



Procurement FAQ Information Sheet

1. How and where do you communicate upcoming opportunities?

- For RFP, RFQ, ITB: Posting on our website, PTAC, PWMBE, and WEBS. Announcement to previous vendor lists for re-purchases. We also place an ad in the Bellingham Herald. Construction related also get posting with WCR Plan Center and Builders Exchange where applicable.
- For non-formal procurements: The departments will reach out to current/past vendors, vendors on an interested vendor list, or Google search new vendors.
- For Construction/Small Works related we use MRSC Rosters.

2. Please list and explain the top 3 procurement methods your agency uses.

- Small Purchase. These are purchases that are less than \$150,000 and require up to 3 quotes. Typically, our individual departments seek out the quotes on their own. Once they have the quotes, Procurement gets involved to make sure policies were followed and to cut a purchase order.
- Contract Purchase: These are purchases that we make off of competitively established contracts. These contracts can be direct between WTA and the vendor, or we piggyback off of another agency or cooperative who competitively established the contract. We use a lot of Washington State Department of Enterprise Services (DES) contracts.
- Formal Procurement: These are purchases that are expected to be over \$150,000 and/or have potential for a lot of competition. Often these result in multi-year contracts. Invitation to Bids (ITB) are awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. Request for Proposals/Qualifications (RFP/RFQ) are awarded based on several weighted factors and are scored by a team of stakeholders.

3. What are some of the common mistakes Contractors make in responding to requests?

- Not Reading the entire solicitation. All of the contract responsibilities for BOTH WTA and the successful supplier are put into the solicitation: prevailing wage, bonding, insurance, public disclosure, reporting, and how to submit questions and responses, and how to request deviations from any contract terms. There's more to the solicitation than just the needed work. Each type of government entity has unique statutory rules, policies, etc. so a solicitation from Port of Bellingham will be different than a solicitation from WTA. If grant funds are used, that agency has additional rules to follow on top of their already established rules. Not all solicitations, or agencies are created equal, so it's important to read everything.
- Not asking questions or not requesting contract deviations BEFORE the deadline. Procurement is here to help you complete your response (within limits), and if you have a question, others in the vendor pool may have the same ones. Occasionally, a question has been asked and we've discovered we missed something or need to explain something better. We'd rather issue an addenda and change something in the beginning than have to throw the procurement out. Often there are requests to deviate from certain contract terms. WTA prefers to negotiate these before the solicitation is closed and offer the same terms to all proposers.
- Placing a limit to their liability, marking the entire response as confidential, requiring the contract be on the Vendors template. As a public agency using taxpayer money, WTA is legally prohibited from limiting a vendor's liability should something unfortunate happen. Similarly, Washington State has some very broad laws about what public agencies can and cannot keep confidential. Finally, WTA includes a sample contract in its formal solicitations for Contractors to review and potentially negotiate before the solicitation closes. Our contracts are made up of:
 - a. The solicitation and any addenda issued
 - b. The Contractors response and any pre-approved deviations
 - c. The Terms and Conditions included in the solicitation
 - d. Any PO's or Task Orders issued

4. What are the most important qualities in a supplier?

- Suppliers that can be flexible, transparent, collaborative, honest and communicative. WTA wants to have suppliers that we can partner with.

5. What is your preferred method of communication?

- Email. We travel quite a bit for meetings, conferences, and other business. If we have an email, we can answer questions easier than trying to connect via phone.

6. What kind of programs or resources are available for small and diverse businesses wanting to do business with your agency?

- None at this time. While this is something we are working on fixing, WTA is always eager to hear how we can work to fill this gap!

7. How does the agency use rosters?

- WTA uses MRSC Rosters for its public works projects it estimates at less than \$150,000.

8. How to get assistance with required paperwork.

- Work with PTAC!
- Contact procurement@ridewta.com. If it's during a solicitation, be sure to pay close attention to deadlines though as there is a cut-off for questions!