



# SPD Online Bidding Web Site

City of Houston  
Strategic Purchasing Division

## Vendor's Guide

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## 1. Introduction

The Strategic Purchasing Division (SPD) Online Bidding Web Site was created to streamline the bidding process and provide vendors with the convenience of doing business with the City in an online format.

In designing the eBidding system, the City of Houston wanted to:

- Make it extremely easy for vendors to find and view bidding opportunities that are of interest
- Allow vendors to submit their bids using an intuitive web form rather than requiring a time-consuming manually created bid sheet
- Help City Buyers communicate with vendors by allowing them to send group emails to all those interested in a particular bid
- Automatically alert vendors to changes to bids or bid specifications
- Speed the Bid Tabulation process so that bids may be awarded more quickly

## 2. Contact Information

We appreciate your feedback and encourage questions. We are continually adding features to the site and your feedback is an important part of our development process.

Please contact

Adi Dajani, IRM  
City Hall Building, 901 Bagby  
832-393-8710  
[spdwebmaster@cityofhouston.net](mailto:spdwebmaster@cityofhouston.net)

## 3. Getting Started – Get Registered!

The City has **two** registration forms for vendors on the web site. The first form is very short and gives immediate access to bids and bid documents. The second form is somewhat longer and allows vendors to apply for a City Vendor Number (required to do business with the City). This number will be issued to the applicant within five business days.

### Web Site Registration

The Web Site Registration Form allows vendors to create an account used to get access to bids and bid documents. It is also the account used to place online bids. This form is located at:

[http://www.faspd.ci.houston.tx.us/Bid\\_RegForm.aspx](http://www.faspd.ci.houston.tx.us/Bid_RegForm.aspx)

## Supplier Registration

The Supplier Registration Form allows vendors to apply for a City of Houston Vendor Number. This number is used within our accounting system to uniquely identify each vendor we do business with. If you have applied for a vendor number within the past three years, you do not need to re-apply. Just call the Supplier Assistance Desk at 832-393-8800 to get your number if you have forgotten it. The Supplier Registration form is located at:

[http://www.faspd.ci.houston.tx.us/registration\\_form.aspx](http://www.faspd.ci.houston.tx.us/registration_form.aspx)

## 4. Searching for Bids

You can search for Bids that interest you by using the Bids, RFP & Tabulations Search Engine. Simply hover your mouse over the yellow Bids and RFPs Area menu and select the Bids & Tabulation Search Engine item.

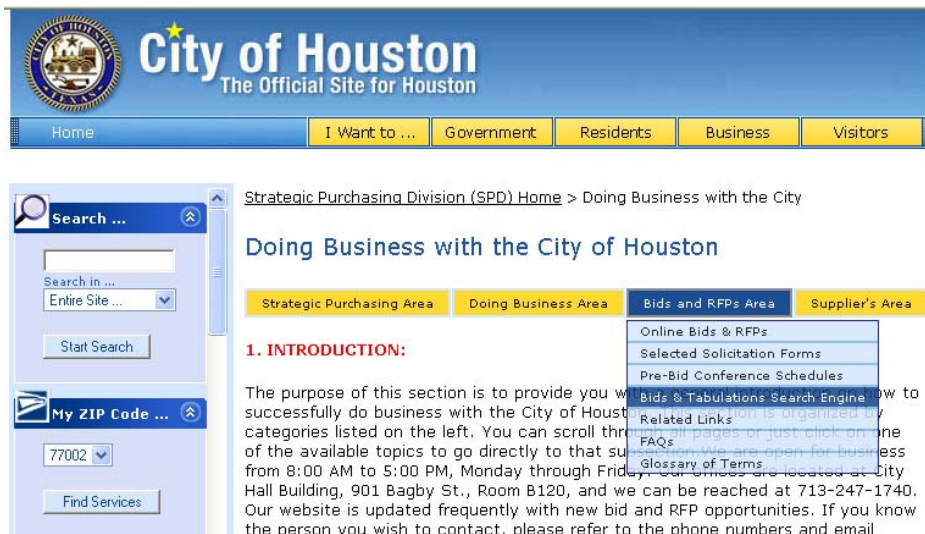


Figure 1. Getting to the Search Engine.

