

# Working with St Lucie Public Schools



*Each Child, Every Day*

SUPERINTENDENT  
E. Wayne Gent

Purchasing Department  
9461 Brandywine Lane  
Port St Lucie, FL 34986  
Telephone (772) 429-3980  
<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/purch/>

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## Preface

Welcome vendors to St Lucie County Public Schools! This guide is designed to simplify interactions between you and the Purchasing Department. This guide contains the information you will need in order to sell goods and/or services to our district. The information contained in the guide is for informational purposes only, and is not intended to be a compilation of all legal requirements applicable to the district.

The Department's goal is to ensure that the district receives quality merchandise and services at the most competitive price. We invite all businesses to participate in St Lucie County Public School's purchasing process.

There are many opportunities for vendors, contractors, and consultants to do business with St. Lucie County Public Schools. The District purchases all types of supplies, materials, commodities, and services, as well as constructing and maintaining a large variety of facilities. The School Board is committed to promoting and developing business relationships with a wide variety of businesses and ensuring that eligible local businesses have the chance to compete for a fair share of these opportunities. These opportunities are advertised on the Purchasing Department website, located at <http://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/purch/>.

All questions may NOT be answered in this brief summary, however, any additional question may be directed to Purchasing Department, at (772) 429-3980.

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## **Section 1 - Introduction**

The Purchasing Department is administered by the Director of Financial Operations, who is supported by a professional staff. Vendors and other interested parties are invited to contact the office for more information regarding specific questions, well as any other matters pertaining to the procurement and contracting function.

Vendors and citizens are invited to visit the office between the hours of 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, but are requested to call first to make an appointment.

Purchasing Department is located at:

9461 Brandywine Lane  
Port St Lucie, FL 34986  
(772) 429-3980

## **Section 2 - Purchasing Mission**

The Purchasing Department:

1. Support the instructional and educational goals of St. Lucie Public Schools.
2. Provide Departments and Schools with quality, cost-effective and expedient procurement services that directly or indirectly support SLPS's core responsibility, the students.
3. Renders services with courtesy using professional and ethical principles.

The School Board of St. Lucie County, Florida, makes every effort to maintain a good working relationship with all vendors who supply material and services to the school system, and continuously seeks the advice and counsel of vendors concerning improvement of such relationships.

## **Section 3 - Becoming a Vendor**

A prospective vendor, interested in doing business with the School Board, may obtain a vendor application by visiting the Procurement website at <http://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/departments/purchasing/vendor-application/>.

When completing the application, make sure to include the products or services your company provides. Additionally, if you would like to be notified when we renew one of our contract awards, please review our awarded contracts. Once you identify the contracts you are interested in, either call or email the purchasing department so you may be added to the contact list for the next solicitation.

Insurance requirements can vary based upon the goods and/or services provided. Please confirm with Risk Management or Purchasing for the required minimum insurance coverage.

Vendors can also register with Demandstar.com to receive notifications for competitive solicitations. To register with Demandstar.com for free, you must select Free Agency and only subscribe to one entity (i.e School District St Lucie County).

Lastly, as a result of the Jessica Lunsford Act (HB 1877) during the 2005 legislative season, contractors and others, including architects, will be required to meet a Level 2 background screening requirement, which includes any individual or employees of any firm under contract with The School Board of St. Lucie County, Florida. Additional information regarding the Jessica Lunsford Act or vendor information may be accessed on The St. Lucie County School District website at <http://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/departments/human-resources/fingerprint-drug-screen/>.

Moreover, all contractors, vendors, etc. are required to sign in and show a valid photo identification card (Florida Identification Card or Driver's License preferred) to site administration upon arrival. In no event should vendors disturb teachers who are in the classrooms.

#### **Section 4 – Competitive Bidding**

The School Board requires that commodities sought after should be purchased at the lowest possible cost, consistent with an adequate standard of quality, usually through the competitive bidding process.

The competitive bidding process includes, but is not limited to, Request for Qualifications (RFQ), Request for Proposals (RFP), Invitations to Bid (ITB) and Invitations to Negotiate (ITN).

All solicitations are published on the Purchasing Department website, Demandstar.com and within Purchasing Department (on a community bulletin board). When required (for select projects), we also publish notifications in the local newspaper.

