

H-GAC Cooperative Purchasing Program

“A Government-to-Government Procurement Service Available Nationwide”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is H-GAC?

A: The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) is a regional council of governments and a political subdivision of the State of Texas. H-GAC conducts its affairs under the laws of Texas and is governed by a 35-member board comprised of elected officials from the 13-county H-GAC region. The Board awards all contracts in public meetings, traditionally the third Tuesday of each month. Through these contracts local governments nationwide are permitted to purchase through the H-GAC Cooperative Purchasing Program.

Q: What are some differences between H-GAC’s Program and others?

A-1: H-GAC has offered Cooperative Purchasing since 1973. The Program specializes in high ticket, capital-intensive products and services that require technical, detailed specifications and extensive professional skills to evaluate bid and proposal responses. H-GAC does not “piggy-back” contracts originating with other entities.

A-2: No membership dues are required to participate in the H-GAC Cooperative Purchasing Program.

A-3: Internal and external audits are conducted annually and reported to the H-GAC Board.

A-4: The competitive process has been fulfilled in all H-GAC contract awards. “Competitive bids” are prescribed unless a product is specifically determined to be “high tech.”

A-5: Contractor accountability is an important requirement of the Program. H-GAC requires Performance Bonds and Insurance Certificates from its contractors.

Q: What defines requirements for “Competitive Bids” and “Competitive Proposals”?

A: Chapters 252 and 262 of the Texas Local Government Code specify the criteria governing city and county procurement methods in soliciting responses from suppliers. Specifically, “competitive proposals” are limited to procurement of equipment, goods and services that are highly technical in nature (i.e. data processing, telecommunications, electronics, and technical services related to those items). “Competitive bids” are prescribed for all other products such as vehicles, heavy equipment, and other products not considered “high tech.”

Q: How does the H-GAC Program work?

A: Your entity executes an “Interlocal Contract” with H-GAC. The document sets out the conditions, requirements, and processes through which your purchase orders are received, confirmed and processed. You send your purchase orders directly to an H-GAC supplier with a duplicate to H-GAC for confirmation. The supplier processes your orders, delivers the products and invoices you for payment.

Q: Is my entity eligible to purchase through the H-GAC Program?

A: The Texas Interlocal Cooperation Act permits joint participation by local governments, states, state agencies, and non-profit corporations providing one or more government functions and services in Texas—and in other states. Most states have interlocal cooperation authority or other joint power provisions that allow participation in cooperative activities.

Q: How do I purchase without going through my own bid process?

A: When you purchase through H-GAC, your “Interlocal Contract” connects you with H-GAC’s duties and responsibilities on your behalf. H-GAC (1) conducts research and pre-bid/pre-proposal conferences, (2) prepares specifications, (3) advertises, (4) solicits and evaluates supplier responses, and (5) awards contracts that are listed on the web site: HGACBuy.com.

Q: Does H-GAC offer other services?

A: Professional staff support is available to confer with you concerning specific products in addition to supplier representatives in various product categories. You may contact H-GAC by referencing the directory listed on the web site: HGACBuy.com. The toll free number is 1-800-926-0234.

Q: Where can I find a list of the products and services available?

A: The Program web site HGACBuy.com has a complete listing of products and services available with base prices, descriptions, and supplier contacts. (If you do not already have a password, follow the link provided to receive one.)

Q: What are the benefits of the H-GAC Program?

A-1: Volume Purchasing

A-2: Volume Discounts

A-3: On-duty staff of qualified purchasing professionals ready to assist you

A-4: Technical specifications that can eliminate the need to hire consultants

A-5: Elimination of advertising, printing, and delivery costs

A-6: Expedited procurement process without lengthy delays