When the Search Engine page is displayed you will have several options available to help you find the bids that interest you the most.

**Search for Bids, RFPs, Tabulations**

Status:  ▼

Bid Type:  ▼

Keywords:

Search Type:  ▼

Figure 2. Search Criteria

All of the search criteria fields are optional. However, if you leave everything blank you will get back a list of thousands of bids, most of which are closed. For this reason, it's a good idea to set at least one criteria field.

Here are the search criteria fields to choose from:

**Status** – The Bid Status says whether the bid is in progress or not. An Open status means that the bid has not been awarded and that you may place a bid. A Closed status means that the City is no longer accepting bids for this bid. Leaving the Status blank will return both open and closed bids.

**Bid Type** – The Bid Type allows you to search on either Formal or Informal bids. Formal bids are bids of over \$25,000 in value and must be approved by the City Council. Informal bids are bids of less than \$25,000 and require only departmental approval. Formal bids tend to remain open for two to four weeks or longer. Informal bids may only remain open for a few days. This is up to the City Buyer. If you leave this field blank, all bid types will be returned.

**Keywords** – The Keywords field allows you to search on particular keywords that interest you, for example "Office Supplies". The keywords search looks in the bid's description, and department, and Bid Number text fields for matching words. If you know the Bid Number of the bid you are interested in, you can go right to it by simply entering the Bid Number in the keywords field.

**Search Type** – The Search Type field will help you narrow or widen your results. Selecting "Match ANY word" will usually return more results because any of the words can be in the keyword fields searched. "Match ALL Words" will usually return fewer results because all words must be matched before the bid will be returned.

**Tip:** The most common search is to simply select the "Open" status and then click Search. This will return all the currently open bids, both Formal and Informal.

## 5. Search Results

After clicking the Search button, the results of your search will be displayed.

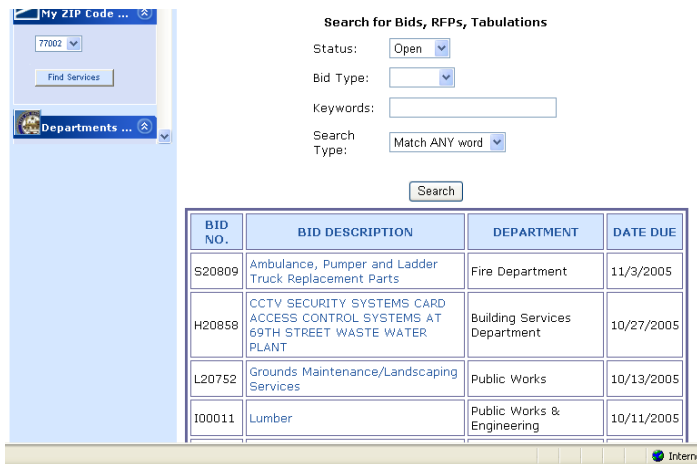


Figure 3. Search Results

The results will list the Bid Number, Description, Department, and Due Date. You can click on the header row of the results table to sort the list by that column.

The Bid Description gives a brief summary of the nature of the bid. For an abstract of the bid, hover your mouse pointer over the Bid Description. A small window will pop up with additional information.

At this point you are not required to login. However, clicking on the bid's description will allow you to go to the Bid Documents page. If you haven't logged in yet, you will be asked to do so at this time.



Figure 4. The Supplier Logon page

Remember, you must register for a Web Site Account (see section 3, above) before you are able to view and download bid documents. This is a simple 5-minute or less process.

If you have forgotten your password, you can click the link provided on the Logon page. The system will automatically send your password to the email address on file for you.

## 6. The Bid Documents Page - Viewing and Downloading Bid Documents

After logging in, you will be able to view all the documents associated with a particular bid.

