OKLAHOMA SUPPLIERS GUIDE

A step-by-step guide for doing business with the state.

OKLAHOMA
Office of Management
& Enterprise Services

Want to do business with the State of Oklahoma? Follow these steps!

Doing business with the State of Oklahoma doesn't have to be complicated! This simple guide brings together the most important things you need to know, all in one place. We'll walk you through the basics – from getting registered and finding bidding opportunities to understanding the rules and knowing who to call when you have a question. Our goal is to make the process clear and straightforward, so you can focus on what you do best. Let's keep it simple and get started!

Step 1: Registration

Registering as a bidder: Getting on the mailing list

- It's a **quick and easy sign-up**. You only need to provide a few pieces of information about your company.
- The main goal is to **receive notifications** when the state has opportunities (solicitations) for the products or services you offer. You'll pick categories (UNSPSC codes) that match what you sell.
- **It doesn't fully register you to get paid.** It's just about getting information.
- **This does allow you to bid on open opportunities.** If you are awarded, you will need to register as a supplier to get paid.

Registering as a supplier: Becoming officially recognized

- This is the **full registration process**. Your company is officially recorded in the state's payment system.
- Besides getting opportunity notifications, you also provide more detailed information about your business, like how to get paid electronically (EFT/direct deposit), a W-9 and any special certifications you might have.
- Being a registered supplier allows state agencies to **buy directly from you for smaller purchases** (up to $25,000).
- **To get paid by the state, you MUST be a registered supplier.** Bidder registration alone isn't enough.
- For larger purchases (over $25,000), the state will still need to go through a competitive bidding process, even if you're a registered supplier.

In simple terms:

- **Bidder:** Just wants to know about opportunities to bid.
- **Supplier:** Wants to do business with the state and get paid.

So, if you just want to see what's out there, register as a bidder. If you are ready to sell to the state and receive payments, you need to complete the full supplier registration.

Step 2: Solicitation

Think of it this way: The state sometimes needs to buy stuff, and there are a couple of main ways they go about it. Whether you're a bidder or a supplier, you'll need to bid on a solicitation to sell your goods or services to the state when the purchase will be over $25,000. There are two types of solicitations in Oklahoma: agency-specific and statewide solicitations.

Agency solicitation: When one agency needs something specific

Imagine a single state agency, like the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, needs new playground equipment for their parks. Here's how they might go about getting that equipment through an **agency solicitation**:

- **They have a unique need:** They can't just get playground equipment from existing sources, like State Use contracts, statewide contracts or Oklahoma Correctional Industries.
- **It costs more than a little bit:** The total cost of the playground equipment goes over a certain "fair and reasonable" amount.
- **They ask for help:** The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department teams up with a buyer from OMES Central Purchasing to figure out exactly what they need.
- **They create an announcement:** Together, they write up a Request for Proposal (RFP) or an Invitation to Bid (ITB) – basically, an official announcement saying, "Hey, we need playground equipment! Here's what we're looking for."
- **Everyone gets to see:** This announcement is posted publicly so that companies who sell playground equipment can see it.
- **They pick the best offer:** The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and the OMES buyer review all the responses from the companies, figure out who offers the best deal, and OMES awards the contract to that lucky supplier.
- **Just for them:** Keep in mind, these playground equipment contracts are usually just for the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department. Other state agencies that need the same thing will likely have to go through their own process.

Statewide solicitation: When everyone might need the same thing

Now, imagine the state realizes that *lots* of different government groups – not just one department but maybe all state agencies, schools, even cities – could use something, like office paper. That's when OMES Central Purchasing might do a **statewide solicitation**:

- **Broad interest:** OMES Central Purchasing notices that many different parts of the government need the same type of product or service.
- **For everyone:** This type of solicitation is designed to create contracts that *any* authorized user can use. That includes state agencies, schools, cities and more!

- **Experts weigh in:** OMES works with people who really know about office paper (the subject matter experts) to decide exactly what kind of paper they need.
- **Public announcement:** Just like with agency solicitations, OMES Central Purchasing posts an announcement so paper companies know about the opportunity.
- **Careful scoring:** OMES Central Purchasing carefully evaluates and scores all the offers they receive.
- **Contracts for all:** OMES Central Purchasing awards contracts to the best suppliers, and these contracts can then be used by any of those authorized government groups.
- **Saves time and money:** Statewide contracts are great because they help the state buy things more cheaply and consistently across the board. It's much easier than everyone trying to buy office paper on their own!

The big difference

Think of **agency solicitations** as being for a **specific department's unique need**, while **statewide solicitations** are for things that **many different parts of the government might need**. Statewide solicitations aim to create contracts that lots of people can use, saving time and money in the long run.

Step 3: Bidding

So, you're signed in to the Oklahoma Supplier Portal as a bidder **(signing in is critical, so be sure not to skip that step)** and see the Bidding Opportunities tile. That's your gateway! The number on it tells you how many chances are waiting. Click it!

