



Spring ISD Contracting Requirements

- I. **Definition of a contract:** An agreement with specific terms between two or more persons or entities in which there is a promise to do something (or to refrain from doing something) in return for a valuable benefit known as consideration.
- II. **Elements of a contract:** The following four (4) elements must be met for a valid contract to exist:
 - a. **Agreement:** An agreement includes an offer and an acceptance.
 - b. **Consideration:** Something of value received or promised (e.g. Services to be performed, payment to be made)
 - c. **Contractual Capacity:** Both parties entering into an agreement must have the legal capacity to do so (they must be competent).
 - d. **Legality:** The contract must be regarding acts that are legal.

A District Purchase Order is an offer. A contract is created between the District and the vendor only when the vendor accepts the terms of the Purchase Order by causing the goods or services requested on the order to be delivered/rendered. In other words, the District's offer (Purchase Order) is a presentation to the vendor of what the District wants from the vendor and under what conditions (terms). Purchase Orders provide a uniform way for the District to make offers to vendors with all terms in writing.

In the case of bids and requests for proposals, a different set of circumstances exists. Here, the offer is the vendor's bid or proposal. This is the vendor's offer to the District of what the vendor will sell the District and under what terms. **The acceptance of an offer occurs when the Board of Trustees awards a bid or selects a proposal.**

Note: the vendor may withdraw his offer [bid/proposal] at any time up until the offer is accepted [award made] by the Board.

- III. **Authorized Signatories** - The only individuals authorized to bind the District into a contract are listed below:
 - a. Board President
 - b. Superintendent of Schools
 - c. Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
 - d. Authorized Purchasing Agents, as follows:
 - **Purchase Orders under \$10,000** (Buyer II)
 - **Purchase Orders \$10,000 and over** (Director of Purchasing & Contracts)

NOTE: The authority over budget expenditures granted to school principals and other administrators does not authorize them to execute contracts related to those expenditures.



IV. Governing Law and Venue for Litigation: As a political subdivision of the state of Texas, the Constitution and laws of the state of Texas must govern any contracts executed by Spring ISD. In addition, the District also requires the venue for any contract litigation to be in Harris County, TX.

V. Applicable Laws/Statutes Regulating District Contracts:

- **Goods and/or Services (Competitive Sealed Bids & Proposals):** All school district contracts for the purchase of personal property (goods) and/or services **valued at \$50,000** or more in the aggregate during a 12 month period are covered by state legal requirements under **Texas Education Code (TEC) Chapter 44.031(a)**. This statute requires the District to source these goods and/or services through a competitive procurement process (Requests for Bids/Requests for Proposals).
- **Exceptions:**
 - **Professional Services** – Contracts for services to be provided by an architect, physician, certified public accountant, attorney, surveyor, engineer, or state certified real estate appraiser are considered professional services. Contracts for professional services are covered by **Texas Government Code Sections 2254.001 – 2254.07 (Professional Services Procurement Act, “PSPA”)**. If the District determines that the services are professional services, the procurement is exempt from the requirements of TEC 44.031 and does not have to be sourced through a competitive procurement process.
 - **Sole Source Goods** - items covered by a patent, copyright, or monopoly; films, books, manuscripts; utility services; and captive replacement or component parts for equipment repair [**TEC 44.031(j)**]. If the District determines that the goods are considered sole source, the procurement is exempt from the requirements of TEC 44.031 and does not have to be sourced through a competitive procurement process. A Sole Source Justification form, Sole Source Letter from the vendor, and Conflict of Interest Questionnaire will be required in order to procure goods under this category.

VI. Contracting Process for Engaging with Independent Contractors/Consultants (“Contractors”) – Applies to Services Only (not goods)

- a. **Who qualifies as a Contractor?** An independent contractor/consultant (**herein referred to as “Contractor”**) is a firm, organization, or individual (**not an employee**) that offers **services** to the general public, including school districts. A Contractor usually maintains an office and usually provides the equipment and materials necessary for completing or performing a service. A Contractor is paid on a fee basis for specialized services that are usually considered temporary or short-term in nature, normally in areas beyond the expertise of the employing entity's employees.
- b. **How to Engage with Contractors:**



