



SUPPLIER GUIDE

Rev. 11/22

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I. Introduction and Contact Info

This information is intended to help businesses take advantage of available opportunities to do business with Dorchester County. Dorchester County is the 8th fastest-growing county in the state of South Carolina with a retail market of over 168,000 people. Located in the Charleston region, it offers all the amenities of a major metropolitan area with a well-developed transportation network which includes air, rail, interstates, and the Port of Charleston.

The Purchasing Division's goal is to obtain maximum value for each tax dollar spent. With this in mind we follow guidelines established by the Dorchester County procurement ordinance (or “procurement code”) and the Dorchester County Procurement Policy Manual, both which can also be found on the Purchasing Services webpage on the County website (www.dorchestercountysc.gov).

The Purchasing Services team is led by Rebecca Dantzler, Purchasing Services Manager, and also consists of two Purchasing Agents, Jeannie Tyner and Nancy Rizzo, and a Purchasing Administrative Support Specialist, Taylor Marchant. The Purchasing Services office is located on the second floor of the Kenneth F. Waggoner Building at 201 Johnston Street, St. George, SC, 29477.

The best way to contact the Purchasing Services team is by emailing the Purchasing Services inbox at purchasing@dorchestercountysc.gov. This inbox is monitored by the entire team during business hours, so using it will ensure a fast response. Our team is happy to assist with the vendor registration process, answering general questions, or responding to inquiries about solicitation or payment statuses.

You may also contact Purchasing Services by calling:

Rebecca Dantzler	(843) 563-0142
Jeannie Tyner	(843) 563-0140
Nancy Rizzo	(843) 563-0128
Taylor Marchant	(843) 563-0142

Please call if you do not receive an email response within 24 hours.

II. Registering as a Dorchester County Vendor

Dorchester County partners with a third-party electronic procurement (e-procurement) platform called Vendor Registry. Vendor Registry can be accessed either through the [Dorchester County](#) website. Registering on Vendor Registry is a free service. While you may view County solicitations without registering, you will only be able to download the solicitation documents by registering an account.

- Go to the Purchasing Services page on the [Dorchester County](#) website
- Click on **Vendor Registration**

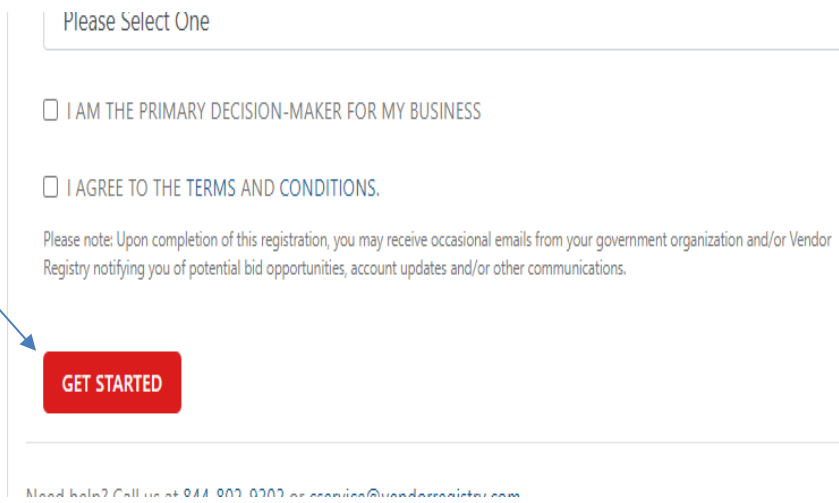
The screenshot shows the 'Purchasing Services Division' page on the Dorchester County website. A blue arrow points from the 'Vendor Registration' link in the 'HELPFUL LINKS' sidebar to the main content area. The sidebar also lists other helpful links: Bid Opportunities, Supplier Manual, Procurement Policy Manual, Insurance Requirements, Terms & Conditions, Sample Contract, and Surplus Auctions. The main content area includes the title 'Purchasing Services Division', a breadcrumb trail 'Government » Business Services', and introductory text about the division's role in procurement. Below the text is a section titled 'Our Mission'.

- To register for free, select the Agency registration on the left that says, **SIGN UP FOR FREE** – there are other plan options that will allow your firm to access bids from other agencies in the State or nationally, however these are not required to participate in Dorchester County’s solicitations.

