

Frequently Asked Questions for Suppliers

Updated 12/30/19

The following are answers to the most frequently asked questions from suppliers about doing business with the State of Wisconsin. If you are unable to find an answer to your question below, please contact the Wisconsin State Bureau of Procurement at DOAWisPro@wisconsin.gov, (800) 482-7813 (US only) or (608) 264-7897.

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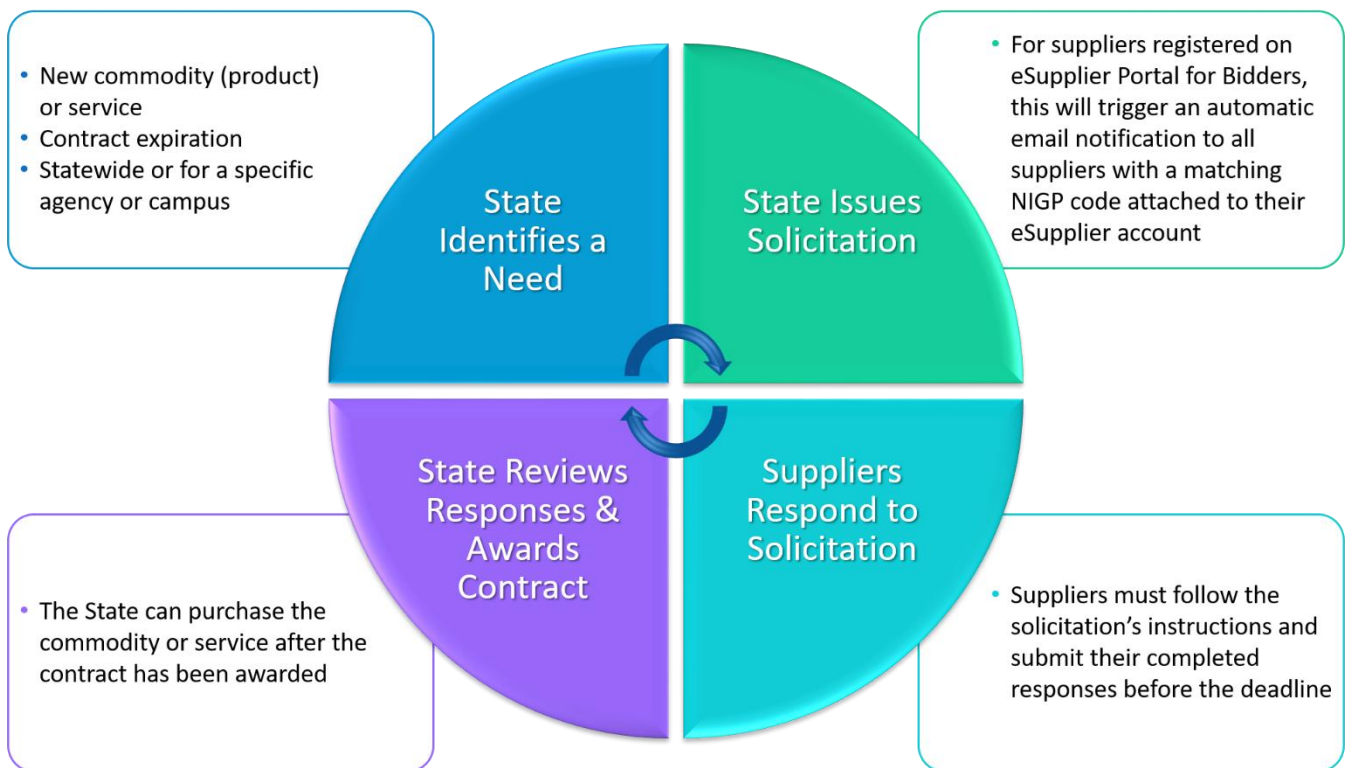
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Wisconsin State Procurement Overview

How does Wisconsin do business? What's the process?

Below is a brief overview of Wisconsin's procurement process:



The process starts when the State identifies a need. For example, there may be a new commodity (product) or service that the State wants to buy or an existing contract will be expiring soon and needs to be re-bid. Next, the State will issue a solicitation if the total amount spent on this service or product over the course of the contract would be \$50,000 or above. Any business who has registered on the eSupplier Portal for Bidders (<https://eSupplier.wi.gov>) and has an NIGP code attached to their account that matches one that's on the solicitation will receive an automatic email notification letting them know there's an opportunity to do business with the State. Businesses interested in selling this product or service to the State will submit responses to the solicitation before the deadline, being sure to follow all instructions outlined in the solicitation. The State will review the responses and may award one or more contracts based on the submitted responses. Once a contract is in place, then the State may begin to do business with the contracted vendor. For more information about the State's procurement process, refer to the [Vendors' Guide](#).

