

BUYBOARD PROCUREMENT AND CONSTRUCTION-RELATED GOODS AND SERVICES ADVISORY FOR TEXAS MEMBERS

Why make purchases using BuyBoard?

Purchasing through a cooperative or "interlocal contract" satisfies the Texas law requirement of local governments to seek competitive procurement for the purchase of goods or services.¹ Therefore, you may purchase goods and services from a vendor under Texas law through BuyBoard without having to conduct your own competitive procurement. If, however, you are procuring construction-related services through a BuyBoard contract, such as a Job Order Contract (JOC) or contract for the installation of equipment or materials (e.g., athletic fields and surfaces, kitchen equipment, HVAC, playground equipment, or modular buildings), you may, as explained in this Advisory, need to procure certain aspects of these services using a separate procurement process outside of the BuyBoard and should consult your procurement officer and/or legal advisor for specific advice.

What is BuyBoard's Procurement Process?

The BuyBoard uses a competitive procurement process to award contracts to vendors for goods and services that the BuyBoard determines, based on an evaluation of multiple criteria, represents the best value for its members.

How does BuyBoard award a contract to a vendor?

As a condition of being awarded a BuyBoard contract, a vendor is bound by and must agree to comply with all the terms of the BuyBoard's proposal invitation (or specifications), the vendor's proposal response, and any additional contract terms negotiated with the BuyBoard member. Among other things, the vendor must honor the pricing submitted in the vendor's proposal. **THE PRICE YOU PAY FOR THE GOODS AND SERVICES COVERED BY THE BUYBOARD CONTRACT MAY BE LESS THAN THE AWARDED PRICING, BUT CANNOT BE MORE.** Additionally, the vendor must comply with the BuyBoard contract's general terms and conditions, and any additional terms and conditions that apply to the specific BuyBoard contract, as set out in the proposal invitation.

How does a BuyBoard member make purchases through the BuyBoard contract?

You utilize the awarded BuyBoard contract by issuing a signed purchase order through the BuyBoard online application to procure the selected goods or services. Although BuyBoard must receive a copy of the signed purchase order, BuyBoard does not review or approve the purchase order or other supplemental agreement that you obtain – this is a matter between you and the vendor. If construction-related services are procured through the BuyBoard, additional contracts with professionals and the contractor may be required, depending on the nature and scope of the services. As stated above, you should consult your procurement officer and/or legal advisor for specific advice.

How do I know that my entity has made a purchase through the BuyBoard?

BuyBoard must have a copy of the purchase order in order for the purchase to be considered a BuyBoard procurement. To ensure that your entity has satisfied state law requirements for competitive procurement, make sure that the BuyBoard has your purchase order. Do not rely on the vendor to submit the purchase order on your behalf; it is your responsibility to make sure that the BuyBoard has the signed purchase order. You may log in to buyboard.com using your member I.D. and password to view the Purchase Order Status Report to confirm that the purchase order is in the BuyBoard system.

What should BuyBoard members consider when using BuyBoard for construction-related purchases?

While purchasing goods and services through BuyBoard satisfies your legal requirement to competitively procure a good or service, as a general matter you must keep in mind other legal requirements that may relate to the purchase, especially when using BuyBoard for construction-related procurement.

When making construction-related purchases through a BuyBoard contract, BuyBoard members must consider the following:

- **Best value determination.** In compliance with Texas law and any local policy, your entity must first determine that purchasing through an interlocal contract or purchasing cooperative is the procurement method that will provide best value.ⁱⁱ This is done by the governing body (e.g., board of trustees, council, commissioners' court, etc.) or may be delegated by the governing body to an individual or committee, with written notice.
- **Products or services not covered by the BuyBoard contract.** The BuyBoard contract covers only the specific goods and services awarded by the BuyBoard. If you want to purchase from a BuyBoard vendor goods or services from a BuyBoard vendor that are not covered by the vendor's BuyBoard contract, such as architectural, design, or engineering services, you must procure them separately in accordance with state law and local policy.
- **Architectural or Engineering and Independent Testing services.** If your procurement includes a construction component that requires architectural or engineering services, you must procure those services separately. **YOU MAY NOT PROCURE ARCHITECTURAL OR ENGINEERING SERVICES THROUGH A BUYBOARD CONTRACT.** Texas law requires architectural and engineering services to be obtained in accordance with the Professional Services Procurement Act (Chapter 2254 of the Texas Government Code) and prohibits them from being procured through a purchasing cooperative.ⁱⁱⁱ
 - **Architecture.** A new building owned by a political subdivision having construction costs exceeding \$100,000 or an alteration or addition to an existing building having construction costs exceeding \$50,000 must have architectural plans and specifications prepared by an architect.^{iv} (An "alteration" or "addition" for purposes of this requirement requires the removal, relocation, or addition of a wall or partition or the alteration or addition of an exit.)
 - **Engineering.** If the goods or services procured through the BuyBoard will involve engineering in which the public health, welfare, or safety is involved, the plans for structural, mechanical, electrical, electronic, fire suppression, geotechnical systems, foundation design, surface water drainage, plumbing and certain roof modifications and associated estimates must be prepared by an engineer, and the engineering construction must be performed under the direct supervision of an engineer.^v The Engineering Practice Act provides two exceptions to this rule – no engineer is required if (1) the project involves mechanical or electrical engineering and will cost \$8,000 or less, or (2) the project does not require mechanical or electrical engineering and will cost \$20,000 or less.^{vi}
 - **Independent Testing.** If acceptance of a facility by a public entity involves independent testing of construction materials engineering and/or verification testing services, the testing services should be procured under the Professional Services Procurement Act, and may not be procured under a BuyBoard contract.
 - **Written Certification.** A local governmental entity purchasing construction-related goods and services through a cooperative in an amount that exceeds \$50,000 must designate a person to certify in writing that the project does not require the preparation of plans or specifications by an architect or engineer OR that an architect or engineer has prepared the plans or specifications.^{vii}

- **Bonds.** You must also consider whether the vendor is required to provide a payment or performance bond. A payment bond is required for contracts that exceed \$25,000 to protect subcontractors who supply labor or materials for the project. A performance bond is required for a contract that exceeds \$100,000, to protect the local government if a contractor fails to complete the project.^{viii} Without payment and performance bonds, if the contractor fails to pay its subcontractors or to complete the project, the public entity that entered the contract can be held responsible for payment claims or costs to complete.
- **Construction Contract.** Even though the procurement of construction or construction-related services may be through the BuyBoard, your construction contract is between your entity and the contractor. The BuyBoard contract's general terms and conditions, standing alone, are not sufficient to document your entity's specific transaction. THEREFORE, YOU SHOULD USE AN APPROPRIATE FORM OF CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT JUST AS YOU WOULD DO IF YOU PROCURED CONSTRUCTION SERVICES INDEPENDENTLY, USING COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSALS. The contract must contain provisions required by state law including: performance and payment bonds, requirements for payment of prevailing wages to all construction workers, workers' compensation coverage for all workers and, on projects where contractor employees may have direct contact with students, criminal history record checks. Other provisions which should be considered in the construction contract are retainage, contingency, liquidated damages and dispute resolution, among others. If federal funds are involved, additional requirements may apply. (See the Purchasing with Federal Funds BuyBoard Advisory available on the BuyBoard® website for additional information on purchases with federal funds.) By supplementing the BuyBoard contract with an appropriate form of construction contract, you ensure that your entity's unique interests are addressed and that your entity can enforce the contract directly.
- **Legal advice.** Because of the variety of laws that relate to construction-related purchasing and the potential risk of high exposure, you are well-advised to consult with your entity's legal counsel before procuring construction-related goods and services under any procurement method, including a purchasing cooperative.

This Advisory is provided for educational purposes only to facilitate a general understanding of the law. This Advisory is neither an exhaustive treatment on the subject nor is it intended to substitute for the advice of an attorney.

For more information about BuyBoard, contact us at 800-695-2919.

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- i. Tex. Gov't Code §791.025 and Tex. Local Gov't Code §271.102.
 - ii. Tex. Ed. Code §44.031(a) (school districts); Tex. Local Gov't Code §252.043(a)(municipalities) and §262.022(5-a) and §262.027(counties)
 - iii. Tex. Gov't Code §2254.004 and §791.011(h)
 - iv. Tex. Occ. Code §1051.703
 - v. Tex. Occ. Code §1001.0031(c)
 - vi. Tex. Occ. Code §1001.053
 - vii. Tex. Gov't Code §791.011(j), effective September 1, 2013
 - viii. Tex. Gov't Code §2253.021(a)