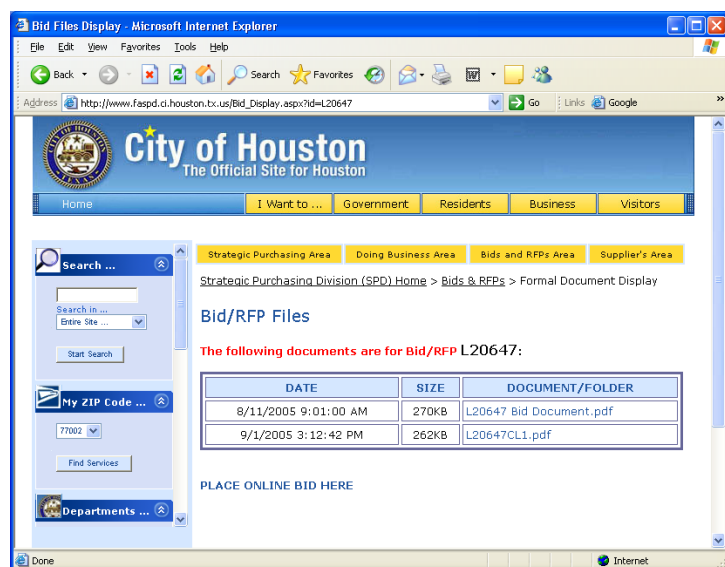


Figure 5. Bid Files

By clicking on the file name displayed on the right, you will be able to view and download the file. In general, bid documents are in Adobe PDF format. To get the free reader for PDF files, go to [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

Files available for download usually include a primary bid document, one or more clarification letters, and other files included in the bid package by the Buyer. (This might include additional specifications, photographs, diagrams, etc.)

Occasionally, a particular bid may not have any bid documents associated with it. (This can happen for Informal bids). In this case, all the information is displayed on the Place Bid page.

If you decide that the opportunity is something your organization would like to bid on, you may click on the Place Online Bid link, below the Bid files listing.

Note: Some bids may not have an online bid option. This is at the discretion of the Buyer. Our goal, however, is to have most bids available for online bidding.

## 7. Placing a Bid – The Vendor Home Page

After clicking on the Place Online Bid link below the Bid Documents list, you will be taken to the Vendor Bid Home Page.

**City of Houston**  
The Official Site for Houston

Home | I Want to ... | Government | Residents | Business | Visitors

Strategic Purchasing Area | Doing Business Area | Bids and RFPs Area | Supplier's Area

### Vendor Home

Welcome Patrick Plummer

TO PLACE A NEW BID FOR BID NUMBER L20647, [CLICK HERE](#).  
To edit an existing bid, see below.

To place a NEW bid, select the Bid Number using the Bid/RFP Search Engine.

You may edit your placed bids up until the close date by clicking on the Bid Number. To view the documents for this bid, click on the Description.

A status of **Pending** applies to bids you have created but not submitted to the City. A status of **Final** applies to bids you have completed and submitted to the City.

**Your Current and Past Bids**

Item #	Bid Number (Edit Bid)	Description	Post Date	Due Date	Status
1	I00007	Installation of two (2) metal doors.	9/7/2005	9/19/2005	Pending
2	L20647	Jail Food Services	8/11/2005	9/15/2005	Pending

Figure 6. The Vendor Home Page

This page allows you to manage your bids.

Vendors can place bids on several Bid Numbers at the same time. In fact, you may even place multiple bids on the same Bid Number! (This option is described below).

### New Bids

To place a NEW bid on the Bid Number you just came from, click the first link given on the page. In Figure 6, above, this is the area that states, “To place a new bid for bid number L20647, click here”. This will create a new bid on this bid number, regardless of whether you have already placed a bid for this number already. If you wish to edit an existing bid, see below.

Why would you wish to create more than one bid for the same Bid Number? Sometimes you may wish to offer drastically different options to the City Buyer for their consideration. For example you may be able to get the exact parts required by a bid from one of your distributors, for a particular price. But you are also able to get equivalent (although not exactly the same part numbers) from another distributor, at



another price. Wishing to give the City Buyer a chance to consider both options, you submit two separate bids.

If you wish to place a new bid, but NOT on the currently selected Bid Number (in this example L20647), click the link to go back to the Bid/RFP Search Engine.

### Edit Existing Bids

Existing Bids are displayed at the bottom of the page. **As a convenience factor, you are not required to do a final submission of your bid in one session.** You may save your bid in a partial state, and come back to it over the course of days, if desired. In this case, your bid will be displayed with a "Pending" status.