- 1) **Obtain a Written Proposal/Quotation:** Schools/departments seeking the services of a Contractor shall obtain a written proposal/quotation (the “Proposal”). A Proposal should be detailed and itemized, thoroughly explaining the services to be provided (Who, What When, Where, How, and How Much?).
 - 2) **Determine the Appropriate Procurement Method (Refer to Section VIII):** In accordance with the respective Federal, State, and local procurement laws, policies, and regulations, determine the proper method of procuring the services sought from the Contractor. Section VIII of this document (“Methods for Justifying a Purchase/Contract”) provides information regarding the possible methods required to justify a given procurement.
 - 3) **Complete the Required Sourcing Documents:** Contractors shall not perform any services until both (i) a Spring ISD Services Contract is executed by both the District and Contractor **AND** (ii) a duly authorized District Purchase Order has been issued by the District to the Contractor.
 - **Spring ISD Services Contract:** The purpose of the Services Contract is to document the legal terms and conditions of the agreement entered into between Spring ISD and the Contractor. A Services Contract should include a detailed description of the services to be rendered by the Contractor and should answer the questions Who, What, When, Where, How, and How Much?
 - **Spring ISD Purchase Order:** The purpose of the Purchase Order is to encumber (reserve) the funds necessary to pay for the services to be rendered by the Contractor under the respective Services Contract. The Purchase Order number must be referenced on the Contractor’s invoice to ensure prompt, accurate payment for services rendered.
 - **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Any services rendered by the Contractor and accepted by the District school/department prior to executing a Services Contract AND issuing a duly authorized District Purchase Order shall be considered an “**Improper Purchase**”, meaning a purchase performed out of compliance with the District’s standard policies/procedures. Depending on the severity and/or frequency of the offense, an improper purchase may render the offender liable for the amount of the improper purchase, lead to disciplinary action, and/or termination from employment.
- c. **Generating a Services Contract:** The Services Contract document is a written contract template developed by Spring ISD and approved by the District’s Cabinet Members and in-house General Counsel. The Services Contract includes standard terms and conditions developed to protect the District, the Board, its employees and authorized agents from potential legal risks and/or liabilities that may arise over the term of any engagement with



a Contractor. In addition, the Services Contract references the funding source for payment of the services, as well as the responsibilities assigned to both Spring ISD and the Contractor under the agreement.

- **Contract Review/Routing Process:** Any document requiring signatures and which will bind the District into a legal agreement must undergo the District’s Contract Review Process, as follows:
 - Once a Services Contract is drafted and both the Contractor and the contract originator (school/department) are in agreement with the terms and conditions of the contract, the contract originator must submit the proposed Services Contract (and any supporting documents) to their respective Chief Cabinet member for review/approval*;
 - ***NOTE:** **Schools** must first submit the contract to their respective Assistant Superintendent of Administration for initial review/approval. Upon review/approval, the Assistant Superintendent of Administration will route it through the Chief Schools Officer to initiate the standard Contract Review Process.
 - Assuming the contract is authorized by the respective Chief Cabinet member, a Contract Review Routing Form is filled out and submitted through the Contract Review Process;
 - a) The Chief Financial Officer reviews/approves the contract as to the required funds and the business terms of the contract (CFO signs contract);
 - b) The Legal Officer reviews/approves the contract as to form (legal terms & conditions) only (Legal Officer signs contract).
 - c) The Superintendent of Schools reviews/approves and signs the contract (final signatory).
- d. **Exceptions to Requiring a Spring ISD Services Contract:** In a few instances, it will make more sense to utilize the Contractor’s contract (rather than the Spring ISD Services Contract) to document the terms of the engagement. This exception normally occurs when the service to be provided by the Contractor is very complex and requires very unique, special (i.e. industry specific) terms and conditions that the Contractor normally includes in their contract **AND** the Contractor already has a standard contract template (“boilerplate agreement”) it can offer to the District. Under such circumstances, the contract originator must contact the Contract Specialist at Procurement Services to determine whether using the Contractor’s boilerplate agreement is the best option. Assuming that the Procurement Services department approves to use the Contractor’s contract, the Contract Specialist will need to negotiate the contract terms when the contract reaches the Procurement Services department as it is routed through the Contract Review Process.



