



2.2 COLERAIN TOWNSHIP PURCHASING POLICY

PURPOSE

In the course of general business and operations, Colerain Township will be required to make various purchases of goods and services. This policy outlines the rules and requirements that all Township employees and elected officials must follow in order to make a purchase. This policy is intended to conform with State of Ohio law and best practices for government procurement.

GENERAL PURCHASING PROCESS

The process of making a purchase shall generally be as follows:

1. Obtain a price for the purchase consistent with Township procurement section of this policy;
2. Identify whether the funds have been budgeted for the purchase;
3. Open a PO or SBC for the purchase;
4. Proposal or contract for the purchase is signed by Township Administrator or designated Acting Administrator as identified in a personnel order;
5. Purchase is made as delegated by the Board of Trustees (as a reminder, the Township is exempt from sales tax);
6. Invoice is processed and paid.

GENERAL PRACTICES: PROCUREMENT

Employees will use the following standards when securing pricing for purchases.

- There are no special procurement practices for purchases under \$2,500.
- Unless exempted below, a demonstrable attempt must be made to gather three price quotes for purchases between \$2,500 and \$50,000.
- Any purchase over \$50,000 must go out for competitive bid, consistent with the provisions of the competitive bidding section of this policy.

There are several exemptions to the procurement rules stated above. The below list demonstrates all items that are exempted from general procurement practices per state law via Ohio Revised Code (ORC) section 307.86. In general, Colerain Township will, as a matter of best practice, obtain a minimum of three quotes on these items, even if they are exempt from competitive bidding.

1. Any State of Ohio Department of Administrative Services contract
2. Any State of Ohio Department of Transportation contract
3. Accounting Services
4. Architectural Services
5. Attorney Services
6. Physician Services

7. Appraisal Services
8. Professional Consulting Services
9. Sole source vendors or items (with proper documentation)
10. Land purchases and sales through the Colerain CIC
11. Any jointly purchased item per Ohio Revised Code section 9.48

GENERAL PRACTICES: PURCHASE ORDERS

As part of the purchasing process, the Ohio Revised Code (ORC 5705.41 (D)) requires that a Purchase Order (PO) with a certificate from the Fiscal Officer stating that funds are available must be created prior to the incurrence of an expense. In short, before a purchase is made or a contract is signed, a PO must be processed by the Fiscal Officer. On all Township POs, the Trustees or their designee must approve the PO. When the Trustees' purchasing policy is followed (i.e. the appropriate level of authorization has been received), the purchase order will be deemed to be approved once the Fiscal Officer has signed as certifying the availability of funds.

There are three types of purchase orders, which all contain the Fiscal Officer's certificate of available funds and can be applied toward purchases:

Regular Purchase Order (PO)

A PO is issued when the purchase of specific items is planned from one vendor. It can be used for any amount and can be over multiple appropriation account codes. It is valid until the contract is fulfilled or canceled. To cancel the remaining balance on a PO, one should indicate that the PO should be closed on the final invoice.

Regular POs can be used for the same vendor for several invoices worth of purchases.

Super Blanket Certificates (SBC)

A SBC can be opened for any amount and can be used on multiple vendors. They are valid until the end of the fiscal year and are restricted to one appropriation line. The following are acceptable SBC purchases:

- Architectural Services
- Attorney/Legal Services
- Consultant Services
- Professional Engineering Services
- Fuel oil and gasoline
- Food items
- Roadway materials
- Utilities
- Any other specific expenditure that is a recurring and reasonably predictable operation expense and is exempt from competitive bidding

Then and Now PO

- To the extent possible, these should be used only in emergency situations. This means that the situation must be unforeseen, unplanned, and requiring immediate action, such as the towing of a broken-down vehicle, not routine vehicle maintenance. A Then and Now PO is used for purchases where prior certification of funds was not able to be obtained before the contract or order involving the expenditure of money was made.