The screenshot displays the registration options on the Vendor Registry website. At the top, it states: 'Your registration with Dorchester County is free. Optional bid subscriptions are available through Vendor Registry. Choose one of the options below to get started.' Below this is a blue bar with the text: 'Already have a Vendor Registry Profile? Log in to complete your registration with Dorchester County.' There are radio buttons for 'Monthly' and 'Annually'. Three plan cards are shown:

- Agency (FREE):** Limited access. Access bids from Dorchester County. Includes: Get bids from one agency only, Receive agency-sent notifications. A red button labeled 'SIGN UP FOR FREE' is highlighted with a blue arrow.
- State (\$42/month):** MOST POPULAR. Billed Annually. Access bids from Dorchester County + 1287 agencies in South Carolina. Includes: All features from Agency package PLUS: Access local, state and Federal bids; Receive keyword based bid alerts; View current and past bids. A red button labeled 'SELECT' is present.
- National (\$158/month):** Billed Annually. Access bids from Dorchester County + 88293 agencies in all 50 States. Includes: All features from State package PLUS: Access bids throughout the country; Customized support and training. A red button labeled 'SELECT' is present.

- Enter your information and click on **Get Started**. You will then receive an email with a PIN number and a link.



Please Select One

I AM THE PRIMARY DECISION-MAKER FOR MY BUSINESS

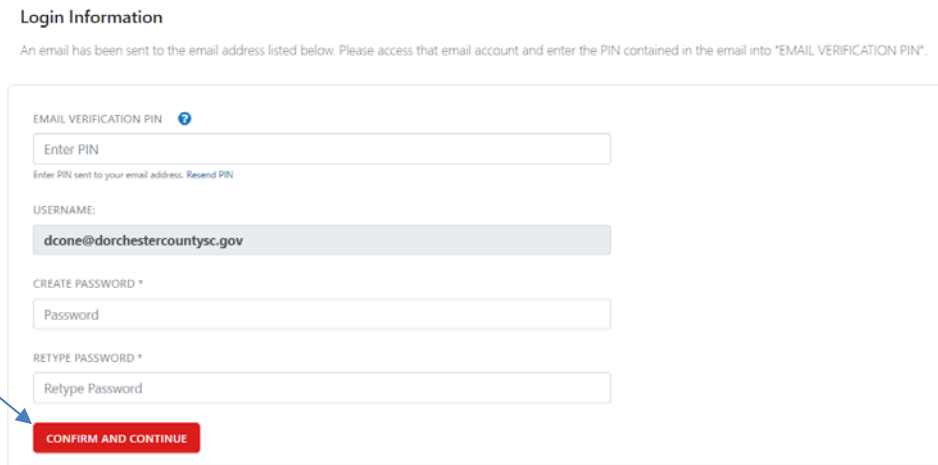
I AGREE TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS.

Please note: Upon completion of this registration, you may receive occasional emails from your government organization and/or Vendor Registry notifying you of potential bid opportunities, account updates and/or other communications.

GET STARTED

Need help? Call us at 844-803-0202 or services@vanderregistr.com

- Click on the link in the email, and your pin number will show up in the space provided. Create a password, and click on **Confirm and Continue**. You will come to a screen where you will need to enter information about your business (name, address, etc.). When finished entering this basic info, hit **Save and Continue**.



Login Information

An email has been sent to the email address listed below. Please access that email account and enter the PIN contained in the email into "EMAIL VERIFICATION PIN".

EMAIL VERIFICATION PIN ⓘ

Enter PIN

Enter PIN sent to your email address. Resend PIN

USERNAME:

dcone@dorchestercountysc.gov

CREATE PASSWORD *

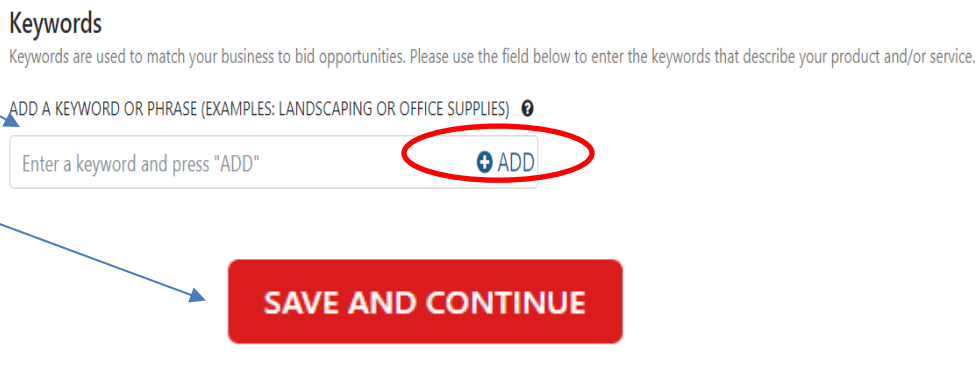
Password

RETYPE PASSWORD *

Retype Password

CONFIRM AND CONTINUE

- Add keywords to help match your business with bid opportunities and click on **Save And Continue**. These keywords will enable you to receive automatic notifications whenever the County bids out a project within that scope.



