



# Choice Partners Contract Managers (CP)

#	Cooperative Organization Questions	Response
1	Are your organization's cooperative contracts available for use by Arizona public entities? If so, do you have any local representation?	Yes our organization's cooperative contracts are available for use by Arizona public entities. If local representation is defined as members and vendors in Arizona, yes, we have (5) members in Arizona and contracts for goods and services from over 350 vendor contracts available for Arizona public entities.
2	What is the legal formation of your cooperative organization (public, non-profit, for profit, etc.)? How long have you been established?	We are a public entity and a division of Harris County Department of Education (HCDE), a local county school district.
3	Does your organization conduct its own procurements with in-house personnel or does it enlist a public agency to conduct the procurement? If a public agency is utilized, please identify that agency or agencies and briefly explain how those agencies are selected.	The procurement process is completely performed through our electronic bidding system (e-Bid) by Choice Partners employees. The evaluation and scoring portion of the vendor analysis is done by Choice Partners Contract Managers with the assistance of outside subject matter expert consultants and/or additional purchasing professionals, either from the HCDE (Harris County Department of Education) Purchasing Department or from outside Purchasing department professionals from local school districts or other public entities.
4	If your organization handles all of the contracting functions in-house please explain if you periodically have a 3rd party audit firm review your internal contracting procedures.	Yes - the State of Texas Auditors' office routinely audits our documents and processes and procedures on what has been at least an annual basis in recent years. We have consistently performed exceedingly well in these 3rd Party audits.
5	What governing procurement laws does your organization follow in the soliciting, evaluating and awarding of cooperative contracts? (Please be specific.) Also, what state is noted as the legal venue within your contracts for dispute resolution?	Texas is the legal venue. We follow any and all local, state and national codes, statutes and laws, including but not limited to: EDGAR (fully compliant since September 2015), Local Government Code 271 (Purchasing & Contracting Authority of Municipalities, Counties and Government), Education Code Ch 44 (Procurement - All construction, with the exception of Performance Contracts - which is in Code 2269), Government Code 791 (Interlocal Cooperative Contracts), Government Code 2269 (Construction Procurement for all government (except Higher Ed.), Government Code 262 (Purchasing and Contracting Authority of Municipalities, Counties and other government), and 24 CFR 85.36 (Housing and Urban Development).
6	Does an agency need to register or sign an agreement with your organization in order to purchase from your contracts? If so, please attach the registration form or agreement. Also, is the agency charged a fee to join your cooperative organization?	An agency, or "member", is NEVER charged a fee to join Choice Partners. Fees are paid by vendors. An Interlocal Agreement (ILA) is required in the State of Texas. Other states may sign an ILA, depending on the requirements of each individual state and/or the requirements of their governing authority, or Board of Directors.

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7	Where can your organization's cooperative solicitations and resultant contracts be viewed? Describe what documentation is available at this site.	The procurement process is completely performed through our electronic bidding system (e-Bid) by Choice Partners employees. The evaluation and scoring portion of the evaluation is done jointly by Choice Partners Contract Managers and outside consultants and member of HCDE Internal Purchasing Team and/or additional outside purchasing professionals from other school districts or other public entities in the local metropolitan area. The organization's cooperative solicitations and resultant contracts can be viewed on our website at the vendor's landing page under the download available in the due diligence section. It is accessible by all registered Choice Partners members and contains the following documents: Independent Estimate Determination, Advertisement, Affidavit, Scope and Specification, Participation List, Evaluation Summary, EDGAR documents (Federal), Form 1295 (Texas requirement), Cost-Price Analysis and Vendor Contract. Other company-specific forms - W-9 etc. are possibly available also, but are not publicly available.
8	Do you periodically perform audits to ensure your contractors are fulfilling the contracts to include charging the correct price? If so, please briefly describe your internal audit program and explain if that program includes any benchmarking to ensure pricing stays competitive over the term of agreement.	Yes - we have a full-time Contract Compliance Specialist on staff that reviews ALL aspects of our contracts and their performance.
9	What is the total employee count for your cooperative organization? How many employees perform specific contracting functions (solicitation development, bidding, evaluation and awarding of contracts)?	We have (14) full time employees. We have (5) Contract Managers performing all contract functions and up to (9) different employees that may participate in the evaluation process at various times.
10	Describe your approach to customer service and include any response time commitments.	We believe our level of customer service is what sets us apart from many purchasing cooperatives. We have a large staff of full-time Choice Partners employees willing and ready to help members and vendors with their questions or concerns. We target a response within 24 hours of receiving it. We also have a toll free number that rings to a live person (member of our management team) 24 hours a day 7 days a week (with very minimal exceptions) answering any questions.
11	How do you generate your bidders' list for any particular solicitation and what steps do you take to ensure Arizona companies are included in your notice?	Bidders' lists are typically generated through the list of registered bidders. They "register" when desiring to bid on future contracts and select the appropriate boxes for their products or services. Our e-Bid system automatically notifies all potential bidders when an RFP is advertised. Additionally - we perform searches via the internet to find and add companies pertaining to the bid request. We have not historically pursued companies from a specific state as bidders. We have hundreds of awarded vendors that are able to sell their products and services nationally - and they typically have multiple locations across the country.
12	How do you evaluate contractor performance? Do you have a process that allows agencies to report vendor deficiencies?	We always communicate to any member entity that they have the ability to report any deficiencies in pricing and/or service levels. We actively reach out to members on a regular basis to inquire about Choice Partners vendors' performance and encourage their feedback.

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13	Indicate any national cooperative coalitions/associations to which your organization is a member.	N/A
14	How do you track the usage of contracts to ensure you are accurately conveying order volume within your solicitations?	Tracking the activity and usage of contracts is one of our most time-consuming tasks. It is done between monthly member reporting and vendor reporting and verifying both reports and then developing invoices for vendors and their activity. All activity or usage is tracked by vendor, contract # and member. Many vendors maintain awards on multiple contracts. It is necessary to track by both vendor and contract number.