What you'll see:

- **Public Events:** Anyone can jump in and bid on these.
- **Invited Events:** These are special invites just for certain bidders.

On the left, you'll find **filters** to help you sort through the different stages of the bidding process. The main part of the page shows you the available opportunities.

Ready to bid?

Click the > icon, which can be found on the far right of the page, under the “Event Details” of an opportunity you’re interested in.

Inside the bidding event:

At the top, you'll see key info like the start and end dates, the deadline for asking questions, and below that are the specific items you can bid on.

Must-know buttons and sections:

- **View Bid Package:** Click this to see important documents related to the bid. You can download whichever files you need.
- **Event Q&A Forum:** If there is a Q&A period, click here to ask the state questions and see their anonymous responses after the Q&A ends. To ask a question, hit Reply.
- **Accept Invitation to Bid:** Clicking this just tells the state you plan to bid – it doesn't submit your actual bid.
- **Bid on Event:** Click this to start filling out your bid details.
    - **Submit Bid:** Use this **after** you've entered all the info.
    - **Save for Later:** If you need to come back and finish.
    - **Cancel:** To go back to the main page.
    - **Bidding Instructions:** Opens a separate window with specific rules for this event.
- **State Notes & Details:** This section shows info from the state, like contact info, payment terms, and if you can edit your bid later or submit multiple bids. The Q&A link is also here.
- **Questions from the State:** This part changes for each event and has questions the state needs you to answer (a red asterisk means it's required). You can also upload supporting documents here. The system won't let you submit if you miss a required question.
- **Line Items to Bid On:** Here's where you enter your price for each item you want to supply, along with the quantity the state needs. If you don't want to bid on an item, check the box. You can also add comments for the state next to each item. Click Bid for more details on a specific item, including shipping info. Save for Later or Start Page will take you back.
- **Validate Entries:** Click this anytime to have the system check if you've missed anything or entered data incorrectly.
- **Submit Bid:** Once you're sure everything looks good, hit this. You'll see a review page. If allowed, you can edit your bid, even after submitting it, until the event ends by going to the Action drop-down and selecting View/Edit Bid.

What happens next?

After the bidding event closes, the State of Oklahoma will review all the bids. Everyone who bid will get a notification about the results. If you win, the state will start the contract process.

In simple terms: This is your guide to finding and submitting bids on the Oklahoma Supplier Portal. Pay attention to deadlines, answer all required questions, and good luck!

Full guide (with pictures!): Bidding on events in the Oklahoma Supplier Portal.

Step 4: Doing it right: Ethics

Think of procurement – buying goods and services for the state – as a process built on trust. Taxpayer dollars are involved, and everyone needs to be sure that decisions are fair, transparent, and aboveboard. That's where ethics comes in! It's all about doing the right thing, even when no one is watching, to ensure a level playing field for everyone.

Keeping things fair during solicitations

Imagine a state agency needs to buy new software and has put out a solicitation (that's the official announcement asking for bids). During this time, it's important that the agency keeps things strictly professional with all potential suppliers.

The "No Chit-Chat" rule: To avoid even the *tiniest* hint of favoritism or unfair advantage, state agency employees generally can't have detailed discussions about the open solicitation with bidders. This means:

- **No secret meetings:** Sorry, no private coffee chats to discuss your amazing proposal before the deadline.
- **Questions go through the proper channels:** If you have questions about the solicitation, there's usually a specific process outlined (like the Q&A forum we talked about earlier). This ensures everyone gets the same information at the same time.
- **Staying impartial:** Agency folks need to remain neutral and can't give you insider tips or tell you what your competitors are doing.

This "quiet period" is in place to make sure everyone has an equal shot at the opportunity. It might seem strict, but it's all about fairness!

What about gifts and meals?

This is another area where clear boundaries help maintain ethical practices. State employees are expected to be good stewards of taxpayer money and avoid situations that could look like they're being influenced by gifts or favors.

State agency employees should **not** accept gifts or have suppliers pay for their meals or entertainment.

Think of it this way: Even a small gift could create the impression that the supplier is trying to gain an unfair advantage. To avoid any such perceptions, state employees will politely decline.

Why it all matters

Ethical procurement isn't just about following rules; it's about:

- **Fairness:** Ensuring everyone has a fair chance to do business with the state.
- **Transparency:** Making the process open and understandable to the public.

- **Accountability:** Holding everyone involved to high standards of conduct.
- **Public trust:** Maintaining the public's confidence in how their money is being spent.

By understanding and following ethical guidelines, both suppliers and state agencies play a crucial role in ensuring a procurement process that is fair, efficient, and benefits all Oklahomans.