Keywords

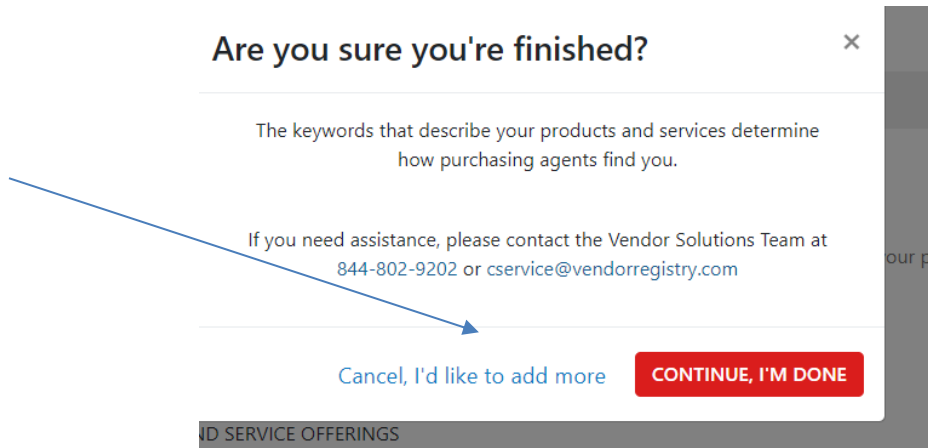
Keywords are used to match your business to bid opportunities. Please use the field below to enter the keywords that describe your product and/or service.

ADD A KEYWORD OR PHRASE (EXAMPLES: LANDSCAPING OR OFFICE SUPPLIES) ⓘ

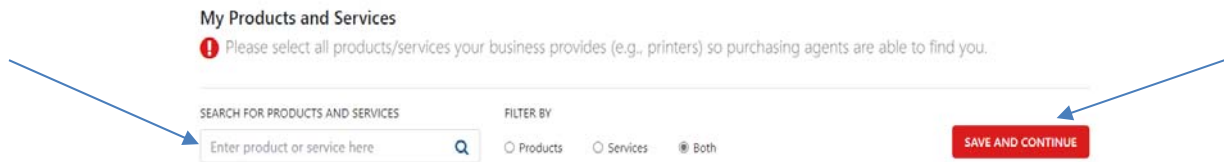
Enter a keyword and press "ADD" **ADD**

SAVE AND CONTINUE

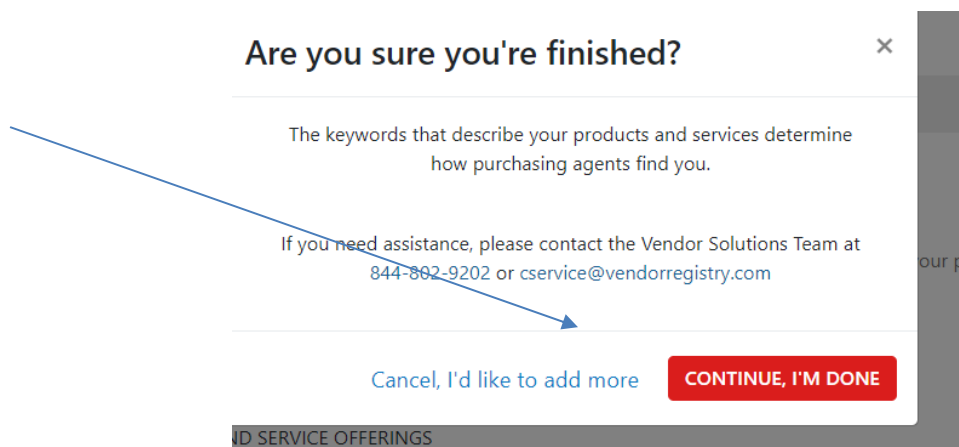
- If you are finished adding keywords, click on **Continue, I'm Done**. If you choose to add additional keywords, click on **Cancel, I'd like to add more**.



- Enter the products and services your business provides by using the search field. Like keywords, this entry will help enable you to receive automatic notifications whenever the County bids out a project within that scope. Once all products and services are selected, click on **Save And Continue**



- If you are finished adding products and services, click on **Continue, I'm Done**. If you choose to add additional keywords, click on **Cancel, I'd like to add more**.