How can I do business with the State?

If you haven't yet started your business, you can find resources to do so on the Department of Revenue's [Starting a Business](#) page or on the [Wisconsin One Stop Business Registration Portal](#).

If you already have a business, you can begin by registering on the [eSupplier Portal for Bidders](#). Then you'll want to add NIGP codes to your eSupplier account – NIGP codes tell the system what type of business you'd like to do with the State. Completing these steps will allow you to receive automatic notifications of solicitations that match your business interests from State agencies, University of Wisconsin System campuses and any Wisconsin

municipalities that choose to post with the State. For detailed eSupplier registration instructions, view the [eSupplier Bidder FAQ Guide](#).

Once you receive notification of a solicitation, you can decide whether you'd like to submit a response. If you choose to do so, follow the instructions in the solicitation and be sure to submit your completed response by the due date and time. The State will review the responses and may award one or more contracts as a result. If your business is awarded a contract, then the State may start purchasing your product or services once the contract is in place.

In my business, it's normal to take clients out for coffee to discuss a new product. Is this allowed when working with the State?

No. Unlike private companies, State employees are subject to a very strict code of ethics. State procurement professionals practice a heightened awareness by avoiding even the appearance of a conflict of interest when interacting with current or potential vendors. They may not accept personal gratuities or associate with a bidder or vendor for personal gain. Please help us by not offering to take a representative out to lunch or for coffee and by not sending gifts (all gifts must be returned or thrown out).

I want to talk to someone about my products and services. Who can I talk to at your agency?

If you are already a contracted vendor and want to discuss the products or services available on the current contract, you should reach out to that contract's manager.

On the other hand, if you are not a contracted vendor and simply want to introduce a product or service in the hopes that the State may want to make a purchase (e.g., a "cold call"), then your chances of success might be limited. You could contact those listed on the [State Agency Purchasing Directory](#), but since the State follows a strict procurement process, a single individual isn't able to decide to make a significant purchase without issuing a competitive solicitation and awarding a contract. Most of the time, your effort would be better spent researching contracts you would be interested in being awarded and figuring out when their next solicitation may be issued (contract searches are publicly available on VendorNet at <https://VendorNet.wi.gov/contracts.aspx>).

Where do I go if I want to get involved with construction, highway or airport projects?

The State Bureau of Procurement isn't involved with construction, highway or airport projects. Solicitations for these projects will not appear on eSupplier or VendorNet and your registration on eSupplier will not ensure you receive automatic notifications for these types of solicitations. For more information about these types of projects, including any other systems that you may need to register with (like [WisBuild](#)), see the following links:

- [Construction Projects](#): Department of Administration, Division of Facilities Development & Management
- [Highway Construction Projects](#): Department of Transportation
- [Airport Projects](#): Department of Transportation

I only want to do business with University of Wisconsin System campuses (or with municipalities) – why do I have to register on eSupplier when they only post on VendorNet?

All State of Wisconsin bidders register on eSupplier (and add relevant NIGP codes to their eSupplier account) in order to receive automatic email notifications of solicitations from State agencies, UW System campuses and

municipalities that choose to post solicitations with the State. eSupplier and VendorNet work together behind the scenes to ensure that you are sent automatic notifications for all solicitations that match an NIGP code on your eSupplier account regardless of where the solicitation was originally posted.

How do I become a preferred bidder (or preferred vendor)?

While the State doesn't have "preferred bidders" or "preferred vendors" of any kind, Wisconsin does have a list of approved, contracted vendors that we are able to do business with.

In order to be on a list of approved vendors with the State of Wisconsin, you have to be awarded a contract with the State. The way the procurement process works in Wisconsin is the State must first identify a need for a product or service. Then the State will issue a solicitation that includes NIGP codes representing the type of service or commodity (product) the State is looking for. Any business that is registered in eSupplier and has included a matching NIGP code in their eSupplier profile will automatically be sent an email notifying them of the solicitation. Businesses decide if they want to respond to the solicitation, and if so, prepare their bids or proposals and submit them to the State contact by the deadline set in the solicitation. The State evaluates the responses according to the process outlined in the solicitation and one or more vendors may be awarded a contract. Those businesses who have been awarded the contract are now on the list of approved vendors that the State may do business with for that service or commodity.

So, if you'd like to be a contracted vendor with the State of Wisconsin, you'll need to participate in the procurement process and respond to one or more solicitations issued by the State. The first step will be to get your business registered on eSupplier. (Detailed eSupplier registration instructions can be found in the [eSupplier Bidder FAQ Guide](#).)

