature, etc., unless otherwise instructed in a solicitation notice issued by the County. Nonetheless, the County practice is that all contacts and correspondence pertaining to negotiations affecting purchases, prospective purchases, and awards which terms, conditions, price, delivery, quantity, substitution, complaint, or anything whatsoever involving the commitment, shall be processed through the Purchasing Department.



Questions or Comments?

Telephone: **843.255.2353**

E-mail: [**bcvendors@bcgov.net**](mailto:bcvendors@bcgov.net)



DISCLAIMER: THIS PURCHASING GUIDE IS INFORMATIONAL ONLY AND NOT AN ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS ALL OF THE PURCHASING PROCEDURES OF BEAUFORT COUNTY, NOR TO SERVE AS A REPLACEMENT OF THE COUNTY'S PROCUREMENT CODE AND REGULATIONS. PURCHASING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MAY CHANGE PERIODICALLY AND THIS GUIDE WILL BE UPDATED THEREAFTER.