Once you have added all of your products and services and select **Continue, I'm Done**, your registration is complete!

III. Bidding Thresholds and Policy

At Dorchester County, many purchases of goods and services exceeding \$75,000 are made using a formal solicitation process. State and cooperative contract items and services are an exception. The table below illustrates the County's bidding thresholds.

Solicitation Method	Award Selection	Threshold	Procedure
Direct purchase by departments	Best Value	\$0-\$5,000	Departments have the legal authority to purchase goods or services up to \$5,000 without further requirement.
Three Quotes	Lowest cost to meet minimum specifications	\$5,001-\$24,999	Departments may submit purchases using a competitive "three quotes" method. Departments are required to obtain a minimum of three quotes and attach to the requisition in Naviline.
Request for Quotes	Lowest cost to meet minimum specifications	\$25,000-\$74,999	Solicited by the Purchasing Services Division, or department-approved buyers, using the Request for Quotes (RFQ) solicitation method.
Invitation for Bids	Lowest cost to meet minimum specifications	\$75,000+	Solicited by the Purchasing Services Division using the Invitation for Bids (IFB) or Request for Proposals (RFP) solicitation method.
Request for Proposals	Best value		
Request for Qualifications	Best Qualifications; no cost consideration	N/A	Solicited by Purchasing Services Division; used for professional architectural/engineering services only

Below is a typical example of how an Invitation for Bids, the most common solicitation method used by the County, would proceed. County Vendors may also download the Procurement Policy Manual, located on the Purchasing Services webpage on the County website, for an in-depth review of the Invitation for Bids, Request for Proposals, and Request for Qualifications policies.

- Using agency (Department Head or Elected/Appointed Official) forwards requisition to the Purchasing Services Division for goods or services in excess of \$75,000, as well as appropriate specifications or scope of work.
- Purchasing Services prepares bid forms for advertisement and publishes to Vendor Registry. Vendors that have registered as Dorchester County vendors and have put in the appropriate keywords and products/services receive automatic notifications that the County's bid has been published.
- Purchasing Services also typically advertises bids in SCBO (South Carolina Business Opportunities).
- The minimum time for bids to be published is seven calendar days. However, most are published for at least two weeks, or even longer for construction projects.
- Bidders may download the solicitation documents from Vendor Registry.
- Sealed bids are received in the Purchasing Services Division at the specified time and date listed on the bid documents. Bids will be opened and read by the Purchasing Services Manager or Purchasing Agent, unless otherwise indicated. All information pertaining to the bid opening and receiving deadlines will be included in the bid package.
- After bids are publicly opened and read, an unofficial bid tabulation is published on Vendor Registry, usually within 24 hours.
- After bids are tabulated, the Purchasing Services Manager will meet with the using agency concerning the bids. The department head or elected/appointed official will make a recommendation to the Purchasing Services Manager and/or County Administrator.
- The using agency will then enter a requisition to approved bidder. Award information will be published on Vendor Registry.

General policies to know regarding formal bidding:

- The Purchasing Services Manager reserves the right to require samples of items being bid to conduct quality tests.
- Deadline for receiving bids shall be as specified in the bid package, and shall be according to the Purchasing Services Manager or Purchasing Agent's designated timekeeping device (clock or computer).
- Bids must be in the place specified by the specified deadline or the bid will be rejected and returned to the bidder unopened. The County's typical deadline is at 2:00:00 PM. This means that as soon as the clock reads 2:00:01, the bid opening begins, and any bids received even one second later are considered late bids.

Notifying the Office of a bid being late will not result in a late bid being accepted. Purchasing Services will make no exception to this rule other than those outlined in the Procurement Policy Manual. In any event concerning late bids, the Purchasing Services Manager's decision is final and binding.

Additional tips for the bidding process:

- Check frequently for new solicitations by visiting the Dorchester County Vendor Registry website at: <https://www.dorchestercountysc.gov/government/business-services/purchasing-services/bid-opportunities>.
- Carefully read the complete IFB or RFP specifications and scope of work. When you upload your bid or proposal files, be sure to include everything that is required, including all the required forms.
- Prior to submitting a response to the IFB or RFP, check the solicitation information on Vendor Registry for any addendum that may have been issued.
- Upload your files sufficiently in advance of the closing time and date posted on Vendor Registry. At 2:00:00 (or the exact second of whatever the appropriate bid due time is), Vendor Registry no longer permits bid files to be uploaded.