- e. **Changes/Modifications to an Existing Contract (Contract Amendments):** An existing contract requiring “significant” changes/modifications must be processed through a written Amendment and executed by both parties. Significant changes may entail (i) major changes (i.e. additions or omissions) to the original Scope of Work to be provided by the Contractor, (ii) changes that have occurred during the term of the existing contract which may affect the amount to be paid to the Contractor, (iii) an extension of the term of the contract, and other changes of similar magnitude.
- **NOTE:** In any case you believe that a significant change has occurred within a given vendor engagement, please contact the Contract Specialist at Procurement Services to determine whether an Amendment is required. Amendments will be generated by the Contract Specialist and require signature by authorized signatories of both parties to the contract (This means that an Amendment will need to be submitted through the same review/approval process as a Services Contract).
- f. **Criminal Background Checks:** As required per Texas Education Code Chapter 22.0834, Contractors (including subcontractors) must certify to school districts that they have obtained the criminal histories of any employee (or subcontractor) who has, or will have, (i) “continuing duties” related to the contracted services AND (ii) “direct contact” with students. A contractor or subcontractor may not permit an employee to provide services at a school if the employee has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor offense that would prevent a person from being employed under Section 22.085(a).

NOTE: From Spring ISD’s perspective:

- “***Continuing duties***” refers to any services that will continue for a period of more than one (1) day. This would include services from a Contractor that would be provided periodically over a specific term (e.g. Once a week for 2 weeks).
- “***Direct Contact***” refers to any activity that may provide substantial opportunity for verbal or physical interaction with students and that is not supervised by a professional district employee (e.g. unsupervised coaching, tutoring, etc.)

VII. Purchase of Goods:

When sourcing goods, the following process applies:

1. **Obtain a Written Proposal/Quotation:** Schools/departments seeking to purchase a product should obtain a written quotation (the “Quotation”). A Quotation should be detailed and itemized, thoroughly describing the product sold by the Supplier.



2. **Determine the Appropriate Procurement Method (Refer to Section VIII):** In accordance with the respective Federal, State, and local procurement laws, policies, and regulations, determine the proper method of procuring the goods sought from the Supplier. Section VIII of this document (“Methods for Justifying a Purchase/Contract”) provides information regarding the possible methods required to justify a given procurement.
3. **Complete the Required Sourcing Documents:** Suppliers shall not deliver any goods until all applicable sourcing documents (as may be required to justify the purchase) are gathered and a duly authorized District Purchase Order is issued to the Supplier.
 - **NOTE:** Software and Web-based software applications (“**Software Applications**”) are considered by the District as goods (not services); however, most purchases involving a Software Application will involve some type of written contract (e.g. Software Licensing Agreement, Subscription Agreement, End User Licensing Agreement, etc.). Suppliers selling the Software Application should provide their boilerplate agreement for review by the Contract Specialist at the Procurement Services department, whom will negotiate the contract terms either directly with the Supplier or through the originator of the contract.

VIII. Methods for Justifying a Purchase/Contract: When planning to make a purchase for goods and/or services, it is required to determine the procurement method required to “justify” the purchase, in accordance with any applicable Federal, State, and/or local laws, regulations, policies and/or procedures.

PROCUREMENT CATEGORY	JUSTIFICATION METHOD	SOURCING DOCUMENTS REQUIRED
Contracts for goods and/or <u>non</u> -professional services valued under \$10,000	No specific procurement method required. Unless a District contract exists, the purchase may be made without having to meet any specific purchase requirements. Requestor should, but not required, obtain a written quote/proposal from the vendor.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One (1) vendor quote required 2. Services Contract (if a service) 3. Purchase Order
Contracts for goods and/or <u>non</u> -professional services valued over \$10,000 but under \$50,000	A minimum of three (3) written vendor quotes required. Quotes should be for same or comparable goods/services. Requestor should select the proposal that offers the “best value” to the District. Upon selection of the vendor/proposal, Requestor must complete	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Three (3) written vendor quotes required 2. Informal Bid Tabulation form 3. Services Contract (if a service) 4. Purchase Order

