

Brazoria County Vendor Handbook



October 2025 Edition

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Introduction and Purpose

This handbook, prepared by the Brazoria County Purchasing Department, is designed to help vendors understand the County's procurement processes for goods and services. It details key procedures, purchasing thresholds, and vendor expectations, aligning with the County Purchasing Act and the Brazoria County Purchasing Policy adopted on September 1, 2025.

This October 2025 edition updates and consolidates all current purchasing practices, ensuring the content is accessible and supports transparent, efficient, and legally compliant procurement activities.

Brazoria County encourages businesses that provide goods or services to participate in its competitive procurement process.

County Purchasing Law, Methods, and Vendor Responsibilities

Brazoria County adheres to the Texas County Purchasing Act (Local Government Code Chapter 262), which governs the expenditure of public funds by counties. This law ensures that all purchases are made transparently, competitively, and in compliance with state statutes. Contract awards are granted to responsive and responsible vendors who meet all requirements and offer the best overall value.

While Texas law does not generally favor geographic preference in bidding, Brazoria County supports the principle of "Buying Brazoria County First" when legally permissible and in the County's best interest. The Purchasing Department's mission is to deliver quality goods and services to County departments in a timely and cost-effective manner, ensuring the responsible use of public funds through fair and open competition and high ethical standards.

For questions or additional information, please contact the Brazoria County Purchasing Department at (979) 864-1825 or (281) 756-1825.

Purchasing Methods by Dollar Threshold

Purchasing procedures are determined by the estimated cost of goods or services:

- **Under \$5,000:** Purchases may be made using verbal or written quotes, which are still conducted competitively.
- **\$5,000 to \$25,000:** Requires competitive verbal or written quotes solicited directly by the Purchasing Department.
- **\$25,000 to \$50,000:** Requires competitive written quotes, typically informal and requested through email or telephone. Usually requested by the Purchasing Department.
- **\$50,000 to \$100,000:** Requires written quotes with a minimum of three quotes. May be request through an informal Request for Quote (RFQ) process via our eProcurement platform, or email. These are typically requested by the Purchasing Department.
- **\$100,000 and above:** Requires a formal sealed bid or proposal process. Solicitations (see glossary of terms attached for specific solicitation types used by the County) are publicly advertised and formally opened in public.
- **Intergovernmental Agreements:** Brazoria County may also procure goods or services through cooperative purchasing agreements, regardless of dollar value, provided they meet legal and policy requirements.

Key Vendor Guidelines

- **Authorized Purchasing Authority:** Only the County Purchasing Agent and employees within the Purchasing Department are authorized to make purchases. The Purchasing Agent can execute purchases under \$100,000, while purchases of \$100,000 or more require formal approval by the Commissioners Court. The only exceptions are purchases made utilizing cooperative contracts with other public agencies that have completed
- **Purchase Orders (P.O.) Required:** A valid P.O. number from the Brazoria County Purchasing Department is mandatory before delivering goods or services. The County is not responsible for unauthorized or "after-the-fact" orders. All Purchase Orders or Release Orders must have the Purchasing Director's signature in order to be considered a valid P.O.
- **Delegated Ordering:** In limited cases, departments may issue "P.O. Release Orders" against existing contracts or blanket P.O.s with written authorization from the Purchasing Department.
- **Personal Purchases Prohibited:** County employees are not permitted to request goods or services for personal use with County funds.

- **No Geographic Preference:** State law generally prohibits the County from favoring local vendors based solely on location. However, the Commissioners Court may consider location for purchases above the statutory threshold in specific, legally permissible cases.

Vendor Reminders

- Confirm that the County employee requesting a quote or order is authorized.
- Always obtain a valid purchase order before delivering goods or services.
- Provide your most competitive pricing on the first quote, as vendors are selected based on the lowest, best price from the most responsible offeror.
- Contact the Brazoria County Purchasing Department with any questions or concerns.

Compliance with State Purchasing Laws

Brazoria County ensures full compliance with Texas Government Code provisions related to vendor eligibility, in accordance with state law and County Purchasing Policy. Vendors and contractors must not be listed on any restricted lists maintained by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, including:

- **Prohibited Foreign Terrorist Organization Lists:** Companies engaged in scrutinized business operations with countries such as Iran or Sudan, or those associated with designated foreign terrorist organizations, as defined in Chapters 2252 and 2270 of the Texas Government Code.
- **Boycott of Israel:** Brazoria County does not contract with companies that boycott Israel, pursuant to Chapters 2271 and 808 of the Texas Government Code, unless exempt by law.
- **Boycott of Energy Companies:** The County complies with Chapter 809 of the Texas Government Code, which prohibits contracting with financial companies identified by the Texas Comptroller as boycotting energy companies.