IV. Contract Execution & Accounts Payable

Purchasing Services strives to ensure that contracts are awarded in a timely manner, however, sometimes the evaluation and award process does take time. Vendors should feel free to inquire at purchasing@dorchestercountysc.gov any time they have an inquiry regarding a solicitation or contract status.

Sample contracts are included with all of Dorchester County's formal solicitations. Vendors should carefully read the sample contract prior to submitting a bid or proposal. It is the County's policy to only rarely permit deviations from our standard contract document in order to protect the interests of the County and its taxpayers.

After a contract has been prepared, typically a representative from Purchasing Services will send the contract to the vendor for signature. Once the vendor has signed and returned the contract to Purchasing Services, it may take up to a week for the County to fully execute the contract.

The County's payment terms are Net 30 unless specified otherwise in a contract. The County offers payment of invoices by check or ACH. The default payment method is check; vendors may request ACH by sending an email to purchasing@dorchestercountysc.gov and Purchasing Services will assist with further instructions.

V. Cooperative Contract Policy & Benefit

At Dorchester County, every solicitation contains the following language:

The use of this solicitation and resulting contract shall be made available to other local governmental agencies and agencies established for the public benefit ("Public Agencies"). The parties agree to allow other governmental agencies to enter into separate agreements with the Contractor under the terms and prices in effect between the County and the Contractor. The parties also agree that any other agency utilizing the terms and prices of this agreement shall not be deemed to be an agent or employee of the County of

Dorchester for any purpose whatsoever. The parties further agree that any Public Agency will enter its own separate contract with the Contractor.

The County is not otherwise responsible for the Public Agencies' performance of the Contract between the individual Public Agencies and the Contractor or for any obligation or liability accruing to the Public Agencies in the performance thereof. The Public Agencies and the Contractor further agree to waive any rights they may have in making the County of Dorchester a party to a dispute between a Public Agency and the Contractor.

This language is what is known in public procurement as a cooperative language. It enables other public agencies to utilize Dorchester County's competitive solicitation process to directly contract with our contractors for goods or services. This is a great benefit to our vendors, because it could lead to additional business locally, regionally, or even nationally, depending on the capacity of the contractor.

Firms that have a contract with Dorchester County and would like to take advantage of this cooperative purchasing mechanism could consider adding their Dorchester County contracts to a cooperative contract database like CoProcure – www.coprocure.us – where other public buyers can find these contracts, and inquire with your firm for further details directly.

VI. Your Responsibility as a Supplier

If a contract is awarded, typically the Purchasing Services Division will require the following documentation:

- W-9
- Certificate of Insurance that meets County requirements as listed in solicitation
- Bid Bond (required for construction bids)
- Payment and Performance Bond (required for construction bids)

Some of these, such as a W-9 and COI, may have to be renewed on a periodic basis.

Your Ethical Responsibility:

Fair Dealing

Suppliers are required to act honestly, in good faith, and with professionalism. No supplier may take unfair advantage of another person through harassment, manipulation, abuse of privileged information, misrepresentation of material facts, or any other unfair practice. Stealing proprietary information, possessing trade secret information that was obtained without the owner's consent, or wrongfully inducing such disclosures by past or present employees of the County or any other organization is prohibited, as is any form of collusion with other suppliers to manipulate pricing or award of contracts.

Employment Standards

Suppliers will maintain fair and non-discriminatory work environments where all employees are treated with respect and dignity and in a manner that comports not only with workplace practices mandated by state and federal laws, but also with Dorchester County's commitment to the highest ethical standards in all aspects of its mission and business practices, including employment.

Protection and Proper Use of County Assets

Suppliers should protect the County's assets and ensure their proper and efficient use. Theft, carelessness,

and waste have a direct impact on the County's operations. Any suspected incident of fraud or theft should be immediately reported for investigation.

Compliance with Laws, Rules, and Regulations

Obeying the law, both in letter and in spirit, is the foundation on which the County's ethical standards are built. In conducting business with the County, suppliers must comply with applicable laws, rules, and regulations at all levels of government in the United States and in any other jurisdiction in which supplier does business.

Timely and Truthful Reporting

Suppliers involved in the preparation of financial, sales, or payment reports and documents (and information included therein) submitted to the County and/or filed with federal, state, and local authorities in connection with a supplier's relationship with the County are required to make disclosures that are full, fair, accurate, timely, and understandable. They may not knowingly conceal or falsify information, misrepresent material facts, or omit material facts necessary to avoid misleading the authorities or the County. The same standards apply to other public communications made by the Supplier which reference Dorchester County.

**Thank you for all you do. We
look forward to doing business
with you!**