Cooperative Purchasing Reference Guide

Your guide for sourcing success
Cooperative Purchasing

Cooperative purchasing is procurement conducted by, or on behalf of, one or more governmental units for use by other governmental units.

Compliant
- Our process can be trusted to satisfy your bid requirements
- We are a government agency that works like you
- Achievement of Excellence in Procurement recipient

Competitive
- Buying power of 50,000 members
- Contracts offer ceiling-based pricing and volume discounts
- More than 300 quality vendors holding competitively awarded contracts
- Full suite of options for a complete solution
- Easy, no-cost membership

Convenient
- More than 300 quality vendors holding competitively awarded contracts
- Full suite of options for a complete solution
- Easy, no-cost membership

Become a member
Membership is free. Just fill out an online or paper application. A membership legal agreement is available if needed. After submitting your application, you will receive a Sourcewell member ID number electronically and a welcome packet by mail.
- Online at: www.sourcewell-mn.gov/become-member
- Through hard copy participation membership application (download from our website)
- Through “Joint Exercise of Powers” or “Interlocal” agreements

Make a purchase
Browse our catalog of nationally awarded vendors online. Contact the vendor directly and inform them of your interest in using the Sourcewell contract, OR use our expertise — contact our membership team. We want to be your guide.

For more information, contact our membership team:
877-585-9706
membership@sourcewell-mn.gov

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Our user-friendly process—the consistency of our documents, forms, and evaluation criteria—is among our greatest assets. We continuously refine our efforts to meet the changing needs of our members. The result is a national, competitive procurement process that is valued by our members and satisfies state-specific procurement requirements.

Our members add value to these steps by understanding their local procurement requirements and assessing their ability to legally access and utilize Sourcewell contracts.

Competitive Procurement Process

1. **Scope of Solicitation**
   We determine the scope of each competitive solicitation by identifying the needs of our members. This is accomplished through daily interactions and guidance from our members.

2. **Authorization from Sourcewell’s Board of Directors**
   Before initiating a solicitation, we seek permission from the publicly elected Sourcewell Board of Directors.

3. **Public Notice and Advertising**
   Upon approval from the Board, we issue a public notice and advertisement. Refer to www.sourcewell-mn.gov/process for specific advertising locations.

4. **Proposal Receipt and Opening**
   We time and date stamp each proposal upon receipt at our office in Staples, MN. We conduct a public-proposal opening at a time, date, and place specified in the solicitation.

5. **Objective Evaluation**
   At the proposal opening, we evaluate the responsiveness of each proposal received. The evaluation committee then presents its recommendations to the chief procurement officer (CPO) for final review and approval.

6. **Official Award**
   Upon approval by the CPO and ratification by the Sourcewell Board of Directors, we award the recommended vendor(s) a four-year contract with the potential for a one-year extension. The Procurement Department sends a Notice of Award or Non-Award to all respondents via email.

7. **Posting and Review of Approved Contract Documents**
   Sourcewell maintains a complete procurement file, and contract documentation is posted on our website. We periodically review all awarded contracts for compliance and effectiveness. In addition, Sourcewell may review and approve price and product changes at the vendor’s request.

The Sourcewell Advantage

You can confidently partner with Sourcewell because we:

**Value independence**
- As a government agency authorized by the state of Minnesota, we can enter into contracts and operate as our own cooperative purchasing lead agency. (See enabling legislation on page 6)
  - We adhere to competitive solicitation requirements of the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law.
  - We award most contracts corporately, but you purchase from local dealers and providers.
  - Contract terms allow you to propose supplemental terms and conditions.

**Lead the way**
- Choice of high-quality equipment/products/services—300 North American vendor contracts and more than 500 construction contracts.
- We eliminate low-bid, low-quality issues. You capture lifecycle-cost savings.
- Our contracts are tailored to you with solutions-based solicitations.
  - Basic to fully customized solutions available when you choose from a suite of options.

**Read the fine print**
- Proven procurement process, refined over 40 years. (See prior page.)
- Contracts competitively solicited on your behalf and awarded by our CPO and elected board.
- The documentation you need is right at your fingertips— with a complete procurement file posted on our website Sourcewell-mn.gov.

**Make purchasing easy**
- Browse our catalog of awarded vendors online.
- Members can then contact the vendor directly and tell them you’d like to use the Sourcewell contract.
  - If not a member, check out how easy it is to join on page 3.
- Tap into our expertise by contacting our membership team: 877-585-9706 or membership@sourcewell-mn.gov.
A. Sourcewell, formerly National Joint Powers Alliance, is a local unit of government, a public corporation and agency under the Minnesota Constitution and its enabling law, Minnesota Statutes § 123A.21. Sourcewell employees are government employees.

A. Sourcewell is a service cooperative created to provide programs and services to members in the government, education, and nonprofit sectors. Its statutory purpose is to assist members in meeting specific needs which are more efficiently delivered cooperatively than by an entity individually. Minn. Stat. § 123A.21, subd. 2.

A. Sourcewell is authorized to establish cooperative purchasing contracts on behalf of itself and its members. Sourcewell follows the competitive contract law requirements under Minnesota Statutes § 471.345, to solicit, evaluate, and award these contracts.

A. Sourcewell is governed by an eight-member Board of Directors made up of local elected officials including county commissioners, city council members, mayors, and school board members.

A. Membership is free and available to all government, education, and nonprofit entities.

A. You can join by submitting an online membership application at: Sourcewell-mn.gov/join or by submitting a paper application.

A. Joint powers and cooperative purchasing laws authorize members to access Sourcewell cooperative purchasing contracts. Sourcewell members are responsible for ensuring compliance with state and local laws in their respective jurisdictions. A comprehensive list of state laws is included on the Sourcewell website on the “Compliance and Legal” page.

Sourcewell continuously monitors changing laws and regulations affecting cooperative purchasing. For questions about state-specific compliance or contract-use requirements, please contact contract.administration@sourcewell-mn.gov.

A. Sourcewell contracts are competitively solicited on behalf of Sourcewell and its members. Individual members are free to determine whether the awarded contracts meet their needs.

Material prepared and provided by Sourcewell is intended as informational and for reference purposes, but is not legal advice. We recognize your responsibility to ensure the Sourcewell procurement process complies with your local laws.
Cooperative Purchasing

Sourcewell creates cooperative contract purchasing solutions on behalf of its member agencies. Cooperative contracts offer both time and money savings for users by consolidating the efforts of numerous individually prepared solicitations into one, cooperatively shared process—taking advantage of the volume pricing generated by 50,000 members across North America.

Join and Purchase
Visit sourcewell-mn.gov/cooperative-purchasing or turn to page 3 for more details.

We want to be your guide.

Contact our membership team:
877-585-9706
membership@sourcewell-mn.gov