Vendors may be required to complete verification forms to certify compliance with these laws as a condition of doing business with Brazoria County.

Authority to Sign Contracts

Under the Texas County Purchasing Act (Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 262), only designated County officials have the legal authority to approve and sign procurement contracts on behalf of Brazoria County:

- **Commissioners Court:** Authorized to approve all contracts exceeding the statutory purchasing threshold of \$100,000. The Court acts as a voting body and does not individually sign procurement documents. Signing authority is typically delegated to the County Judge, but can also be delegated to another person by the Court.
- **County Purchasing Agent:** Has been granted the authority to sign contracts on behalf of the County by Commissioners Court, not to exceed \$100,000 or a purchase made using a cooperative purchasing contract.

Program officials, department heads, or other County staff do not have procurement authority unless explicitly delegated by the Commissioners Court in accordance with the County Purchasing Act or other applicable law.

To ensure compliance with County policy and Texas law:

- Vendors must confirm that all contracts are reviewed by the County Purchasing Department before execution.
- All contracts involving County funds must be supported by a valid Purchase Order issued by the County Purchasing Department.
- Any contract signed without proper authority may be deemed void and unenforceable.

Responsibility to County

Brazoria County Purchasing personnel are committed to avoiding any activities that could compromise or appear to compromise the County's best interests. Personnel will not use confidential proprietary information for personal gain.

Ethical Code

Brazoria County Purchasing personnel uphold high ethical and moral standards. The acceptance of gifts or gratuities is prohibited by governmental purchasing ethics, as well as State and Federal statutes.

County officials and employees are strictly prohibited from accepting or soliciting money, property, service, or other items of value (gift, favor, loan, or otherwise) when the employee or official knows or should know it is being offered or given in the process of:

- requesting goods or services;
- receiving or accepting goods or services;

- influencing the discharge of official duties;
- purchasing, approving, or awarding of contracts; and
- processing invoices, payments, or other correspondence.

This handbook does not prohibit an official or employee from accepting a gift or loan that is not statutorily prohibited, provided it is accepted on behalf of Brazoria County. Such gifts become the exclusive property of Brazoria County and must be included in inventory or other accountable property records like other acquired property.

Conflict of Interest

Brazoria County recognizes Texas Local Government Code Chapter 176, which requires any vendor or person seeking to contract with a local governmental entity (including their agents) to disclose, on Questionnaire Form CIQ, any employment, affiliation, business relationship, family relationship, or provision of gifts that might cause a conflict of interest with the local governmental entity.

Taxes

Purchases by the Brazoria County Purchasing Department represent expenditures of public funds governed by various state laws. Most purchases are exempt from Federal, State, and Local Taxes. Brazoria County is a tax-exempt governmental entity. Vendors should not include Federal Excise, State, or City Sales Tax unless contrary to State statute.

Sole Source Purchasing Goods and Services

Sole source goods and services require a statement from the Purchasing Agent affirming the existence of only one source and specifying the type of sole source good or service being purchased. This statement must be submitted for consideration and approval by the Commissioners Court and reflected on the meeting agenda. Sole source purchasing procedures are outlined in Texas Local Government Code Section 262.024.

Submission of Bids

Brazoria County Purchasing Department uses Bonfire for supplier management and to distribute and receive bids and proposals online. Vendors are encouraged to register on Bonfire via the Purchasing Department's webpage to create a free profile and access solicitations. Suppliers will receive automatic email notifications of project opportunities based on their NIGP code selections.

Unless otherwise specified, all Offers (including ITB, RFP, CSP, RFO, RFQ, and RFSQ) must be submitted through Bonfire by the exact time and date indicated in the solicitation. Offerors are responsible for ensuring electronic submissions are fully uploaded and confirmed in the Bonfire system before the deadline.

If a solicitation explicitly allows hard copy submittals, the offer must be delivered in a sealed and properly labeled envelope to the Office of the County Purchasing Agent by the designated deadline. It is the offeror's sole responsibility to ensure timely delivery, whether electronic or hard copy. Late submissions will not be accepted or considered.

