

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

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- **Must goods or services be bid if a budget unit, faculty, or staff member receives funding through an operating, revenue, restricted, or plant account?**

Yes, in most instances when the aggregate cost of all items to be purchased exceeds 10,000. Purchases may not be artificially divided to avoid or lessen bid requirements. If ordering from a Louisiana State Contract no competitive pricing is required over \$10,000, except when utilizing a LAPS contract. A purchase requisition must be processed through Northwestern Purchasing for encumbering funds, verification of state contract information, and issuance of a State Release Order.

- **How often is the State Contract information on the Internet updated?**

The Office of State Purchasing updates State Contracts nightly to assure current information is available.

- **For services involving labor and material for the construction or renovation of buildings, improvements to the campus or other University properties, or contractor work needed for instruction or research, is there a procedure for requesting this work?**

Contact the Physical Plant Dept. State Fire Marshall approval may be involved or coordination necessary with drafting specifications on appropriateness of altering a building or the campus grounds. Such considerations for work coming in contact with building or underground computer, telephone and utility lines must be respected

- **How should we address a vendor who is not honoring specified delivery date?**

Budget unit should initially make verbal contact with the vendor regarding a problem in contract performance. If the complaint remains unresolved, the budget unit sends a formal complaint to the Procurement Specialist. Northwestern Purchasing will send a letter, with a copy of the complaint, asking the vendor to investigate and respond within a time frame. If the matter cannot be resolved, a Contract Controversy Hearing may be held. If the complaint concerns a State Contract purchase, the budget unit will need to complete a Deficiency/Complaint Form DA 3496 for Northwestern Purchasing to send to the State Purchasing Office. State Purchasing will send the vendor a letter, with a copy of the complaint report, asking the vendor to investigate and respond within a time frame. If the matter cannot be resolved, a Contract Controversy Hearing may be held.

- **How do I find items on State Contract?**

See State Purchasing's Contract Search on the Internet

- **When is it advisable to have a signed agreement for software licenses and software or hardware maintenance or support?**

Sometimes vendors will require that an agreement be signed. In this case, the original agreement, not signed by the University, must be forwarded to Northwestern Purchasing for review with compliance with Louisiana law to request the President's signature. Contact the Director of Purchasing if further direction needed.

- **Where can you find the most current information for statewide contracts?**  
 The Office of State Procurement has a search tool for the State Contract database. This tool enables agencies and the public to access current contract information.  
 Click [https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/OSP/LaPAC/eCat/dsp\\_eCatSearchLagov.cfm](https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/OSP/LaPAC/eCat/dsp_eCatSearchLagov.cfm) to search the contracts. The search engine provides rapid access to the database by contract number, T Number, vendor, brand/model in addition to a general search. State contracts are updated nightly to assure current information is available. You may also search for contract LaGov.
- **How should a Department place an order for items that are on the E.D.S. (State Use Program) or Prison Enterprises contracts in LaGov?**  
 State Use Program and Prison Enterprises orders for items on contract are handled through entry of a Purchase Order in LaGov.
- **How do you search for a statewide contract in eCat?**  
 ECat can be searched by contract number, vendor name, description, t-number, etc. at: [https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/lapac/ecat/dsp\\_eCatSearchLagov.cfm](https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/lapac/ecat/dsp_eCatSearchLagov.cfm)
- **How do I find items on contract?**  
 See State Procurement's Contract Search (La's electronic catalog - eCat) on the Internet or the OSP website. eCat provides search capabilities by various categories. (Contract name, item description, vendor name, etc.)  
[https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/OSP/LaPAC/eCat/dsp\\_eCatSearchLagov.cfm](https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/OSP/LaPAC/eCat/dsp_eCatSearchLagov.cfm)
- **How can I see the Prime Contract Vendor and Distributors for statewide contracts?**  
 This can be found on eCat by clicking on the contract number. The contract vendor and distributors (if applicable) can also be found in LaGov in the contract header information.
- **How do you find a listing of featured statewide contracts?**  
 A list of featured contracts can be found at [http://www.doa.la.gov/pages/osp/contracts\\_index.aspx](http://www.doa.la.gov/pages/osp/contracts_index.aspx)
- **How do you obtain copies of statewide contracts?**  
 Copies of contracts can be obtained from the following link: [http://www.doa.la.gov/pages/osp/contracts\\_index.aspx](http://www.doa.la.gov/pages/osp/contracts_index.aspx)
- **Will the justification from a previous sole source purchase suffice for the next request/order for the same item or service?**  
 No. The previous file can be used as a reference, but a new sole source letter from the vendor along with a current price quote and current published price list must be submitted. The Department must submit a new letter of justification also. The vendor must certify each time that sole source conditions still exist, and that no other competitor has entered the marketplace, or that the vendor has not established a distributor network.

