



# Doing Business with the District

**The South Florida Water Management District purchases a variety of products and services to support its operations. This guide takes a closer look at business opportunities with the District.**



The South Florida Water Management District is a regional governmental agency that manages water resources in the southern half of the state, covering 16 counties from Orlando to the Florida Keys and serving a population of 9 million residents.

The District's Procurement Bureau helps fulfill the agency's mission by establishing contractual relationships to support District programs, projects, and operations. The District purchases goods and services from vendors throughout the state and the nation. This helps the District tap into the expertise and versatility offered by private businesses and the entrepreneurial community while controlling costs, expanding opportunities in the communities we serve and reaching out to small businesses.

Purchase orders and agreements are governed by the agency's commitment to quality, cost effectiveness, efficiency and fairness in a competitive arena as well as adherence to applicable statutes, rules and regulations.



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# PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS AND CATEGORIES

General procurements represent the majority of the District's procurement needs. These purchases are categorized by the procurement threshold amounts as shown here.

Formal competition requires submission of a Request for Bids (RFB) or Request for Proposals (RFP). Contracts are awarded to the responsive/responsible bidder (RFB/lowest price) or respondent (RFP/most advantageous proposal).



## Standard

*Less than or equal to \$50,000:*

- ▶ No competition required

*Greater than \$50,000 to \$150,000:*

- ▶ Three written quotes required

*Greater than \$150,000:*

- ▶ Formal competition

## Construction

*Less than or equal to \$100,000:*

- ▶ No competition required

*Greater than \$100,000 to \$300,000:*

- ▶ Three written quotes required

*Greater than \$300,000:*

- ▶ Formal competition

## Office Leases

*Less than 5,000 Sq. Ft.:*

- ▶ No competition required



## Helping Us Meet Our Goals

We rely on businesses to supply goods and services of every nature to help us successfully complete District initiatives and meet our goals. Needed services run the gamut from remote data collection, to dredging, to janitorial services, to property leasing, to spillway construction. The number and type of commodities we purchase are just as diverse, including auto parts, lab equipment, fencing, computer software and paper supplies.

The District takes pride in its efforts to continually seek out willing and able contractors, and we encourage all segments of the business community to look for opportunities to do business with the District by participating in the agency's procurement process.

## Finding Business Opportunities

To optimize chances for finding business opportunities, we invite you to join in the District's business network. You can learn about current solicitations by visiting our website. Information is frequently updated.

Additionally, all formal solicitations greater than \$150,000 are announced in at least one newspaper with local distribution in the county where the work will actually be performed. Every effort is made to publish notices in a manner that encourages responses from all segments of the business community.

## Becoming a Registered Vendor

Vendors who feel they may be able to supply needed services and commodities should become registered with the District by completing and submitting a Business Registration Application to our agency. Forms are available online and can be returned through email; or, they can be downloaded and sent by regular mail to our Procurement Bureau.

The District also has an active Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program. To participate, firms must be registered vendors and must become certified as small businesses by the District. To fulfill the criteria of certification, a business must demonstrate that the three-year-average gross receipts of the business, together with its affiliates, do not exceed \$13 million for construction, \$5 million for commodities and \$6 million for services.

## Awarding Contracts through Competition

All standard procurements greater than \$150,000 and construction procurements greater than \$300,000 require formal solicitation. In addition, standard procurements greater than \$250,000 and construction procurements greater than \$1,000,000 require Governing Board approval of the final award.

Competition through the use of a Request for Bids, or RFB solicitation, results in an award based solely on price and price-related factors. Use of a Request for Proposals, or RFP solicitation, results in an award based on an evaluation, or integrated assessment of each proposal. For an RFP, final selection of a contractor involves conditions other than price. In either case, the contractor must meet the requirements for responsiveness and responsibility as described below:

### Responsiveness

Bids received by the submission deadline are publicly opened and reviewed to determine whether they conform to the instructions and requirements of the solicitation, including bonding, insurance and licensing requirements.

### Responsibility

District staff conducts a review to assess whether the apparent low bidder has the capability to perform the work in all respects and the integrity and reliability to ensure good faith performance.

