General Purchasing Process Overview
Wichita State University

1. When a department identifies a need to procure goods or services (hereinafter referred to as “Commodity”) it shall first determine if the desired Commodity is available from an internal source. Examples include Facility Operations, University Computing and Telecommunications, Media resources Center or Central Services Storeroom and Copy and Print Shop. If departments have a question, they may call the Office of Purchasing at Wichita State University (hereinafter referred to as “Purchasing”) for assistance. Use of an available internal source is mandatory when using funds on deposit with the state treasury to pay for the transaction, including grant funds.

2. If the desired Commodity is not available from an internal source, departments shall then determine if the Commodity is available through the State Use Catalog. If the Commodity is available through the State Use Catalog, the Commodity must be purchased from the listed vendor unless the vendor issues a waiver. All waivers shall be requested through Purchasing. Use of the State Use Catalog vendor is mandatory, however, some of the internal sources mentioned in Section 1, procure Commodities through the State Use Catalog vendors and the department will have been considered to have used the State Use Catalog vendor if it uses an internal source who has originally purchased the Commodity from the State Use Catalog vendor.

3. If the desired Commodity is not available from an internal source or a State Use Catalog vendor, departments shall then determine if the desired Commodity is available on a specific state contract, specific local contract, a specific local encumbrance contract or available from Kansas Correctional Industries. If the Commodity is available from one of these named sources, the appropriate vendor shall be utilized unless a prior authorization is obtained through Purchasing. Purchasing will assist in making this determination. You may email us at purchasing.office@wichita.edu or call 978-3080.

4. If a source for the desired Commodity has not been located as stipulated above, departments may purchase the desired Commodity from a vendor of their choice up to their delegated purchasing authority amount. When making purchases that are funded from funds in the state treasury, the delegated authority is $9,999.99 and below. This threshold is for the entire purchase and shall include the cost of delivery. Departments are always encouraged to get more than one quote to make sure they are being good stewards of public funds when purchasing items within their delegated authority.

If federal grant funds are being used for the purchase the delegated authority is $2,999.99 and below. Wichita State University Purchasing Policy allows department using federal grant funds the authority when the total delivered purchase is between $3,000 and up to $9,999.99 to obtain 3 quotes and make the purchase from the lowest quoted vendor, or if their needs will not be met by accepting the lowest quote, they must provide a business justification for not accepting that bid. Along with this authority, the department has the responsibility to compare the quotes in written format and to keep these records available for review by internal and external auditors for 3 years after the grant is terminated. At the department’s request, Purchasing may assist by reviewing the department’s documents.
Many departments have the use of a Business Procurement Card (hereinafter referred to as a BPC). These cards generally have monthly limits and transaction limits that are well below a departments’ delegated authority. If a department wants to use a BPC to make their purchase and the limit is insufficient to make an otherwise acceptable purchase they may contact the BPC Administrator at PCardAdmin@wichita.edu.

5. If the goods and/or services cannot be purchased under the guidelines above, Purchasing will work with the department to conduct a bid. The department will be responsible to write specifications based on their requirements, and Purchasing will assist in this process by reviewing the specifications and soliciting bids from vendors. There are several different types of bids and Purchasing will assist the department in determining the best solicitation based on the circumstance and the anticipated cost.

If the department believes there does not exist any competition for the goods or services they are wishing to purchase, they may submit a Prior Authorization for Sole Source. These forms are available on the Purchasing website at www.wichita.edu/purchasing. The department or end user shall complete this form and sign it avowing that they have taken due diligence to determine there are no other sources that can fulfill their requirements. This form may then be emailed to the buyer responsible for that commodity or to purchasing.office@wichita.edu.

If a department finds a source for a “state or local contract” item for considerable savings they may submit a “Prior Authorization for Off-Contract Purchase” as outlined above for a sole source. The department is responsible to obtain the delivered cost of the item they wish to purchase and compare that with the cost of that same item under contract, and list the absolute savings as well as the percentage of savings. In general the guideline is to show a savings of 10% or $100 minimum.