## Bids:

- **Can a bid be accepted after the bid opening date and time?**  
Under no circumstances will late bids be accepted, regardless of the reason. All bids must be received by the bid opening date and time shown on the bid document.
- **Must a pre-bid conference be advertised?**  
Notification of a pre-bid conference must be included in the solicitation. If the estimated value of the award is over \$30,000 and attendance is mandatory, the pre-bid meeting must be advertised (Purchasing Rules and Regulations, Chapter 5, Section 511).
- **How do I find information on a bid that has been posted?**  
Bid information can be found on the LaPAC website listed below:  
<https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/osp/lapac/pubMain.cfm>
- **What are the bidding/quote requirements for small purchases below \$30,000?**  
Bidding and quote requirements for purchases below \$30,000 can be found at the following link:  
<https://www.doa.la.gov/osr/other/JBE%202020/JBE20-21.htm>
- **Where can bid laws/purchasing rules and regulations be found?**  
<http://www.doa.la.gov/osp/legalinfo/rulesregs03-10-2017.pdf>

## Vendors:

- **How should we address a vendor who is not honoring a contract or performing satisfactorily?**  
Departments should initially contact the vendor regarding a problem in contract performance. If the complaint remains unresolved, the Department sends a formal complaint ([Deficiency/Complaint Form](#)) to the Purchasing Office. Purchasing will send the vendor a letter, with a copy of the complaint report, asking the vendor to investigate and respond within a time frame with a proposed resolution. If the matter cannot be resolved, a Contract Controversy may be filed.
- **How does a vendor register with the La Secretary of State?**  
Louisiana Secretary of State's vendor registration information can be found at the links below:  
<https://www.sos.la.gov/pages/default.aspx>  
<https://geauxbiz.sos.la.gov/>

## P-Card:

- **Who should I contact if I have a P-Card question?**  
You can contact the Purchasing Office P-Card Program Administrators at [purchasing@nsula.edu](mailto:purchasing@nsula.edu)
- **Where can I find additional guidelines for using a NSU P-Card (LaCarte Visa)?**  
<http://www.doa.la.gov/pages/osp/travel/lacartepcard.aspx>

## Miscellaneous:

- **Who determines the need for a product or service?**  
The Department usually determines the need for a product or service in conjunction with the actual end user. The role of Purchasing is to purchase the goods or services in accordance with the laws, to ensure competition and provide guidance.
- **Can a Department order additional quantities over the original Purchase Order amount on an order that contains an increase/decrease clause?**  
Yes. Purchase order changes should be issued against the original purchase order, rather than issuing a new purchase order. For any quantity exceeding 100% of the original amount, the Department should seek prior approval from Purchasing. A change order produces the appropriate audit trail, usage records, and builds approvals to Purchasing.
- **What is an NDC number?**  
This is the National Drug Code number. This number identifies the product, manufacturer, and packaging.
- **Is there anything in the law that prevents a Department from obtaining materials, supplies or services from another country?**  
No, there is nothing in the law that prevents agencies from ordering from other countries. However, NSU may authorize the rejection of bids from vendors domiciled in a communist country or when the supplies are manufactured in a communist country.

## Data Processing:

- **How do I determine if requests for hardware and software maintenance & support should be processed through procurement or professional contracts?**
  - Hardware maintenance which consists of remedial maintenance, preventative maintenance, replacement parts, labor and engineering changes necessary to keep information technology hardware in good working condition are typically handled through the procurement side of Purchasing.
  - Software maintenance which consists of on-site, telephone and/or on-line troubleshooting, installation assistance, basic usability assistance, etc. are typically handled through the procurement side of Purchasing.

- Software Support Services which consists of capacity planning, performance analysis, on-site troubleshooting (problem determination/diagnosis), custom modifications, etc. are typically handled through the professional contracts' office.
- **Is it acceptable to contract with vendors at an hourly rate to provide ongoing hardware or software maintenance or support?**

Procurements for on-going hardware maintenance and software maintenance under \$100,000 may be handled non-competitively and are typically set at a fixed monthly price or a fixed annual price and shall not be for a price greater than the vendor's published price. Procurements which exceed \$100,000 must be in accordance with R.S. 39:199 and LAC Title 34, Chapter 55 and are typically set at a fixed monthly price or a fixed annual price.
- **What types of data processing services are considered "support services?"**

Software Support Services include capacity planning, performance analysis, on-site troubleshooting (problem determination/diagnosis), custom modifications, etc.
- **Is the installation of computer hardware purchased from state contracts included in the purchase price? If not, is it acceptable to use the contract vendor to install the equipment?**

The majority of state Brand Name PC contracts include a line for installation at an hourly rate. Installation is limited to the initial set-up and initial diagnostics of microcomputers and peripherals purchased from the contract. Installation is to be used only at the time of the purchase of the component(s) from the state contract. Installation is not to be used for configuration or reconfiguration of network equipment, installation, or rearrangement of in-building or outside wiring/cabling nor any other fashion. If installation falls outside this definition, it must be procured in accordance with the Small Purchases Executive Order and the Purchasing Rules and Regulations.