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PROCUREMENT CATEGORY	JUSTIFICATION METHOD	SOURCING DOCUMENTS REQUIRED
<p>Contracts for goods and/or <u>non</u>-professional services valued at \$50,000 or more in the aggregate for each 12-month period.</p>	<p>Purchase shall be made by the method, of the following methods, that provides the “best value” for the District:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competitive bidding (Invitation for Bids/Request for Proposals) for goods/services other than construction services 2. Interlocal contract (includes interlocal agreement with other governmental agency or contract with a Purchasing Cooperative). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Competitive bid process (IFB/RFP) 2. Services Contract (if a service) 3. Purchase Order
<p>Contract for <u>professional</u> services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services defined as professional services by the Professional Services Procurement Act (PSPA) under Gov’t. Code 2254.003 must be made in accordance with the PSPA • Services other than those specifically defined as professional services by the PSPA Act must undergo a formal review process prior to be approved by Spring ISD as District-Determined Professional Services. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District-Determined Professional Services Form 2. Vendor Written Proposal 3. Services Contract 4. Purchase Order
<p>Contract for goods/services only available through a single source (Sole Source)</p>	<p>Goods/services only available from a single source do not have to be procured through a competitive bid method (Education Code 44.031(j)). “Sole Source” refers to an item that is available only from one source under one or more of the following circumstances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An item for which competition is precluded because of existence of a patent, copyright, secret process, or monopoly; 2. A film, manuscript, or book; 3. A utility service, including electricity, gas, or water; and 4. A captive replacement part or component for equipment. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sole Source letter from the vendor, certifying they are the sole creator/provider of the goods/services. 2. Spring ISD Sole Source Justification Form, certifying the reason for claiming sole source. 3. Conflict of Interest Questionnaire 4. Services Contract (if a service) 5. Purchase Order



- **Competitive Bid Process** – As required by Education Code Ch. 44.031, District contracts for goods and/or non-professional services meeting or exceeding a value of \$50,000 in the aggregate over a consecutive 12 month period must be competitively bid to ensure “best value” to the District (**NOTE**: Professional services are excluded from the competitive bid requirement).

A. EXAMPLES:

- Invitation for Bids (IFB) for Athletic Football Equipment & Supplies
- Request for Proposals (RFP) for Curriculum Software
- Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

NOTE: Spring ISD maintains a database called Contract Reporter, which contains a list of contracts that have been awarded through a competitive bid process. Contract Reporter allows end users to search for a contract by filtering contracts by Bid Number, Vendor Number, or Category.

Link to Contract Reporter: https://www.springisd.org/contract_reporter

- **Interlocal Agreements/Purchasing Cooperatives**: Per Texas Gov’t Code Ch. 791 (the “Interlocal Cooperation Act”), local governments in Texas are authorized to contract with and between each other “to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of local governments by authorizing them to contract, to the greatest possible extent, with one another and with agencies of the state.” Under this statute, local government entities can contract with one another to provide governmental functions and services, and to join together in contracting with others to provide goods and services. Purchases made through an authorized interlocal agreement or purchasing cooperative meet the competitive bid requirement, so the District is not required to perform its own competitive bid process.

A. Interlocal Agreements – The written contracts entered into between one or more local government entities, allowing them to exchange governmental functions and services (e.g. purchasing, academic instruction, administrative services, etc.). Interlocal agreements must be authorized by the governing body of the entity (e.g. Spring ISD Board of Trustees).

• EXAMPLES:

1. Agreement between Spring ISD and New Caney ISD, allowing New Caney ISD to purchase motor fuel through the vendor that Spring ISD awarded a contract to as a result of a competitive bid process (IFB/RFP).
2. Agreement between Spring ISD and the Harris County Juvenile Board (HCJB) for participation in the Juvenile



Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP), an education program for students that are expelled from school.

- B. **Purchasing Cooperatives** – Cooperatives formed through interlocal agreements between two or more federal, state, or local government entities for the purpose of combining purchases to achieve efficiencies and lower costs through volume purchasing. The District may source products/services through vendors that have been awarded contracts by a purchasing cooperative that meets Texas procurement laws and regulations.
- ***See attachment at the end of this document for a list of purchasing cooperatives authorized for use by Spring ISD.***
- **Sole Source Justification** – Refer to the Spring ISD Sole Source Justification form for a detailed explanation of the criteria required for the purchase of an item to be considered a sole source.
- **Professional Services** – Per Texas Education Code 44.031(f), the District is not required to competitively bid for “professional services”. The methods and processes for procuring professional services are governed by Texas Gov’t Code 2254, known as the Professional Services Procurement Act (“PSPA”).

Professional services may be separated into two categories: PSPA-Defined professional services and District-Determined professional services.

- A. **PSPA-Defined Professional Services**: These are specific categories of services defined as “professional services” by the Professional Services Procurement Act, including: architect, physician, certified public accountant, attorney, surveyor, engineer, or state certified real estate appraiser. Financial consultants and technology consultants may also be considered a PSPA-defined professional service, except that these services may also be competitively bid (District decides which method to use).
- PSPA-Defined professional services cannot be procured through a competitive bid process. School districts must apply the *PSPA Test* when procuring such services (Gov’t Code 2254.003). The PSPA Test* requires for school districts to make a selection and award a contract on the basis of:
 1. Demonstrated competence,
 2. Qualifications to perform the services, and
 3. For a fair and reasonable price

* **NOTE**: The PSPA Test for architectural, engineering, or land surveying services requires for a contract to be awarded solely on



the basis of (a) first selecting the most highly qualified provider based on demonstrated competence and qualifications without considering price (cannot ask vendors for price during review of qualifications) and (b) then attempt to negotiate a contract at a fair and reasonable price.

