



Public Bidding Process

This brief document is intended to assist those new to the public bidding process. As the PennBid Program is committed to greater bidder inclusion, we encourage all businesses to participate and will assist where we can. Although PennBid cannot answer questions related to the specifics of any solicitation or bid, we can facilitate by either answering general questions or providing contacts and resources that can answer your questions.

Key Terms

Sealed Bid – Prices or offerings, based on Contract Documents, that is only accessible or visible to potential bidders until the Bid Opening date and time.

Bidding Documents - Documents usually including advertisement or invitation to bidders, instructions to bidders, bid form, form of contract, forms of bonds, conditions of contract, specifications, drawings, addenda, and any other information needed to completely describe the work so that bidders can adequately prepare proposals or bid.

Instructions to Bidders - A document included as part of the bidding requirements with specific instructions necessary for the preparation of a competitive bid.

Addendum - A document describing an addition, change, correction, or modification to contract documents. An addendum is issued during the bidding period and is the primary method of informing bidders of modifications to the work during the bidding process. Addenda become part of the contract documents and (generally) need to be acknowledged (by number and date) when the bid is submitted.

Important Note – It is generally understood that it is the responsibility of the bidder to review all posted addenda.

Bid Bond - A form of security provided by the bidder to guarantee that the bidder will enter into a contract within a specified period of time and will furnish the required bonds for performance and labor and materials payment.

Support Documents – Generally outlined in the Instructions-to-Bidders document, support documents are those requested by the posting agency and are to be submitted with the sealed bid. In most cases these include a bid bond, non-collusion affidavit, and vendor qualification statements.

Prime Contractor - Any contractor on a project having a contract directly with the owner.

Subcontractor - One under contract to a Prime Contractor for completion of a portion of the work for which the prime contractor is responsible.

Vendor – A company or firm that provides standard materials, equipment, or services for a project or contract.