Opening a Regular Purchase Order, Then and Now Purchase Order, or Super Blanket Certificate

To open a purchase order, departments must send a requisition request to the Finance Specialist, Accounting Specialist, or Public Safety Administrative Assistant assigned to said department. This request should include the vendor name, dollar amount, line item code, and include the Department Head's signature. Prior to requesting a PO, the Department Head should ensure that there are sufficient appropriations available to support the PO. It is prudent to have at all times an open POs or SBCs with a sufficient balance to cover your regular monthly expenses (electric, telephone, etc.) and to open a new PO or increase an existing PO when your balances are getting low.

The Township Administrator can approve any PO that is \$2,500 or less per ORC 507.11 (A). Any PO that exceeds that amount must first be reviewed by the Township Administrator, who will initial the PO, and then be approved by signature of the Fiscal Officer and two of the three Township Trustees.

GENERAL PRACTICES: CONTRACTS

Only the Township Administrator has been given the authority to execute contracts on behalf of the Township. This authority may not be delegated. Pursuant to motion adopted on January 22, 2019, the Township Administrator may execute contracts in the amount of \$10,000.00 or less without the prior approval of the Township Trustees. Any contract over \$10,000.00 must be approved by the Township Trustees before they are executed by the Township Administrator.

GENERAL PRACTICES: INVOICES

All invoices must be promptly processed and sent to the Finance Department for payment, as soon as they are received, unless invoice is being questioned. The following steps represent the process each department should follow to ensure that all invoices are properly and promptly paid.

1. All invoices shall immediately be sent to the Finance personnel assigned to the department.
2. Each invoice is stamped, so the SBC/PO number assigned, the amount, and the date of processing can be recorded.
3. The invoice will then be routed to the Department Head for review and approval by signature.
4. The Department Head will verify that the goods and services received are correct. If the goods or services are not correct, then the Department Head shall dispute the charges and no invoices shall be paid until the dispute is resolved.
5. If the invoice is correct, the Department Head will return the signed invoice to the Finance Department as soon as possible.

PURCHASING ABILITY

No one has the authority to make a purchase without an approved purchase order (except in the rare set of instances where a “Then and Now” Purchase Order is used). Once an approved purchase order has been created, The Township Administrator, Assistant Township Administrator, or Department Head may delegate the ability to make a purchase. No one may make a purchase without authorization from their Department Head. Department Heads giving an employee authorization to purchase should ensure the employee understands this policy and his/her purchasing limits. Please note, the employee making purchases may be responsible for the cost of the purchase if this policy is not followed.

COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Competitive bidding rules and regulations are in place to ensure that goods and/or services are purchased at the best possible price by opening purchasing practices to a broader, more competitive marketplace. The ORC dictates many requirements of competitive bidding and Department Heads are encouraged to consult with the Township Law Director on the need for a competitive bid and the exact requirements of the bid, prior to issuance of a competitive bid.

Purchases of \$50,000 or more must be competitively bid, unless the item to be purchased is subject to one of the exceptions listed earlier in the policy or ORC 9.48. In addition, any maintenance/repair of roads or bridges in excess of \$45,000 or \$15,000 per mile must be competitively bid. Any provision of recycling and solid waste disposal contracts must also be competitively bid.

The minimum process for issuing a competitive bid is as follows:

1. The bid must be publically noticed in a newspaper of general circulation within the Township once per week for two consecutive weeks prior to the opening of the bid.
2. The bid must be posted on the bulletin in the Township Administration building for at least two weeks.
3. The posting should include:
 - a. General description of the proposed contract
 - b. Time and place where documents related to the purchase can be obtained
 - c. Deadline for submission of bids
 - d. Time and place where bids will be opened
 - e. Terms of the proposed purchase
 - f. Conditions under which the bids will be received

While the ORC outlines several types of purchases that require competitive bids, the Township Administrator or Board of Trustees may elect to competitively bid a purchase that is not required to be competitively bid by ORC. The Township also reserves the right to reject all bids at any time.