To edit the bid, click on the Bid Number. If the Bid Number is not a link, this means that the bid has closed. You may edit your bid as much as you wish until you perform the final submission (this will be described below).

You may also withdraw a bid (even a Finalized bid) up until the time of the Due Date of the bid.

## 8. Placing a Bid – The Place Bid Page

Clicking on either the Place New Bid link or the Bid Number link for an existing bid, will take you to the Place Bid Page.

This page will walk you through the process of creating a bid to submit to the City of Houston.

### Bid General Information

[Place Bid](#)

#### Bid General Information

**Please remember that it is still a City policy that a sealed, signed bid be submitted to the City Secretary by the due date. After you submit your bid online, please print and sign and return to the City Secretary.** [More details...](#)

[View Bid Documents](#)

Bid Number	L20647
Bid Description	Jail Food Services
Bid Abstract	In order to receive bid award consideration, the bidder must be able to demonstrate that they are currently providing or have had at least one contract, as a prime contractor, for jail food services that is similar in size and scope to this contract. Bidder must have at least one reference(s) documenting that it has performed jail food services in one or more of the following types of facilities: Federal, State, City, County, or private jail facilities.
Buyer Email	bill.garner@cityofhouston.net
Post Date/Time	9/11/2005 10:00:00 AM
Close Date/Time	9/15/2005 11:00:00 AM
Pre-bid Conference	Optional
Pre-bid Date/Time	9/23/2005
Pre-bid Conference Location	SPD Conference Room # 2 @ 1:30 P.M.

Figure 8. Bid General Information

The first section of the Place Bid page displays the basic information about the bid, including the description, brief abstract, the Buyer contact email address, post date, due date, and pre-bid conference information, if applicable.

## Bid Items

The next section allows you to actually fill out your bid.

1 - year one					
Item #	Description	Unit of Measure	Quantity	Unit Price	Line Total
1	Meals to be provided per specifications ( based 11,000 to 13,500 Meals per week	ea	581000	\$0.00	\$0.00
1A	less than 8,000 Meals (cost per meal)	ea	1	\$0.00	\$0.00
1B	8,000 Meals to 9,500 Meals(cost per meal)	ea	1	\$0.00	\$0.00
1C	9,500 Meals to 11,000 Meals(cost per meal)	ea	1	\$0.00	\$0.00
1D	More than 13,500 meals (cost per meal)	ea	1	\$0.00	\$0.00

2 - year two					
Item #	Description	Unit of Measure	Quantity	Unit Price	Line Total
2	Meals to be provided per specifications ( based 11,000 to 13,500 Meals per week	ea	581000	\$0.00	\$0.00
2A	less than 8,000 Meals (cost per meal)	ea	1	\$0.00	\$0.00
2B	8,000 Meals to 9,500 Meals(cost per meal)	ea	1	\$0.00	\$0.00
2C	9,500 Meals to 11,000 Meals(cost per meal)	ea	1	\$0.00	\$0.00
2D	More than 13,500 meals (cost per meal)	ea	1	\$0.00	\$0.00

3 - year three					
Item #	Description	Unit of Measure	Quantity	Unit Price	Line Total
3	Meals to be provided per specifications ( based 11,000 to 13,500 Meals per week	ea	581000	\$0.00	\$0.00
3A	less than 8,000 Meals (cost per meal)	ea	1	\$0.00	\$0.00
3B	8,000 Meals to 9,500 Meals(cost per meal)	ea	1	\$0.00	\$0.00
3C	9,500 Meals to 11,000 Meals(cost per meal)	ea	1	\$0.00	\$0.00
3D	More than 13,500 meals (cost per meal)	ea	1	\$0.00	\$0.00

Figure 9. The Bid Items section

Bid Items are displayed on the page, in order, grouped by categories, as set up by the Buyer. The quantity requested is displayed for each item, along with the unit of measure of the item required. Enter your bid for the unit price of the required item on each line.

At any time, you may click the Save Bid To Edit Later button, located at the bottom of the page. This will save your changes but keep the bid in a pending state. For your security, City Buyers DO NOT have any access to your bid while in a pending state. They are only allowed to view Final bids. The security of the system protects your pending bid information.

