

## How Does the Bid Process Work?

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You finally made the decision to take your business a step further by expanding into the Education Category. Some of the education opportunities come in the form of a bidding process.

So, you're probably wondering:

What happens next?

What do I need to do in order to bid on an opportunity?

How does the whole bid process work?

If you are new to bidding on education contracts, the bid process can seem very daunting, but it doesn't need to be. I will walk you through the process below.

### **What is a Bid?**

A bid is the process a government agency undertakes in order to purchase furniture, consumables, services and technologies from vendors like you. Some services may require that an agency award a contract to only one vendor, or it may require a contract to be awarded to several vendors, depending on the type of product or service needed.

### **Specifications:**

The first step in the bidding process deals with coming up with the specifications for the job. The school district looking for bids has to develop specifications for the bidding process. For example, if the district needs a building constructed, a schematic or blueprint must be developed first. All of the details for the entire project must be outlined in the documentation. If a school district is looking for bids on furniture, then they will gather information including quantity, sizes, shapes, colors and sometimes manufacturer.

### **Request for Bids:**

After the details of the project have been developed, the school district must request that bids be made. This can involve sending out invitations to bid and posting the opportunity online. In some cases, the school district will only request bids from a pre-selected list of vendors. In other situations, the bid opportunity may be open to anyone who qualifies to bid on it. It is important to ensure that your business is registered as a vendor with the school district. There is typically an initial bid meeting scheduled, so vendors can hear about the bid and ask questions.

### **Bidding:**

After the information about the project has been distributed to vendors, the bidding process begins. The bidding process can differ, depending on the rules set by the school district. In some cases, sealed bids will be submitted and the district will evaluate them. In this situation there is typically an official bid opening meeting scheduled. All vendors are invited to this meeting to watch the district open each sealed bid.

In other cases, a more informal bidding process will be involved in which vendors simply give a total amount that they can do the job for.

**Reviewing the Bids:**

The school district will typically set a deadline on when the last bids will be accepted. Once that deadline is reached, the school district will begin reviewing the bids. The length of time that it takes to review the bids could vary, depending on the number of bids received.

**Awarding the Contract:**

After the bids have been thoroughly reviewed, the school district will award the contract to one or multiple bidders. In most cases, the bidder with the lowest bid wins. In some situations, the school district will award the contract not only on price but other factors as well. For instance, the school district may be inclined to go with a more reputable provider or with those where a prior relationship exists. It is extremely important to build a relationship with decision makers at the district level, including those in the purchasing office.

**Do:**

- Establish a relationship with decision makers at the district
- Register your business with the school district
- Request to be notified of future bids or ask to be directed to where you can register and view bids
- Be prepared to provide detailed information about your company, including references
- Ask if you can help them spec the items for their bid. This is an opportunity for you to spec product that you or your wholesaler stocks
- Attend the initial bid meeting. This is an opportunity for you to ask questions
- Attend the official sealed bid opening. This is an opportunity for you to see and hear what other dealers/vendors are offering

**Don't:**

- Do not assume that you will automatically be notified of a bid, just because you already do business with the district
- Do not request to be notified of bids and then not respond. If you have been notified of a bid and you do not want to bid, then submit a no bid response or letter. If a district continues to notify you and you do not respond or "no bid," then you will be removed from their vendor list.
- Do not fail to comply with the bid guidelines. Your bid will automatically be rejected, even if you offer the best price or product
- Do not fail to deliver what you have offered in the bid. This will get black listed from doing business with the district in the future.

DO NOT FEAR SCHOOL DISTRICT BIDS –

THESE ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW REVENUE AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS FOR FUTURE BUSINESS!