

City of Bell Procurement Procedures Summary

The City Manager or a designee acts as the purchasing officer for the city.¹ All contracts must be approved by either the City Manager (for contracts of no more than one year that do not exceed \$25,000,² and/or contracts that are no more than three years that do not exceed \$15,000 per year³) or by the City Council (for all other contracts).⁴ No employee, member of the city council, appointed member of a city commission, board or committee, nor any person who has served such a role within the previous five years may be financially interested in any purchase order or contract. After this five-year period, any contract in which such a person is interested still may only be awarded by the City Council and only at a public meeting.⁵

Most contracts for the purchase of materials, supplies, equipment or services of an aggregate value of at least \$25,000 must be made in compliance with competitive bidding procedures.⁶ For exceptions to these procedures, and procedures for “informal” purchases (less than \$25,000) see Bell Municipal Code 3.12.080. Bidding procedure may be waived by the City Council; the City Manager may waive bidding procedures in cases where the amount of the contract is less than \$25,000.⁷

Where competitive bidding procedures are used:

- i. The process begins with an invitation to bid issued by the purchasing officer which must include a general description of the product or service required, the place, date and time of bid opening, and any applicable specifications and contract terms.⁸ Where a bidder believes further clarification is required, the bidder may request an interpretation or modification from the city. This interpretation, if granted, must be made in writing, never orally, and all parties known to have received bid invitations must be given copies.⁹
- ii. Bids may not be submitted electronically unless specifically authorized in the invitation. Sealed bids are submitted to the city clerk. Bids not been received prior to the time noted in the invitation may not be considered.¹⁰ Mistakes in a bid may be corrected subject to certain procedures; see Bell Municipal Code Section 3.12.060(H). Prior to the award of contracts, contractors must submit certain accounting documents; see Bell Municipal Code Section 3.12.070.
- iii. Bids are opened by the purchasing officer at the time and place designated in the invitation and in the presence of at least one witness. The name of each bidder, the amount of the bid, and other relevant information must be announced by the purchasing officer and recorded.¹¹ The bid must be awarded to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder; for a definition of “lowest responsive and responsible bidder,” see Bell Municipal Code Section 3.12.060(I). Preference may be given to incentivize the use of recycled products¹² or local vendors.¹³

¹ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.020.

² Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.030.

³ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.090.

⁴ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.030.

⁵ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.110.

⁶ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.060.

⁷ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.120.

⁸ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.060(C).

⁹ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.060(E).

¹⁰ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.060(F).

¹¹ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.060(F).

¹² Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.060(K).

¹³ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.100.

- iv. A “notice of intent to award” must be sent to all actual bidders and must include the following text: “Protests must comply with the requirements of Bell Municipal Code Sections 3.12.140 et seq., and be submitted no later than five business days after the date of this notice.”¹⁴
The purchasing file must contain a written summary of the basis on which the award is made. A written determination of irresponsibility must be prepared for any bidder rejected because of irresponsibility.¹⁵
- v. If prices received in two bids are equal, the purchasing officer may choose one of a number of methods for determining the winner; for a list of these options, see Bell Municipal Code Section 3.12.060(J).
- vi. An aggrieved bidder may protest the award; see Bell Municipal Code Section 3.12.140 for procedures and grounds for protest.

¹⁴ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.060(F).

¹⁵ Bell Municipal Codes Section 3.12.060(I).