In addition to the solicitations listed on eSupplier, which are exclusively for State agencies, your eSupplier registration also ensures you are sent automatic notifications for the solicitations listed on VendorNet (<https://VendorNet.wi.gov>), which include the solicitations for the University of Wisconsin System campuses and any Wisconsin municipalities that choose to post with the State. Note that when you go to VendorNet, you only need to click on the "Bids" tab at the top to review the solicitations – you do not need to register or login to VendorNet.

How do I get added to a State contract?

The only way to get added to a State of Wisconsin contract is to participate in the solicitation process. You would need to submit a response to a solicitation and be awarded a contract based on that response. For more detailed instructions, see the answer to the previous question.

I have a minority-owned/disabled veteran-owned business. Is there any benefit to registering with Wisconsin's Supplier Diversity Program?

Yes! Wisconsin statutes encourage State agencies to do business with minority-owned businesses and with disabled veteran-owned businesses. In addition, State law allows agencies to apply a [price preference of up to 5%](#) on behalf of certified Minority Business Enterprises and Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses. For more information about becoming certified, visit the [Supplier Diversity Program's](#) website.

NIGP Codes

What are NIGP codes?

NIGP codes represent the types of services and commodities (products) your company wants to sell to the State. By adding NIGP codes to your eSupplier account, you are telling the system what types of solicitations you want to be notified about. When a solicitation is posted, it will include a list of NIGP codes that closely match the services or commodities being sought. If your account has a matching NIGP code associated with it, you will receive an automatic email notification from the system that lets you know you may want to take a closer look at that solicitation.

Is there an easier way to figure out which NIGP codes I should use?

There are many, many NIGP codes to choose from and it can often feel overwhelming to someone new to State procurement. In addition to searching for various keywords on the “My NIGP Codes” page in eSupplier, one way to get ideas about which codes to select is to look at past or current bids and contracts. All bids and contracts list the NIGP codes associated with them.

[VendorNet](#) can be a helpful resource for looking up current and previous bids and contracts. When accessing VendorNet, you will not need to register or sign in. Simply go to <https://VendorNet.wi.gov> and click the “Bids” or “Contracts” tab at the top of the page. You can narrow your search with a variety of filters. Once you have found a bid or contract that matches your business interests, click the “Solicitation Reference Number” for bids or the “Contract Number” for contracts to view more information, including a list of the NIGP codes associated with it.

Searching Contracts & Solicitations

Is there a way to look up contracts with Wisconsin?

Yes. There are three publicly available websites where you can search for contracts with Wisconsin. On each of these sites, there is no need to register or login.

- [VendorNet](#): Many statewide and agency contracts are posted on VendorNet. To access the contract search, click the “Contracts” tab at the top of the page and enter any relevant search terms. (We recommend using simple, concise search terms for best results.)
- [UW System Contracts](#): A list of contracts for the UW System can be found here.
- [UW-Madison Contracts](#): A searchable, alphabetic listing of the contracts for the University of Wisconsin-Madison can be found on this page.

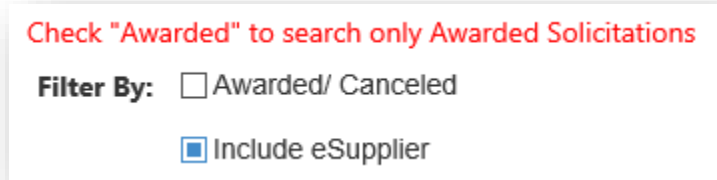
I can't find the contract I'm looking for on VendorNet. Do you have recommendations on how to search?

When searching for contracts or bids on VendorNet, we recommend keeping your search terms as simple and concise as possible for best results, preferably just a word or two. You will likely have the best luck when searching by the “Keyword” field – many contracts don't have information entered into the “Supplier” field, so you will get very limited results when searching by supplier.

In addition, while many contracts are posted to VendorNet, including all of the statewide contracts, some agency-specific contracts may not be posted.

Is there a way to search all the solicitations in one place (not just the ones on eSupplier)?

Yes. You can search all solicitations at once on [VendorNet](#) by clicking the “Bids” tab at the top of the page (no need to register on VendorNet or login to the site). To search all current solicitations, including the ones that also appear on eSupplier, make sure that the “Filter By:” options look like the picture below (“Award/Canceled” should be unchecked and “Include eSupplier” should be checked).



If you know the name or number of the solicitation, you can enter that into the “Keyword or Number” search. If you don’t know that information, but know the name of the agency, campus or municipality, you can enter that information into the “Agency” search. If you aren’t looking for a specific solicitation, you can also do a “Keyword or Number” search, though we recommend using simple, concise search terms for best results.

Troubleshooting: VendorNet

My VendorNet password isn’t working anymore and I get an error when I try to recover it. Why can’t I login to VendorNet?

