

SECTION 7

COOPERATIVE AND INTERLOCAL PURCHASES

A. Explanation and Law

Texas statute authorizes local governments to participate in cooperative purchasing programs to increase efficiency in the purchasing process, generate cost savings through aggregated purchasing volume, and reduce administrative costs. The County participates in the purchasing programs of various local, state, and national purchasing cooperatives.

Although cooperative purchasing is recognized as a valuable tool for compliant government purchasing, it does not provide a customized contract or receive the specialized scrutiny that the solicitation process provides. Although cooperative purchasing is efficient it is sometimes not the best price that can be achieved. For this reason, cooperative purchase requests **under \$250,000** shall be processed according to Purchasing Policy.

Cooperative purchase requests **over \$250,000** shall receive extra analysis from the Purchasing Department as a measure to provide our required due diligence on larger expenditures. The Purchasing Department, as a result of this added analysis and at their discretion, **may** require a solicitation to be issued to fully source the market. The cooperative contract will always remain an option in this scenario.

B. Examples of Purchasing Cooperatives

- Texas Association of School Boards (BuyBoard)
- Houston Area Council of Governments (HGAC)
- National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance (NCPA)
- Purchasing Solutions Alliance (PSA)
- Omnia National (formerly TCPN)
- Sourcwell (formerly National Joint Powers Alliance - NJPA)
- Texas Interlocal Purchasing System/Texas-Arkansas Purchasing System (TIPS/TAPS)
- Purchasing Solutions Alliance (PSA)
- GoodBuy
- US Communities
- Choice Partners
- TxSmartBuy/TXMAS/TPASS
- Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR)
- General Services Administration (GSA)
- Tarrant County Cooperative Purchasing Program

The Interlocal Cooperation Act (Texas Government Code Chapter 791) allows local governments to contract with and between each other to provide governmental functions and services, and to join in contracting with others to provide goods and services through an interlocal or cooperative purchasing agreement. Each interlocal agreement must be approved by the Commissioners Court.

C. Interlocal agreements with various governmental agencies:

- Cities: Austin, Cedar Park, Ft. Worth, Georgetown, Leander, Round Rock
- Counties: Bastrop, Brazoria, Denton, Fort Bend, Hood, Montgomery, Tarrant, Tom Greene
- Other: Montgomery County Hospital District

Before requesting Commissioners Court approval of a Cooperative or Interlocal Agreement, ~~purchasing cooperatives~~each organization or contract areis vetted by the Purchasing, Legal Department and Contract Audit to ensure they comply with the County's legal requirements as prescribed by Texas law.

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