To find bid results, business owners may go to the "Current Solicitations/Contract Opportunities" page on the District's website. Preliminary results for RFBs are posted within two working days from the time solicitations are opened. After final review and tabulation, an official Notice of Intent to Award is posted for seventy-two hours. Contract awards to successful bidders generally occur within ten business days from the time the submitted bids are opened. For RFPs, the posting of an "Authorization to Enter into Negotiations" is made following completion of the evaluation process. Contract awards for successful proposals may take approximately four to eight weeks depending on the number of proposals received, the duration of the evaluation, and whether presentations are required.



# Tips for Becoming a Successful District Vendor



Businesses can take some very important steps to increase chances for becoming a successful vendor. After carefully reviewing the solicitation contractors should:

- ▶ **Check** to see that all solicitation requirements are being met and all requested information is being provided
- ▶ **Make sure** the submittal is received by the District before the bid or proposal deadline

Small business firms should also be diligent in seeking out business relationships. Firms interested in finding opportunities should:

- ▶ **Review** solicitations on the District's website that call for services or commodities the firm can provide
- ▶ **Download** applicable solicitations, plan holders lists and pre-bid attendee lists from the District's website, and contact these firms to establish working relationships prior to upcoming projects
- ▶ **Attend** pre-bid/pre-proposal meetings where important aspects of the solicitation are reviewed and questions are answered
- ▶ **Review** solicitation materials posted on the District's website listing questions and answers during the inquiry period as well as any changes to the solicitation

While there are no guarantees for receiving work from the District, carrying out sound business practices can set the stage for future business relationships.

Once the firm is registered, the best way to benefit is to stay informed about District opportunities and network with other firms within the community.

The District proactively hosts workshops and other outreach events. These activities are generally publicized in local newspapers and are listed on the agency's website. They offer excellent networking opportunities. We also participate in trade fairs targeting small businesses and minority business enterprises.

## Supporting the Fundamentals of Good Conduct

We are entrusted with full responsibility to provide fair and equal opportunity for the sharing of business opportunities. We engage in a procurement planning process that maximizes competition while satisfying the needs of the District in the most effective, economical and timely manner. Planning is a team effort that includes staff professionals throughout the agency.

Our procurement policy perpetuates an ideal that supports the fundamentals of good conduct and incorporates good faith business principles.

### *The District commits to:*

- ▶ Follow accepted public procurement practices
- ▶ Conduct business with integrity
- ▶ Ensure open and fair competition
- ▶ Meet the need for quality products and services
- ▶ Adhere to competitive bidding principles relative to cost and timely delivery, and maintain the public trust.

### Let's Do Business!

Call us, or visit our website at **SFWMD.gov**.

We want to do business with the community we serve.

**Procurement:** 561.682.2011  
**Email:** [procurement@sfwmd.gov](mailto:procurement@sfwmd.gov)

**Small Business Enterprise:** 561.682.6446  
**Email:** [sbep@sfwmd.gov](mailto:sbep@sfwmd.gov)



*The District upholds its commitment to ensure that the community we contract with, reflects the community we serve. We do this by cultivating opportunities for businesses in an atmosphere that is creative, legal, and fair.*







## DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ The procurement team consists of all participants in the process. This includes District program and project representatives and procurement staff, and the contractors who provide the products and services.
- ▶ Procurements greater than \$150,000 require formal solicitation procedures (through a Request for Bids and/or a Request for Proposals) and those in excess of \$250,000 require approval by the District's Governing Board before source selection and an award of the contract is made.
- ▶ In a Request for Proposals (RFP), performance factors may outweigh cost factors. Therefore, a contract may be awarded to a firm that is determined to be the most advantageous, considering all factors detailed in the solicitation document.
- ▶ All contracts, purchase orders and supporting documentation are subject to periodic audits by the District Inspector General's office, and contract files are subject to public inspection in accordance with Florida's Public Records Law.

## OUR MISSION

To **SAFEGUARD** and **RESTORE** South Florida's water resources and ecosystems, **PROTECT** our communities from flooding, and **MEET** the region's water needs while **CONNECTING** with the public and stakeholders.



For more information on this subject, scan this QR code using a barcode reader app on your smartphone.

Ron DeSantis, Governor

### SFWMD Governing Board

Chauncey Goss, Chairman  
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Environmental Protection

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