

**City of Mount Vernon**  
**Purchasing Guidelines and Procedures**  
**July, 2016**

**The Ultimate Purpose of a Purchasing System is to Save \$\$\$:**

1. Ensure that taxpayers get the best value for their monies spent by the City
2. Ensure that budgetary authority exists before commitments are made
3. Spend money effectively and efficiently; eliminate fraud and waste.

**General Purchasing Policies**

**(ref: Seeking Competition in Procurement, NYS Office of the State Comptroller)**

**Competitive Bidding Required**

1. Purchases, generally, involving expenditures in excess of \$20,000 and purchases for public works in excess of \$35,000, are subject to competitive bidding. The bidding process is governed by City Charter and administered through the City Clerk's office.
2. Note: when determining whether or not the threshold has been exceeded, aggregate purchases for a twelve-month period are to be considered
3. There are exceptions to the competitive bidding requirement, including purchases made through:
  - NY State Office of General Services
  - contracts let by other states and political subdivisions
  - emergency purchases
  - professional services
  - legitimate sole sources
4. Professional Services are those which generally require specialized or technical skills, expertise of knowledge. Competition in the contracting for professional services should be promoted via the use of RFP's (Requests for Proposal)
5. Preferred sources include organizations involved in advancing "special social and economic goals." Examples include veterans' workshops, nonprofit agencies for the disabled, etc.
6. "Emergency" designation must be approved by City Council and Board of Estimate and Contract. Emergency status obviates the requirement for competitive bidding, but only to the extent that the purchase(s) is/are required to address an immediate need. An "emergency" means that the peace, health, safety and welfare of the City's inhabitants is involved. Poor planning, budget expiration, and gradual wear and tear do not constitute emergencies.

## Purchases Below the Competitive Bidding Threshold

### General

1. Purchases below the competitive bidding threshold, whether procured by purchase order or voucher request, must conform to the following parameters:
  - Purchases under \$100.00 require no verbal quote
  - \$100-\$1,000 requires three verbal quotes (documented by person requesting quote)
  - \$1,000-\$7,000 requires three written quotes 4403.02
  - \$7,000-\$20,000 requires more than three written quotes

### Purchase Orders

1. The basic parameters for using PO's to procure goods and services:
  - All purchases in excess of \$50, unless otherwise exempted (see voucher parameters below) require a purchase order
  - Purchase orders are to be completed and sent to vendor BEFORE purchase is executed and goods or services received
2. The Purchase Order process via MUNIS is detailed in a separate document devoted to that topic.

### Voucher Requests (Request for Payment)

1. Department completes Request for Payment form. Documentation for the claim is attached to the form. Documentation is most usually an invoice, which may be accompanied by copies of any authorizing legislation.
2. Request for Payment is transmitted to the vendor for Signature. In the case of recurring items, it has been practice to use photocopies of previously signed Request for Payment forms.
3. Vendor signs Request and returns to originating Department
4. Department head signs the Request
5. Request is then sent to Office of the Comptroller for review.
  - a. Verify that budget code is correct
  - b. Verify that monies are available in that budget code
6. Following Comptroller approval, a check is prepared.
7. Check mailed to vendor accompanied by a copy of the request for payment.

### Use Voucher Requests for:

1. Purchases under \$50 and of a recurring nature.
2. Goods and services authorized by written contract and legislation, including emergencies.
3. Utilities, service contracts, postage, legal notices, employee expense reimbursements.