B. **District-Determined Professional Services**: The District has the discretion to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether some services are to be considered professional services (“District-Determined professional services”). In general, a service may be determined a professional service if it is a service that:

- Involves predominantly mental or intellectual skills, rather than physical or manual skills.
- Involves a person working in a field that requires years of education and service for one to attain competence and that calls for a high order of intelligence, skill, and learning.

Determination if a service may be considered a District-Determined Professional Service will be made on a case-by-case basis and with direction by the District’s Executive Director of Procurement Services and/or Legal Officer, and any other resources deemed necessary. Completion, review, and approval of the *Spring ISD Approval of District-Determined Professional Services* form is required.

For questions regarding any information referenced in this document, please contact Paul Young, Director of Purchasing & Contracts, at 281-891-6471 or via email at Contracts@springisd.org

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SPRING ISD AUTHORIZED PURCHASING COOPERATIVES

Cooperative Name	Website	Phone	Co-Op Information
BuyBoard (TASB co-op) *Login required to view contract details. Contact Procurement Services to request a login.	www.buyboard.com or List of BuyBoard Vendors	(800) 695-2919	BuyBoard, the purchasing cooperative formed and managed by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB). This cooperative is open to all local governments, nonprofits, and other political subdivisions. BuyBoard provides access to a wide variety of products and services. The operation is financed by rebates of about two percent collected from vendors based on purchases. A flat administrative fee of \$400 is charged for purchases of motor vehicles. BuyBoard is the only cooperative currently offering a rebate to its members once the operational costs have been met.
Central Texas Purchasing Alliance (CTPA)	www.txctpa.org/	www.txctpa.org/contact/	This alliance is composed exclusively of Texas public school districts and their purchasing representatives and offers various benefits to its members, including but not limited to cost saving opportunities on the purchase of goods and services through shared competitively awarded contracts and the sharing of ideas, information, and resources to create efficiencies and provide professional development opportunities within each district's purchasing organization. <i>Contact the Spring ISD Procurement Services department to inquire about available contracts.</i>
Choice Partners (HCDE co-op)	www.choicepartners.org or List of Choice Partners Vendors	(877) 696-2122	This cooperative is a division of Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) and was created by a merger of three former HCDE cooperatives: Choice Facility Partners, Gulf Coast Food Co-op and HCDE Purchasing Cooperative. Choice Partners is a national purchasing cooperative that offers access to various categories of contracts including facilities planning, a variety of supplies, food products, technology items, and energy conservation contractors. Rebates to the cooperative are about two percent of the cost of purchases, which are paid to the cooperative by the vendors.
Educational and Institutional Cooperative (E&I)	www.eandi.org or Contract Finder by Vendor (Partial List) or E&I Suppliers List	(800) 283-2634	E&I is a member-owned, not-for-profit sourcing cooperative delivering expertise, solutions, and services to the educational community and related institutions. E&I provides access to a wide variety of products and services. Spring ISD joined in order to utilize the American Express corporate card / procurement card program.
Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC Buy)	HGAC Buy Or HGAC Buy Contracts	(713) 627-3200	HGAC Buy is a "Government-to-Government" procurement service available nationwide. Spring ISD primarily uses this cooperative for school bus purchases. A flat fee of \$600 is charged to the District for each purchase order for school buses.