Step 5: Keep your statewide contract in good standing

If you've landed a statewide contract with Oklahoma, congratulations! Now, to make sure you continue to shine and are ready for future opportunities, it's important to play by the rules of your contract. Think of it as keeping your membership in good standing! **(Note: This applies specifically to statewide contracts, not individual agency contracts.)**

Here are the essential tasks to keep your Oklahoma statewide contract in good shape:

- **Know where to look:** Find your statewide contract details (like reporting and fees) in the Statewide Contract search portal. Open your contract and look in Attachment C (Sections 6.1-6.4), or sometimes Section 26.17**.**
- **Report quarterly:** You'll get an email from strategic.sourcing@omes.ok.gov each quarter reminding you to report your sales and pay any 1% fee. They'll send you the form and payment info.
- **Pay the 1% fee:** The state charges a 1% fee on all sales under your statewide contract. They'll give you options for how to pay.
- **No sales? Let them know:** If you had zero sales under your *statewide* contract in a quarter, just email strategic.sourcing@omes.ok.gov with your contract number, company name and "no sales for [quarter]."
- **Need help with usage reporting or fees? Email them:** If you have any questions about your statewide contract, just reach out to strategic.sourcing@omes.ok.gov.

Bottom Line: Report your sales under your statewide contract, pay the small fee, keep your contact info current, and renew on time. Remember these things to stay in good standing with your Oklahoma statewide contract!

Step 6: Avoiding common pitfalls: Key recommendations

Here are a few extra pointers to help you make the most of your contract with the state:

- **Stay connected: Keep your contact details fresh.** Make it a routine to double-check that your email and phone number in the Supplier Portal are always accurate. This way, you'll never miss out on crucial updates, reminders, or future bidding opportunities.
- **Teamwork makes the dream work: Consider a general email.** Setting up a shared email address (like procurement@yourcompany.com or statecontracts@yourcompany.com) can be a game-changer. It ensures that important messages about your statewide contract –

such as reporting deadlines and renewal notices – are seen by the right people on your team, even if someone is out of the office.

- **Protect yourself: Wait for the PO!** This is a big one: **Do not begin work or provide goods/services for a state agency under your statewide contract until you have received a valid purchase order (PO).** A PO is the official confirmation that the agency has the necessary approval and funds for the purchase. Starting work without a PO can lead to delays in payment, or even nonpayment if the purchase wasn't properly authorized. Waiting for that PO protects you and ensures a smoother process for everyone.

By keeping these tips in mind, you'll be well-equipped to manage your statewide contract effectively and build a strong, reliable partnership with the State of Oklahoma.

Step 7: Stay in touch

Got questions? Your guide to contacting OMES Central Purchasing

We know that sometimes you might have questions as you navigate doing business with the State of Oklahoma. To get you pointed in the right direction, here's a breakdown of common questions and the best folks to reach out to:

Updating your information (contact details, bank account, etc.)

Who to contact: The awesome team in **Supplier Registration**.

For assistance with questions about supplier registration, including updating your contact information or bank account details, please contact:

- Phone: 405-521-2930 (Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST).
- Email: oksuppliers@omes.ok.gov.

Why: They're experts in eSupplier, and while you must enter and update your own information in the supplier portal, they handle all the behind-the-scenes details of your official supplier profile. Whether you have a new email address or phone number or need to update your bank account information for payments, if you need help, they're the ones who can walk you through the process.

Checking on payment status (Where's My Check/EFT?)

Who to contact: The **state agency** you did business with. OMES Central Purchasing typically does not handle individual payment inquiries. Contact the agency that made the purchase for the most up-to-date information.

Making updates to your contract

Who to contact: It depends on the type of contract!

- **Statewide contracts:** For updates to your statewide contract, your primary point of contact will be the assigned **contract manager (CM)** within OMES Central Purchasing.

- **Agency-specific contracts:** If you have a contract directly with a specific state agency (not a statewide contract), you'll work directly with the **procurement specialist at that agency**. They manage the specifics of that agreement.

Tip: When in doubt about who to contact for a contract update, it's often a good first step to reach out to your main point of contact at the agency involved, or you can contact central.purchasing@omes.ok.gov. They can guide you to the correct person.

General guidance on doing business with the State of Oklahoma

Who to contact: The knowledgeable **Jeannie Troxel** at OMES Central Purchasing.

Why: If you're new to doing business with the state or have general questions about the overall process, Jeannie is a great resource. She can provide guidance on navigating the system and understanding the requirements.

How to reach out

Because specific contact details (such as phone numbers or direct email addresses for individuals) can change, the best way to initiate contact with OMES Central Purchasing is often through the main OMES website. Look for "Contact Us" sections for specific email addresses provided for different functions (like oksuppliers@omes.ok.gov or strategic.sourcing@omes.ok.gov).

Remember!

Being clear and specific in your questions will help the OMES team assist you as quickly as possible. Include relevant details like your company name, supplier ID (if you have one), contract number (if applicable), and the specific issue you're encountering.

We are all working together to make the process as smooth as possible, so don't hesitate to reach out to the appropriate contact when you need assistance!