



How to do Business with La Joya Independent School District

Welcome to the La Joya Independent School District Purchasing Department! The following information will help you familiarize yourself with our school district and particularly, with the procurement process.

General Information

The La Joya Independent School District, located in Hidalgo County, consists of more than 226 square miles, stretching west of Mission to Sullivan City, including the smaller communities of La Joya, Palmview, Peñitas and Abram. The district has 41 schools, grades ranging from Pre-Kindergarten through grade twelve. During the 2014-2015 school year, La Joya I.S.D. has experienced a peak enrollment of 29,690 students. La Joya I.S.D.'s mission—Educational Excellence: the right of every student, is the district's operational driving force. The District strives to provide quality educational opportunities that enable our students to perform at high levels. Teachers, staff and administration work together to ensure that each child is given the opportunity to learn and build on their own natural talents.

Purchasing Department Mission and Goal Statement

The La Joya I.S.D. Purchasing Department is committed to provide high quality service in facilitating the procurement function in an effort to support student achievement.

It is the goal of the La Joya I.S.D. Purchasing Department to procure the goods and services necessary to enhance the educational process in accordance with all laws, policies and procedures established by the United States Federal Government, the State of Texas—its respective agencies and the La Joya Independent School District.

Procurement Philosophy

While campuses and departments determine their purchasing needs, procuring respective goods and services within statutory limits is the responsibility of the Purchasing Department. Subsequently, the oversight of the purchasing process is centralized through the Purchasing Department. The main purpose of the Purchasing Department is to facilitate the procurement of goods and services in order to meet the needs of the district. The Purchasing Department is responsible for the supervision of district procurement for materials, supplies, equipment and services. However, most decisions are site-based, dependent upon campus and department needs.

The Law

La Joya I.S.D. is a political subdivision of the State of Texas and as such, operates under specific legal requirements and local policies for the procurement of goods and services. The district strives to acquire goods and services providing the best value in accordance with all applicable regulations. Therefore, the majority of district purchases are done through the competitive procurement process. La Joya I.S.D.'s legal and local policies are published in the Board Policy online found in the district's website at <http://www.lajoyaisd.com>

Contract Methodology

- All contracts exceeding \$50,000 in the aggregate district-wide within a one-year period are processed through the use of competitive sealed bids, sealed proposals or one of the methods allowed by state law. The competitive procurement threshold for school buses is \$20,000.
- Public bid openings are advertised as required by state law. La Joya I.S.D. bid publications appear in *The Monitor*.

Contract Methodology Cont.

- Interested vendors are required to use the La Joya I.S.D's e-Bidding website to register and participate in the competitive procurement process.
- Bids
 - Interested vendors may attend the bid opening.
 - All bid openings are public.
 - Bids are read aloud and attending vendors may record bid details at their discretion.
 - Once a bid is opened, vendors are not allowed to make changes.
- Competitive Sealed Proposals/Request for Proposals
 - Interested vendors may attend the proposal opening.
 - All proposal openings are public.
 - Only names of participating vendors are read publicly as proposal scope and pricing is subject to negotiation.
- Bid and proposal submittals are evaluated by the Purchasing Department and the district initiating department to determine the best value to the district, in accordance to contract awarding criteria established by the state.
- The La Joya I.S.D. School Board of Trustees takes action on procurement agenda items during their regularly scheduled meetings, typically held on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month, or during special called meetings. School Board meetings are held at the Central Administration at Nellie Schunior – Board Room, located at 200 West Expressway 83, La Joya, Texas 78560.
- The Purchasing Department will issue bid award notifications via the e-Bidding website.
- La Joya I.S.D. reserves the right to use a competitive procurement method for any purchase. However, purchases between \$2,000 and \$50,000, may be processed through vendor quotations. The Purchasing Department processes quotations for campuses, while departments are responsible to process their specific quotations through established district quotation guidelines. The Purchasing Department may utilize the e-Bidding website or fax/e-mail process for quotations. Other district departments will process quotations via e-mail or fax. Telephone quotations are not acceptable.

Vendor Registration

Vendors who wish to participate in the bidding process with La Joya I.S.D. are required to register using the district's online supplier portal powered by Ion Wave Technologies, Inc., hereafter referred to as "e-Bidding website". Please note there is no vendor fee to use this service.

e-Bidding Website Functionality:

- The link to the district's e-Bidding website is found in the Purchasing Department website at <http://www.lajoyaisd.com/purchasing>
- Invitations to bid will be posted on the district's e-Bidding website, containing the date, time and place of bid opening. Bids shall be submitted in accordance with terms, conditions, specifications and requirements. A Pre-bid conference may be scheduled for certain bids. If so, details will be made available through the Invitation to Bid. Any questions pertaining to a bid shall be addressed in writing via the e-Bidding website or directly to the Director of Purchasing & Warehouse Operations via e-mail: s.zapata@lajoyaisd.net The Purchasing Department is not responsible for information provided by district departments or campuses.
- Vendors are advised to familiarize themselves fully with the e-Bidding system's registration terms and conditions.
- Vendors may register for respective commodities and will receive notifications of upcoming bids via system-generated e-mail, based on commodity codes selected.
- Vendors will be able and expected to submit bids online.
- Vendors will be able to review bid tabulations and awards online. Should an award not be available online, please contact the Purchasing Department at (956) 323-2100 for additional information.

e-Bidding Website Functionality cont.