Unless otherwise noted, Offers are opened in the Purchasing Department Conference Room at 237 E. Locust Street, Suite 406, Angleton, Texas, on the date specified in the solicitation. After opening, responses are tabulated and evaluated by the Purchasing Department in coordination with the requesting department. The user department then submits a recommendation for award to the Purchasing Department, which is presented to the Commissioners Court by the Purchasing Director for formal approval. The Commissioners Court reserves the right to reject any and all offers.

System for Award Management (SAM) and Debarment

Brazoria County Purchasing ensures that its purchases do not involve contractors or vendors debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in federally and non-federally assisted transactions or procurements. Brazoria County checks the System for Award Management (SAM) to confirm that a proposed vendor has not been debarred, as the County is unable to conduct business with debarred vendors. All vendors must be registered in SAM to be able to do business with the County.

Contract Awards

Upon award of a solicitation by the Commissioners Court, the Purchasing Department will provide written notification to the successful offeror(s) detailing the awarded amount(s). A Brazoria County Purchase Order will be issued by the Purchasing Department upon execution of all contract documents. Vendors should not begin work or deliver products until a Notice to Proceed and/or a Purchase Order has been received.

Insurance

Prior to the award of a bid or proposal by Commissioners Court, contractors and vendors must furnish certificates of insurance evidencing compliance with insurance requirements. Certificates must include the contractor/vendor name, insurance company, policy number,

term of coverage, and limits. All insurance policies (except workers' compensation) must waive all rights of subrogation against Brazoria County, its officers, employees, and agents, and Brazoria County must be listed as additionally insured. The certificate holder must be: Brazoria County, Texas, 237 E. Locust, Angleton, Texas 77515.

Deliveries

All purchases are normally made F.O.B. destination, inside delivery, unless otherwise stated. Brazoria County accepts title to goods upon satisfactory delivery at the specified delivery point. Therefore, deliveries must be made to the exact address shown on purchase instruments. Vendors should confirm the full name and title of County employees receiving deliveries.

Invoices and Payments

Invoices for payment against a Purchase Order must be mailed to the invoicing address and/or email noted on the Purchase Order. Sending invoices to the Purchasing Department may delay payment. All invoices should be sent to invoices@brazoriacountytx.gov. The County's payment terms are Net30 and all contractors must pay their subcontractors within 10 days of receiving payment from the County.

Invoices must indicate the Purchase Order number and the Bid/Contract number, if applicable. Invoices shall be itemized according to the purchase order, with transportation charges listed separately. A copy of the Bill of Lading and Freight Waybill, if applicable, should be attached. Invoices lacking Purchase Order numbers or other required information may be rejected and returned.

Brazoria County's obligation is payable solely from available funds for the purchase. Lack of funds renders the order null and void to the extent funds are unavailable, and any delivered but unpaid goods will be returned to the Seller by the County.

Surplus or Salvage Property

Scrap metals, used equipment, obsolete materials, and unclaimed personal property may be sold by the Purchasing Department through public auction or sealed bid to the highest bidder. Periodic sales are announced via Public Notice in at least one newspaper of general circulation in the County. The County utilizes several online auction services to sell surplus property, with links available on the Purchasing Department's webpage.

Glossary of Common Purchasing Terms and Acronyms

- **NIGP – National Institute of Governmental Purchasing:** A national professional organization that establishes best practices and standardized codes for public procurement. NIGP codes classify goods and services for purchasing and reporting.
- **RFP – Request for Proposals:** A formal solicitation method used when factors other than price (e.g., qualifications, experience, technical approach) are considered in selecting the best vendor. Proposals are evaluated based on published criteria, and negotiations may follow.
- **ITB – Invitation to Bid:** A formal, competitive solicitation used when the County knows exactly what it needs and selection is based strictly on the lowest price. Also known as a 'sealed bid'.
- **CSP – Competitive Sealed Proposal:** A hybrid method allowing the County to consider both pricing and evaluation factors. Proposals are submitted sealed and evaluated on a combination of cost and merit.
- **RFSQ – Request for Statements of Qualifications:** Used when the County is seeking professional services (e.g., engineering, legal, or architectural). Vendors are evaluated solely on qualifications, not price, with fees negotiated after selection.
- **RFO – Request for Offers:** A flexible procurement method allowing the County to receive and evaluate offers for various solutions, particularly for technology or service-related procurements. Selection is based on best value, not just price.
- **RFQ – Request for Quotations:** An informal solicitation used to obtain price quotes for goods or services, typically for purchases below the formal bidding threshold. It may be verbal, email-based, or written.