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Cooperative Name	Website	Phone	Co-Op Information
Sourcewell	https://www.sourcewell-mn.gov/	(877) 585-9706	Formerly known as NJPA, Sworcewell is a service cooperative created by the Minnesota legislature as a local unit of government. Sourcewell is governed by local elected municipal officials and school board members. As a public agency, all Sourcewell employees are government employees and is governed by a Board of Directors. Sourcewell offer Spring ISD access to a broad range of product and service categories. Sourcewell cooperative collects an administrative fee from its member suppliers that varies per contract and ranges between a quarter percent (0.25%) and two percent (2%) of the total purchases made by each cooperative member under each contract.
School Purchasing Alliance (SPA)	https://schoolpurchasingalliance.org/		The School Purchasing Alliance is a procurement and support services purchasing cooperative formed by a group of southeast Texas school districts in partnership with Marketplace Alliance as a managing consultant and the Santa Fe Independent School District as the Lead Agency. Lead Agency responsibilities will transition to New Caney ISD on July 1, 2019. The main objective of this interlocal cooperative is to provide volume purchasing power for specific Child Nutrition products and services to its over 35-member school districts located within the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) Region 3 commodity distribution area. The SPA cooperative covers its operating costs by administering a Vendor Fee of three quarters of a percent (0.75%) of total purchases processed by its member school districts.
Region 10 ESC	www.region10.org	(972) 348-1700	Region 10 ESC is located in Richardson, TX and currently supports over 120 independent school districts, charter and private schools across several counties in north Texas. Region 10 ESC provides Spring ISD access to the many services it offers and/or the purchasing cooperatives it sponsors.
Region 11 ESC	www.esc11.net or Available Contracted Services 2014-15	(817) 740-3600	ESC Region 11 is one of 20 education service centers established by the Texas State Legislature in 1967, and known as the Texas System of Education Service Centers. As an intermediary educational agency, ESC Region 11 provides professional development, technical assistance and management of educational programs to 77 public school districts and 52 charter campuses in a 10-county area in north central Texas. The Region 11 area includes 65,835 educators and more than 551,503 students. In an area covering 10 counties of North Texas , Region 11 services an area equal to the state of New Jersey in size. School districts in this region range in size from Fort Worth Independent School District's large metropolitan schools to small rural districts with only one building housing a total of 80 students for grades K-9.

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Cooperative Name	Website	Phone	Co-Op Information
Region 19 ESC (Allied States Cooperative or “ASC”)	www.alliedstatescooperative.com	(915) 780-5096	Region 19 ESC is located in El Paso, TX and currently supports over 10 independent school districts and over 5 charter schools within El Paso and Hudspeth counties. Region 19 ESC provides Spring ISD access to the many services it offers and/or the purchasing cooperatives it sponsors.
Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR)	www.dir.texas.gov or DIR Cooperative Contracts (Search by Product/Service Category)	(800) 348-9157	Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) - DIR negotiates contracts with major IT hardware, software, and service providers based on the combined buying power of state and local government customers and the public education community. Beginning with the General Appropriations Act for the 2004/05 biennium (78th Legislature), DIR has an administrative fee cap of two percent for the Cooperative Contracts Program, which is paid to DIR by vendors based on volume of purchases.
OMNIA Partners	https://www.omniapartners.com/publicsector or	(866) 875-3299	Omnia Partners has acquired National IPA and U.S. Communities and over the course of 2019 will be rebranding as OMNIA Partners, Public Sector. In addition to rebranding, OMNIA Partners plans for 2019 include a consolidation of U.S. Communities and National IPA websites and enhanced online reporting through a new platform called OMNIA Partners Connect. As a current member of National IPA and U.S. Communities this acquisition does not directly impact the District financially as fees are paid to the cooperative by suppliers.
TPASS (Texas Procurement and Support Services) *Login required to submit orders through TxSmartBuy	State of Texas Co-op or TxSmartBuy (Contracts List) - PO's must be submitted through this system.	(512) 463-3392	Created by legislation in 1979, the Texas Procurement and Support Services (TPASS) cooperative purchasing program awards and manages hundreds of statewide contracts on behalf of more than 200 state agencies and 1,700 local government agencies. Contracts include regular state contracts known as the State of Texas CO-OP and Texas Multiple Award Schedules (TXMAS) contracts, which are Texas approved versions of federal General Services Administration Contracts. In March 2009, organizations using TXMAS contracts had a 1.5% fee added to their purchases and remitted to Bearing Point, a management company hired by the Comptroller to administer these contracts. The fee to participate in these services is \$100 per year.
The Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS)	https://www.tips-usa.com/	(866) 839-8477	TIPS purchasing cooperative began in 2002 as a small regional cooperative of the Region 8 Education Service Center. Region 8 ESC maintains its role as the Lead Agency for this now national cooperative. All TIPS contracts are awarded by the Region 8 ESC seven-member Board of Directors, and each TIPS vendor has met strict Competitive Bidding Process guidelines established by the administration and TIPS legal team and statute Chapter 44.031 of the Texas Education Code. TIPS does not assess any membership or administrative fees to its members.

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