

Procurement Quick Guide

School Nutrition Programs

Procurement is a multi-step process used to obtain goods and services. All entities using Federal Funds, including school nutrition programs, must follow procurement regulations found in [2 CFR Part 200](#). USDA School Nutrition Program regulations [7 CFR Part 210](#), [215](#), [220](#).

The procurement method you use depends on the estimated dollar value of the goods or services you are purchasing.

Informal Procurement

Informal procurement may be used when the value of a purchase is less than \$350,000*. There are two types of informal procurement – micro-purchase and small purchase.

Micro-Purchase Procedures

Micro-purchase procedures may be used when the value of a purchase is less than \$15,000*. SFAs may choose to establish a higher threshold up to \$50,000 by meeting the self-certification requirements below. Micro-purchases are made without getting price quotes and must meet the following criteria:

- Purchases should be distributed equitably among qualified suppliers.
- Prices must be reasonable.
- Documentation must be kept including receipts and justification for using the micro-purchase method.

Self-Certification: SFAs wishing to increase their micro-purchase threshold up to \$50,000 must self-certify annually by justifying why they want to increase the threshold and have supporting documentation of being a low-risk auditee.

Small Purchase Procedures

Small purchase procedures may be used when the total purchase amount is less than \$350,000*. With this method, the following steps must be followed:

- Develop a solicitation document with product specifications.
- Contact vendors for price quotes.
- Document vendor responses.
- Evaluate vendor responses.
- Select the vendor.
- Monitor the contract.
- Maintain documentation.

Please see the Informal Procurement Checklist for specifics about each step.

* <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/27/2025-16412/federal-acquisition-regulation-inflation-adjustment-of-acquisition-related-thresholds> Local threshold may be more restrictive

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Procurement Quick Guide

School Nutrition Programs

Formal Procurement

Formal procurement must be used when the value of a purchase is greater than \$350,000*. The types of formal procurement include Invitation for Bid (IFB) and Request for Proposal (RFP).

Invitation for Bid (IFB)

Results in a firm fixed price; award made to lowest price responsible and responsive bidder.

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Results in a firm fixed price or cost reimbursable contract (cost plus % is not allowed); award made to lowest price responsive and responsive proposal with additional criteria used in the evaluation; evaluation criteria is clearly identified in the solicitation

Formal Procurement Procedures

- Forecast needs and conduct a price analysis.
- Develop a solicitation document – IFB or RFP – with product specifications.
- Publicly advertise the solicitation
- Evaluate vendor responses.
 - IFB - public bid opening
 - RFP – proposals opened after specified date, evaluated using criteria specified in the RFP
- Select the vendor with the lowest price that is also responsive and responsible (IFB)/ highest scored proposal with price being the primary factor (RFP)
- Award the contract.
- A signed written contract between the SFA and the selected vendor is required.
- Monitor the contract.
- Maintain documentation.

Please see the Formal Procurement Checklist for specifics about each step.

Procurement Policies

Procurement Procedures

The SFA must have a procurement plan that reflects actual practices and includes:

- Procurement methods used.
- Reference to Federal, State, and local regulations.
- Language that prohibits unnecessary or duplicative purchases
- Language that supports the use of small, minority and women’s businesses, when possible.
- The procedures should not include any language that unduly restricts competition.

* <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/27/2025-16412/federal-acquisition-regulation-inflation-adjustment-of-acquisition-related-thresholds> Local threshold may be more restrictive

Procurement Quick Guide

School Nutrition Programs

- Language stating that records documenting all procurement activities will be kept.

Codes of Conduct

The SFA must have written standards of conduct for procurement addressing conflicts of interest. These standards must:

- Prohibit real, or apparent conflicts of interest for employees engaged in selection, award, and administration of contracts.
- Indicate that employees are prohibited from accepting and soliciting gifts/incentives.
- Include disciplinary actions for violations.