Since all businesses now register on eSupplier, there’s no longer a need for businesses to have VendorNet accounts. If you’ve already registered on eSupplier, you can update any personal information on that website (<https://eSupplier.wi.gov>). If you need to register on eSupplier, detailed registration instructions can be found in the [eSupplier Bidder FAQ Guide](#).

You can still access all of the publicly available information on [VendorNet](#), including the contract and solicitation searches, by clicking the tabs at the top of the page, but suppliers cannot get registered or login to the site any longer.

I’m having trouble registering as a bidder/supplier/vendor on VendorNet.

Since all businesses now register on eSupplier, there’s no longer a need for businesses to have VendorNet accounts. If you’ve already registered on eSupplier, you can update any personal information on that website (<https://eSupplier.wi.gov>). If you need to register on eSupplier, detailed registration instructions can be found in the [eSupplier Bidder FAQ Guide](#).

You can still access all of the publicly available information on [VendorNet](#), including the contract and solicitation searches, by clicking the tabs at the top of the page, but suppliers cannot get registered or login to the site any longer.

I’m having trouble with VendorNet. Who can I ask for help?

You can contact the Wisconsin State Bureau of Procurement at DOAWisPro@wisconsin.gov, (800) 482-7813 (US only) or (608) 264-7897.

Troubleshooting: eSupplier & WAMS

Is there a guide to help me use eSupplier?

Yes! The [eSupplier Bidder FAQ Guide](#) has answers to a number of common questions about using eSupplier, including detailed registration instructions; information about WAMS, NIGP codes and communicating with the State through eSupplier; as well as tips for submitting responses within the system.

I'm having trouble getting registered with WAMS (the first step in registering for eSupplier). Who can I ask for help?

The [eSupplier Bidder FAQ Guide](#) has answers to a number of common questions about getting registered with WAMS. For assistance with any other WAMS-related issue, please contact the WAMS support team at [Help Wisconsin Support](#). They don't have a publicly available phone number or email address, but you can fill out an online form with your information and their team will get back to you, typically within a day. You can find a link to this form at the bottom of every WAMS page (it will say, "For assistance send an email to [Help Wisconsin Support](#)").

I'm having technical trouble with eSupplier. Who can I ask for help?

The [eSupplier Bidder FAQ Guide](#) has answers to a number of common questions about eSupplier, including common issues experienced during registration or reasons why a file may not upload to the system. For all other technical questions about the eSupplier system, please contact STAR Support at STARSupport@wisconsin.gov or (844) 947-7827.

I have questions about a specific solicitation on eSupplier. Who can I contact?

Any questions about specific solicitations need to be addressed by the agency contact for that solicitation. Typically, the contact will prefer to have questions submitted in writing and they must be received during the public question and answer period. Refer to the solicitation for specific instructions for submitting questions to the agency contact.

I have a general question about solicitations. Who can I contact?

For general questions about State procurement, you can contact the Wisconsin State Bureau of Procurement at DOAWisPro@wisconsin.gov, (800) 482-7813 (US only) or (608) 264-7897.

Ineligibility Lists

I've been listed on the ineligibility list for the Certification for Collection of Sales and Use Tax Vendor Directory. What does that mean and how can I get that corrected?

State agencies have a responsibility to ensure they are not doing business with ineligible suppliers for failure to follow sales and use tax laws ([PRO-415](#)). In short, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue verifies that businesses follow applicable tax law, and they certify a list of vendors that are not in compliance. These ineligible vendors are listed in the Certification for Collection of Sales and Use Tax Vendor Directory. Until a business is removed

from this list, State agencies are not allowed to do business with them (they can't enter into a new contract and can't make purchases off of an existing contract, regardless of the dollar amount).

If your business has been placed on this list, you are encouraged to register to become an eligible contractor by contacting the Department of Revenue by email at WiTaxLink@dor.state.wi.us or by phone at (608) 266-3969.

I've been placed on the Contract Compliance Vendor Directory Ineligibility List. What does that mean and how can I get that corrected?

State agencies can't contract with suppliers that do not comply with applicable Wisconsin Contract Compliance Law ([PRO-403](#)). The Contract Compliance Program keeps an Eligible Contractor Directory and an Ineligible Contractor Directory. If your business has been placed on the Ineligible Contractor Directory, then the State may terminate an existing contract and may not extend a contract with your business. In addition, your business may not participate in any State of Wisconsin bidding, either directly or as a subcontractor or subrecipient. An ineligible contractor remains on the directory indefinitely until they submit an acceptable Affirmative Action Plan. Questions can be directed to the [Contract Compliance Program](#).

Weekly Oil/Fuel Pricing

Where can I find the most current oil/fuel pricing?

[Weekly Oil/Fuel Pricing](#): This link is updated on a weekly basis. For questions about this document, contact Jeannie McCarville at Jeannie.McCarville2@wisconsin.gov or (608)264-9590.