



VENDOR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General Questions about MRPC

Q - Why do I need to respond to the Request for Proposal (RFP)? Can't schools just buy from me anyway?

A – Texas purchasing laws over the past years have required public entities that purchase more than a certain dollar amount in a category for the entire year to competitively bid all purchases for that category. Though the legislature has raised the dollar amount recently, many schools adopted local policies and procedures to only make purchases through cooperatives that competitively bid items so that they do not have to be concerned each time they make a purchase if it is in a category that has to bid. Each MRPC participating district may have a different purchasing policy; however, by being an approved vendor on the MRPC, our participating districts have the assurance they can purchase products from your company and still meet Texas purchasing laws.

Q – Why do I have to pay a \$20 registration fee?

A – The MRPC recently went to an online system to process the bids. This online system has allowed a more streamlined process that benefits the participating school districts and vendors by shortening the timeline for the bid process from the previous manual processing system. We feel the annual \$20 fee is a very reasonable amount for vendors to have access to a marketing list of over 130 participating school districts and Regional Education Service Centers.

Q – What bids/Requests for Proposals (RFP) does the MRPC offer?

A – Currently the MRPC offers three bids/RFPs each year. Those are:

- Combined Purchasing Bid – a list of specific office and instructional supply type items for a **one-time purchase**. The participating school districts enter the quantity they expect to order for these items before the posting of the bid. Once the bid has been awarded, purchase orders are submitted from each participating school to the vendor for delivery in July to the individual schools/campuses. The schools are only able to order from this bid during the specific time frame set for the bid.
- Instructional/General Supply Catalog RFP – this RFP lists various categories of goods (e.g., office supplies, maintenance supplies, miscellaneous instructional supply, science equipment & supplies, athletic supplies, nursing supplies, etc.) The effective term is August 1 of the release year to August 31 of the following year (i.e., August 1, 2018 – August 31, 2019.)
- Technology Catalog RFP – this RFP lists various categories of technology goods (e.g., workstations, peripheral devices, audio-visual, distance learning equipment, etc.) The effective term is August 1 of the release year to August 31 of the following year (i.e., August 1, 2018 – August 31, 2019.)

Q – Where can I get a copy of the RFPs to see if I am interested in responding?

A – The RFP documents are posted at www.mrpctexas.com (home page when active, archive page when closed). Please note that all responses must be entered online at www.publicpurchase.com.

Q – Where can I get a copy of previous years’ tabulations?

A – The most recent year’s tabulations are listed on the “Vendors” page of the MRPC website (<http://www.mrpctexas.com/#!vendors>). Previous years’ tabulations are listed on the “Archives” page.

Q – My company carries products that would apply to more than one of these bids/RFPs. Can I respond to more than one?

A – Definitely! We encourage you to respond to any and all bids/RFPs you deem appropriate. We especially encourage vendors responding to the Combined Purchasing bid to also reply to the catalog RFPs, so that schools can continue to make purchases from your company throughout the year (although purchases after orders through the Combined Purchasing bid have been processed will be made at regular catalog prices plus offered discount, not the Combined Purchasing bid price.) And, the \$20 annual fee allows you to respond to as many MRPC RFPs as you wish for that year.

Q – My company offers services, not products. Should I respond to one of these RFPs?

A – The current MRPC RFPs are only for products (goods), although some things are a mixture of both, i.e. customized printing (service) which results in product (letterhead, T-shirts), etc. If you feel your company fits into one of our categories, feel free to respond. If your company offers services, you should contact the individual schools to determine their procedures for contracting services.

Q – When will the bids/RFPs be posted?

A – The bids are generally posted around the 10th day of March each year. Please give us a few days after this anticipated release date in case we have encountered unexpected delays, but if you have not received notice of the bid/RFP by mid-March and/or do not have access when you login to www.publicpurchase.com, feel free to check with us by e-mailing dana.parrish@esc9.net or call 940-322-6928.

The closing date for the Combined Purchasing bid is early April, while the catalog RFPs remain open until the latter part of April. (See RFP terms and conditions for specific timelines.)

Q – How will I be notified that the MRPC has posted a bid/RFP?

A – There are two ways to be notified:

- Subscribe to the MRPC email list by completing the “E-Note Sign Up” on the right side of the Resources/Purchasing page of Region 9 ESC website (https://www.esc9.net/119592_2).
- Register with the MRPC through Public Purchase (www.publicpurchase.com). Instructions for the registration process are posted on the Vendor FAQ page. Note that it is a two-part process. The first part registers you with Public Purchase, and requires you to enter information about your company. Secondly, you will need to register with the agency (the MRPC), so that you will receive notice when the MRPC posts any bids/RFPs. If you need help with either of these steps, contact Public Purchase support by using the “Chat” feature at www.publicpurchase.com, or e-mail support@publicpurchase.com.

NOTE: We cannot guarantee that you will be notified through the Public Purchase system due to the use of classification codes, etc. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT YOU CHECK ON THE STATUS OF THE RFPs STARTING MID-MARCH. Vendors who miss the response window cannot be added after the closing date due to lack of notice.

Q – How are the bids/RFPs awarded? When will I receive notice of award?

A – Each bid/RFP is evaluated by the MRPC awards committee, which is made up of representatives from each of the four regional Education Service Centers and participating school districts. Bids/RFPs

are evaluated based on the requirements of TEC 44.031 (see the bid specifications for more details.)

The items on the Combined Purchasing bid are awarded line by line to the vendor(s) the committee evaluates as being the one who best meets the outlined criteria. The award is made by the Region 9 ESC Board of Directors at the April board meeting. Vendors are notified of award following that meeting. Schools will begin issuing purchase orders shortly thereafter.

Vendors are recommended for award for the catalog RFPs based on the evaluation criteria. The award is made by the Region 9 ESC Board of Directors at the June board meeting, and vendors are notified as soon as possible thereafter.