- It will be the vendor's sole responsibility to maintain and keep current vendor contact information, including e-mail addresses, to avoid missing bid opportunities.
- Vendors are strongly encouraged to register a general email address that is accessible to multiple individuals within your organization. Examples include: biddesk@yourcompany.com, or sales@yourcompany.com, or something similar.
- Registration through the La Joya I.S.D.'s e-Bidding website does not grant vendors automatic approved bid vendor status. Vendor approval status is based on the actual award of a bid/proposal by the School Board of Trustees.
- Vendors may access the e-Bidding system "Help" resource for assistance related to "Supplier Guides" and "Supplier Profile". Respective help topics include: Supplier Quick Tutorial (covering how to view and respond online), How to Retract a Bid Response, Add a User, Address Book, Commodity Codes, Inactivate a User, Special Classifications, Unlock-Reset Password.
- Vendor registration does not imply or guarantee to the participating vendor the receipt of any invitation to bid or request for proposals.

Purchasing Protocol

School Board Policy CH(Local) requires that all purchase commitments be made through an official district issued purchase order. La Joya I.S.D. will not assume financial responsibility in the absence of a purchase order.

Tax Exemption

La Joya I.S.D. is exempt from most state and local taxes on the basis that it is a governmental entity. Tax Exempt forms are processed by the Purchasing Department as requested.

Payment Process

All invoices shall be mailed to: La Joya I.S.D. Accounts Payable Department, 201 East Expressway 83, La Joya, Texas 78560. Invoices must reflect the purchase order number.

Insurance Requirements

Vendors performing contracted service work shall comply with La Joya I.S.D. insurance requirements as stated in the proposal terms and conditions. Vendors which are non-compliant shall not be given consideration.

Person Indebted to the District

State law authorizes La Joya I.S.D. to refuse entering into a contract with a person indebted to the district.

Vendor Visits

La Joya I.S.D. is a closed campus district. Vendors shall schedule visits to the Purchasing Department in advance. Please contact the Purchasing Department via e-mail: purchasing@lajoyaisd.net or the Purchasing Department Secretary at (956) 323-2100 to schedule an appointment with Purchasing Department Administrators.

Criminal History Guidelines

Any vendor who will have contact with students shall have a criminal history search performed. For more information, please contact the La Joya I.S.D. Internal Affairs Department at (956) 323-2640.

Ethics – Prohibited Behavior

- The La Joya Independent School District prohibits fraud and financial impropriety, as defined in CAA (Local) School Board Policy, in the actions of its Trustees, employees, vendors, contractors, consultants, volunteers and others seeking or maintaining a business relationship with the district.
- Vendors shall not intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly engage in deceptive practices regarding official policies of the District.

Ethics – Prohibited Behavior Cont.

- Vendors shall not offer or grant gratuities, gifts, or favors, as stipulated in La Joya I.S.D. policies, including but not limited to La Joya I.S.D. BBFB (Legal), DBD (Legal), DBD (Local) and CAA (Local).
- Vendors shall comply with federal and state regulations and La Joya I.S.D. Board policies and administrative procedures.

Cooperative Purchasing Participation

One of the competitive procurement mechanisms allowed by state law is the use of an Interlocal Contract. A Cooperative Purchasing agreement is a type of formal interlocal arrangement between two or more entities which allows participating organizations, such as La Joya I.S.D., to legally use a contract that was processed by an authorized entity. The use of Cooperative Purchasing contracts may promote greater economies of scale, while reducing commodity and administrative costs.

The La Joya I.S.D. School Board of Trustees has approved district participation in these Cooperative Purchasing organizations to supplement purchasing compliance:

- Region One Education Service Center Cooperatives
 - Child Nutrition Program – South Texas Co-Op
 - Library Services and Media Co-Op
 - Region One Purchasing Co-Op
- The Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN)
- The Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS)
- BuyBoard –Texas Association of School Boards
- TexBuy Purchasing Cooperative
- GoodBuy Purchasing Cooperative – Region Two ESC
- State Comptroller’s Office
- Texas Facilities Commission
- Choice Partners Cooperative – Harris County Department of Education
- Houston-Galveston Area Council of Governments (HGAC)
- Central Texas Purchasing Alliance (CTPA)
- Texas Public Energy Alliance
- Department of Information Resources (DIR)

The La Joya I.S.D. reserves the right to participate in other Cooperative Purchasing organizations as it may deem necessary.

Vendor Participation

The La Joya I.S.D. encourages vendor participation and does not discriminate against any vendor because of race, color, national origin, age, religion, gender or physical impediment.