Procurement Lead Times

Procurement Services offers the matrix shown below as a guide to assist in the planning of purchases of goods and services.

THE ESTIMATED DAYS SHOWN ARE BASED FROM THE TIME A PURCHASE REQUISITION IS ACTUALLY RECEIVED AND CLOCKED IN PROCUREMENT SERVICES. Additional consideration must be allowed beyond the days listed below for the budgetary approval processes particular to the department initiating the purchase requisition, and for the shipping time of the good or service once ordered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Cost (including any renewal periods)</th>
<th>Procurement Services Requirements</th>
<th>Estimated Business Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0 - $10,000 (does not include requisitions that have vendor-required contracts/agreements attached)</td>
<td>Obtaining a W9 from a new vendor or verifying information on an existing W9; obtaining a certificate of insurance for vendors doing work on campus</td>
<td>1 to 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>$0 - $10,000 with vendor-required contracts/agreements</td>
<td>Obtaining a W9 from a new vendor or verifying information on an existing W9; obtaining a certificate of insurance for vendors doing work on campus; routing of vendor-required contract/agreement to Legal for review and signature</td>
<td>5 to 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; $10,000 up to $100,000 (does not include Requests For Proposals (RFPs))</td>
<td>Buyers work with department to finalize specifications; solicitation document is formulated; solicitation is advertised in SCBO; offers are received and an award made</td>
<td>20 to 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; $100,000 up to University procurement limits (does not include Request For Proposals (RFPs))</td>
<td>Buyers work with department to finalize specifications; solicitation document is formulated; solicitation is advertised in SCBO; offers are received and an award made; 10-day potential protest period observed</td>
<td>30 to 45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Request For Proposals (RFPs) &gt;$10,000 up to University procurement limits</td>
<td>Buyers work with department to finalize specifications; solicitation document is formulated; solicitation is advertised in SCBO; proposals are received; panel evaluates proposals; award is made; 10-day potential protest period observed</td>
<td>40 to 60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated Cost (including any renewal periods)</td>
<td>Procurement Services Requirements</td>
<td>Estimated Business Days</td>
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<td>Above University procurement limits (limits are: goods and services - $300,000; consultant services - $200,000; revenue generating contracts - $1,000,000; information technology - $50,000)</td>
<td>Buyers work with department to finalize specifications; scope of work is submitted to SC Procurement Services and assigned to a state buyer; state buyer finalizes scope of work; solicitation is advertised in SCBO; proposals are received; (panel evaluates proposals for RFPs); award is made; 10-day potential protest period observed</td>
<td>60 to 132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole Source</td>
<td>Review of Sole Source Request form; preparation by buyer of justification for administrative signature; obtaining a W9 from a new vendor or verifying information on an existing W9; obtaining a certificate of insurance for vendors doing work on campus</td>
<td>3 to 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FAQs:

1. When does the procurement process begin and end?
   The procurement process begins when a department initiates planning for a piece of equipment or for a service. The process ends when the good or service is received and placed into use. Between these two times the process includes the purchase requisition approval process, the receipt of the requisition by Procurement Services, the development of specifications, issuance of a solicitation, award, issuance of a purchase order, and receipt by Central Receiving.

2. What can cause delays once a requisition is received in Procurement Services?
   Common causes creating delays are:
   - Missing fund, activity and object codes on the Purchase Requisition
   - Missing or improper approvals on the Purchase Requisition
   - Delays in obtaining needed information from the vendor
   - Contractual requirements by the vendor which cannot be agreed to by the University
   - Failure of a vendor to provide a certificate of insurance

3. Why do purchase requisitions with vendor-required agreements/contracts attached take longer to process?
   The ONLY person authorized to execute binding documents on behalf of the University is the president or his designee (with the exception of University purchase orders which are signed by the director of Procurement Services). Prior to the president’s signature, all binding documents must be reviewed by University Counsel. In many cases, these documents contain clauses or other language that the University cannot agree to due to state regulations. When this occurs, the vendor must be contacted by University Counsel and revisions made to the document. This often takes some time. The purchase requisition cannot proceed until these details are finalized.
University Counsel and Risk Management require that initiators have a signed agreement/contract from the potential vendor before beginning the process.

4. Why does the solicitation process seem to take so long? Can’t Procurement Services just obtain quotes from several sources and issue a purchase order to one of them?
   As a state agency, the buyers within Procurement Services must ensure the University complies with state laws and regulations related to procurement. To do so requires most, if not all, of the following activities:
   - Determining the best method of procurement
   - Evaluating justifications in the case of sole source procurements
   - Preparing solicitation documents (Request For Quote, Invitation For Bid, Request for Proposal)
   - Advertising the solicitation for certain periods
   - Holding pre-bid conferences and/or site visits
   - Receiving, holding, opening and recording competitive responses
   - Evaluating quotations, bids, and proposals
   - Negotiating
   - Announcing the award

5. What can cause delays in the solicitation process (for those purchases over $10,000)?
   - Missing or improper information on the Purchase Requisition
   - Submitted sample specifications that are vague or that change once the process begins
   - Amendments are made to the solicitation once issued due to specifications changes
   - Evaluation of submitted offers or proposals take longer than expected due to clarifications and/or discussions with bidders
   - Evaluation panels take longer than anticipated for review (RFPs)
   - Protests of awards are filed

6. What can a department do to minimize delays in the procurement process?
   - Start early!
   - Plan sufficient time for product research, budgetary approvals, Procurement processing, and delivery
   - Contact Procurement Services in the early stages of a complex procurement, and/or whenever questions arise.
   - Involve a representative of Information Technology on all planned purchases of IT-related goods and services
   - Ensure vendors have already signed vendor-required agreements/contracts before submitting a purchase requisition
   - Provide prompt responses to Buyers when requested to review and develop specifications