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How To Procure Print in the Empire State

By Leela Moore

New York state spends \$10 billion on print procurement every year—\$3.1 billion goes through the office of general services (OGS). With that amount to spend, OGS has more procurement power than many small countries. In addition to this budget, print purchasing in New York has been largely decentralized with agencies practicing autonomy over their own print buying. The legislature does its procurement through the finance office for bills and journals; the departments handle preprinted forms, offset books, pamphlets, newsletters, brochures, stationary, and envelopes.

"The first place [to find government purchasing opportunities] is through OGS for centralized contracts, things that are used by multiple agencies and authorities," says Jamie Nussbaum, purchasing officer for OGS. New York state welcomes print bids and has well-defined rules for selecting bid winners. They must have multiple submissions, and they outreach for a viable market. A printer's role is to provide information and samples to create a relationship.

An example of a new bid request is on OGS' Web site, effective March 31. The project is for 41,000 copies of a monthly newsletter for a two-year term. Featuring Medicaid updates, it will range from four to 40 pages.

Part of the bid form is designed to assess a vendor's authorization to do business in New York. Questions are aimed at finding out a business' integrity, financial and organizational capacity, and performance history. Mr. Nussbaum explains that printers must submit



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Jamie Nussbaum, purchasing officer for New York state's office of general services, notes that New York welcomes print bids, and has guidelines it follows for selecting bid winners.

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equipment lists and capabilities, as well. According to New York law, at least three bids should be solicited and the lowest price is awarded.

You can register to be notified of bids at www.ogs.state.ny.us. Under "For Business," select "vendor registration for bid notification, new vendor registration." Printers can choose from a list of product or service classifications, including office equipment and supplies, published products, and editorial and design services. The system automatically e-mails notifications with hyperlinks to the bid documents.

You can identify government opportunities by subscribing to the New York State Contract Reporter (NYSCR) to see who has purchased what in the past. A subscription is \$175 a year at www.nyscr.org. You will find that many purchases are cyclical. Look for jobs that fit your business.

State agencies are required by law to notify the NYSCR and go through the bid process. Agencies making smaller purchases are required to get three quotes. They submit either an RFP (request for proposal), IFB (invitation for bid), or an RFEI (request for expression of interest).

Jeff Boyse, deputy commissioner of OGS, administers the NYSCR. He explains that working with the minority- and women-owned business enterprise (MWBE) benefits state agencies because a discretionary spending window usually set at \$15,000, increases to \$50,000 when working with an MWBE. No sub-contracting of actual printing is allowed, and the certification process includes a site visit. Small businesses, minority- or women-owned businesses have a percentage of bids set aside to be marketed to them so state agencies can meet anti-discrimination goals.