Construction contracts will require a performance and/or payment bond equal to the award amount.

#### **Section 5 – Lobbying**

Bidders are hereby advised that they are not to lobby with any District Personnel or Board Members related to or involved with a Bid/RFP until the Administration's recommendation for award has been posted. All oral or written inquires must be directed through the Purchasing Department.

Lobbying is defined as any action taken by an individual, firm, association, joint venture, partnership, syndicate, corporation, and all other groups who seek to influence the Governmental decision of a Board Member or District Personnel after advertisement and prior to the posted recommendation on the award of a contract. Any bidder or any individuals that lobby on behalf of bidder during the time specified will result in rejection/disqualification of said Bid/RFP.

### **Section 6 – Use of Other Contracts**

The District can utilize any other District contract, any State of Florida Contract, any contract awarded by any other city or county governmental agencies, any other school board, any other community college/state university system cooperative bid agreement, or to directly negotiate/purchase per School Board policy and/or State Board Rule 6A-1.12(6), if it is in the best interest to do so.

### **Section 7 – Purchasing Thresholds**

1. \$8,000.00 or less: - Purchases of \$8,000.00 or less do not require three written quotes, although competition is encouraged whenever practical.
2. \$8,000.01 to \$50,000.00 – Invitation to Quotes (ITQ) are issued for all other informal purchases. ITQs are prepared, issued, received, evaluated, and awarded by each school/department. Three written quotes from three firms must be obtained. The entire process from initiation to award and issuance of a purchase order will be completed typically within 5 days.
3. \$50,000.01 and above: Purchases of this value are considered formal and require that the school system follow the procedures governing competitive sealed bidding or competitive negotiation. Once requirements are provided to the Purchasing Department, an Invitation to Bid (ITB) or a Request for Proposals (RFP) will be prepared. The Purchasing Department reviews, issues, and receives responses to the solicitation. Copies of bids or proposals are provided to the user department for review and recommendation. Award recommendations are returned to the Purchasing Department for final review by the Coordinator of Business Services.

### **Section 8 – Purchase Awards**

After the bids to be awarded are approved by the School Board, Purchasing has authority to issue a purchase order or a contract. This creates a legal binding contract between the vendor and The School Board of St. Lucie County, Florida.

All vendors must perform in accordance with the purchase order and/or contract, or the vendor may be liable to the Board for any damages caused by their breach. A bidder who fails to fulfill its obligations, in accordance with the bid, purchase order and/or contract, shall either pay bid damages or lose eligibility to transact business with the Board.

Vendors must not offer goods and/or services prior to receiving a signed purchase order. If a vendor provides goods or services prior to receiving a PO, the Board is not liable to pay the invoice (see School Board policy 7.70)

### **Section 9 – Invoicing and Payment Process**

Payments for purchase orders will be made by the Accounts Payable department within 45 days, from the date approved invoice is received in Accounting. Since payment cannot be made until delivery is confirmed, the vendors should obtain and retain proof

of delivery in case it is needed to resolve a dispute. No payments will be issued prior to receipt and acceptance of goods and services by authorized district representatives.

In order to avoid payment delays, vendors must ensure that the following procedures are followed at all times:

1. Obtain a copy of the purchase order form prior to providing goods or services;
2. Always include the purchase order number on the face of the invoice;
3. Mail invoices for purchases directly to Accounts Payable at the following address:

St. Lucie County Public Schools  
Attn: Accounts Payable  
9461 Brandywine Lane  
Port St Lucie, FL 34986

4. In order to expedite the payment process, all invoices should include as much billing detail as possible (e.g., invoice number, P.O. number, item description, unit price, quantity shipped, total price, etc.) and follow the same line item number sequence established by the purchase order; and
5. If an invoice in connection with a purchase order generated by the District is not paid within 45 days, please contact Accounts Payable at (772) 429-3970 for detailed information.

### **Section 10 – Important Tips for Working with the School District**

1. Check Purchasing's website often to review current solicitations;
2. Register as a vendor with St Lucie County Public Schools;
3. Review a current bid/solicitation opportunity, follow all instructions regarding a bid submittal and submit your company's bid.
4. Review current awards (listed on purchasing website) and contact purchasing to request notification of the next solicitation.
5. Don't be afraid to ask questions.