

Cooperative Purchasing Reference Guide

Your guide for sourcing success



Empowering public procurement

Cooperative purchasing

Cooperative purchasing is procurement conducted by, or on behalf of, one or more government units for use by other government units.



Competitive

- Utilize collective buying power
- Receive ceiling-based pricing
- Leverage competitive solicitation process



Convenient

- Choose from hundreds of quality suppliers
- Access solicitation and contract documents
- Register for free with no obligation



Customized

- Access via local dealers
- Establishes base contract
- Allows flexibility with suppliers



Register as a participating agency

Participation is free. Just complete the online or paper registration form. After registering, you will receive a Sourcewell account ID number electronically.

- Online at: sourcewell-mn.gov
- Through hard copy participation agreement (download from our website)
- Through “Joint Exercise of Powers” or “Interlocal” agreements

Find available suppliers

You know what you want. Complete your due diligence faster by using our enhanced search engine to navigate contract documentation for hundreds of awarded suppliers and to find a local dealer or representative. Use the Buy Sourcewell section of our website to search products, request a quote directly from suppliers, and access purchasing options — including 100% online through several awarded suppliers. We want to be your guide.

For more information, contact our dedicated team:

877-585-9706

service@sourcewell-mn.gov

Our process

Cooperative purchasing connects buyers and sellers for efficiency and savings.

Our user-friendly process — the consistency of our documents, forms, and evaluation criteria — is among our greatest assets.

We continuously refine our efforts to meet the changing needs of our participating agencies. In fact, Sourcewell has earned the achievement for Excellence in Procurement (AEP) award from the National Procurement Institute each year for commitment to innovation, professionalism, productivity, e-procurement, and leadership.

Our clients add value to these steps by understanding their local procurement requirements and assessing their ability to legally access and utilize Sourcewell contracts.



10-time recipient of the Achievement of Excellence in Procurement award.

Competitive procurement process

1. Scope of solicitation

We determine the scope of each competitive solicitation by identifying the needs of our public agency clients. This is accomplished through daily interactions and guidance from our clients.

2. Authorization from Sourcewell Board of Directors

Before initiating a solicitation, we seek permission from the publicly elected Sourcewell Board of Directors.

3. Public notice and advertising

Upon approval from the board, we issue a public notice and advertisement. Refer to sourcewell-mn.gov/process for specific advertising locations.

4. Proposal receipt and opening

We accept web-based, digital submissions through the Sourcewell Procurement Portal. Responses through the portal are secure and inaccessible until after the published due date and time. We conduct a public-proposal opening time, date, and place as specified in the RFP.

5. Objective evaluation

Proposal evaluation is based on established scoring criteria and a 1000-point scoring scale. Price receives the largest share of evaluation points, representing 40% of the score. Other factors evaluated are clearly published in each RFP and include conformance to RFP requirements, financial viability and marketplace success, ability to sell and deliver solutions, value added attributes, and depth and breadth of offered solutions.

6. Official award

After completion of the evaluation and scoring process, the evaluation team provides its review to Sourcewell's Deputy and Chief Procurement Officers for final award recommendations. Approved recommendations then proceed to final contract negotiations with proposers recommended for a contract award. Executed and awarded contracts are ratified by the Sourcewell Board of Directors.

7. Posting and review of approved contract documents

Sourcewell maintains a complete procurement file, and contract documentation is posted on our website. We periodically review all awarded contracts for compliance and effectiveness. In addition, Sourcewell may review and approve price and product changes at the supplier's request.

Frequently asked questions

Q. How do we register?

A. You can register to participate online at sourcewell-mn.gov or by submitting a paper agreement.

Q. Who is eligible to participate, and how much does it cost?

A. Participation is free and available to all government and education entities.

Q. Can my agency use Sourcewell contracts without issuing our own solicitation?

A. Sourcewell contracts are competitively solicited on behalf of Sourcewell and our participating agencies. Individual agencies determine whether the awarded contracts meet their unique solution needs and procurement requirements.

Q. As a Sourcewell participating agency, are we able to buy from cooperative agency contracts?

A. Sourcewell participation and contracts are nonexclusive with no obligation to purchase.

Q. Is cooperative purchasing one of Sourcewell's authorized activities?

A. Sourcewell is a service cooperative, a local unit of government under the Minnesota Constitution and its enabling law, Minnesota Statute § 123A.21. Its statutory purpose is to assist fellow agencies in meeting specific needs which are more efficiently delivered cooperatively than by an entity individuals. (Minn. Stat. § 123A.21, subd.2.)

Q. How is Sourcewell governed?

A. Sourcewell is governed by an eight-member board of directors made up of local elected officials including county commissioners, city council members, mayors, and school board members.

Q. How is Sourcewell funded?

A. Sourcewell is funded by administrative fees paid by suppliers. When Sourcewell awards a contract, that supplier realizes substantial efficiencies in the form of thousands of sales opportunities. Suppliers pay a percentage of those sales to Sourcewell to cover costs related to the procurement process and to offset general operating costs.

Q. How do I obtain copies of the legal documents associated with each contract?

A. Contracts, solicitation documents, and pricing are available under the "Documents" tab on each supplier's page on the Sourcewell website. Due to pricing complexity, some pricing is only available upon request. Procurement files are also available upon request.

Material prepared and provided by Sourcewell is intended as informational and for reference purposes, but is not legal advice. Purchasing agencies are responsible for conducting due diligence and ensuring compliance with state, federal, local laws, and specific funding requirements in consultation with legal counsel.



Cooperative purchasing

Sourcewell offers a cooperative purchasing program to eligible public agencies. Cooperative contracts can offer both time and money savings, with the cooperative completing the competitive solicitation process. Purchasing agencies are then able review awarded contracts to determine if the solutions meet their needs.

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