Make sure to click the Save button before closing your browser window. Also, it is recommended that you save before leaving your computer for any length of time. Your login session may time out for security purposes. This can cause you to lose any unsaved information.

## Additional Forms

This section lists the additional forms that the Buyer requires to be included with your bid submission. These forms are specialized Microsoft Word documents that allow you

to fill out the form information and save it to your hard drive. Download the form by right clicking on the form name and selecting the Save Target option. You can then select a location on your hard drive to save the form.

**Additional Forms to be Included:**

The following documents/forms should be included with your bid. The documents are in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format and may be downloaded by clicking on the link below. You may use the Document Upload feature below to file these documents electronically with your bid OR you may deliver printed copies with your signed Bid Sheet to the Office of the City Secretary before the bid due date (given above).

Form
<a href="#">Affidavit of Ownership.doc</a>
<a href="#">Drug Forms.doc</a>
<a href="#">Fair Campaign Ordinance.doc</a>
<a href="#">MWBE.doc</a>
<a href="#">Statement of Residency.doc</a>
<a href="#">Sub Contractor.pdf</a>

Figure 9. Required forms

After you have retrieved a local copy of the form, you may open it and fill it out.

**Document Upload**

After you have filled out the form, you may upload the file using the Document Upload section of the Place Bid page.

**Document Upload:**

Click the Browse button below to select the document from your local drive. Then click the Add Document button to upload and attach the document to your online bid.

**Currently Uploaded Documents:**

Figure 10. Document Upload

Click on the Browse button to display the Open File dialog box. Browse to the location of your completed form and select it. Then select Open. The path and filename of the form will appear in the text box shown in Figure 10, above.

Now click on the Add Document button. This will upload the document to the site and attach it to your bid package submission.

At any time you may select a document and click the Remove Selected Attachments button to delete the document you previously uploaded from the site. This is useful when you want to re-upload a particular document.

## Save, Submit, or Withdraw (Delete) Bid

The last section of the Place Bid page gives you save and delete options.

Click the following button to save your Bid but NOT submit it. You will be able to return and make changes.

Save Bid to Edit Later

Click the following button to save your Bid and submit it to the City of Houston. The next page will allow you to review the bid information before submission.

Submit Bid to the City

Click the following button to WITHDRAW your bid. This will delete any bid information you have entered above.

Withdraw Bid

### Figure 11. Save, Submit, or Withdraw bid

As previously described, the Save Bid to Edit Later button allows you to save your work without formally submitting the bid to the City. You may return and edit the bid as much as you wish.

When you are finished editing your bid, you may click the Submit Bid to the City button. This will START the formal submission process. You will be given a chance to review your bid in its entirety before completing the submission.

The last button allows you to withdraw (or delete) your bid. You may withdraw both Pending and Final bids, as long as it is before the bid's Due Date.

Note: Bids that are Pending at the time of the bid's Due Date are ignored by the system. **You must click the Submit Bid to the City to formally submit your bid for consideration.** Only Final bids may be awarded contracts.

## 9. Submitting Your Bid

When you are finished editing your bid and uploading document attachments, you may click the Submit Bid to the City button as shown in Figure 11.

You will be taken to the Bid Confirmation Page, which will display your entire bid one last time for your review.

Bid Number	<b>S20791</b>
Bid Description	Spheres, Reflective Glass for Various Departments
Bid Abstract	Supply of reflective glass beads used by the Houston Airport System for runways/taxiways, and the Public Works & Engineering Dept. for roadway lines.
Buyer Email	casey.crossnoe@cityofhouston.net
Post Date/Time	9/15/2005 12:00:00 AM
Close Date/Time	10/30/2005 12:00:00 AM

**Bid Items**

**Line Reflectors**

Item #	Description	Unit of Measure	Quantity	Unit Price	Line Total
1	Blue reflector beads	Each	1000	\$3.50	\$3,500.00
2	Red reflector beads	Each	1200	\$3.25	\$3,900.00

**Edge Reflectors**

Item #	Description	Unit of Measure	Quantity	Unit Price	Line Total
1	24" edge reflectors - yellow	Each	800	\$5.35	\$4,280.00

TOTAL BID: \$11,680.00

Figure 12. Bid Confirmation Page

Here you will see your bid in a non-editable format. This is exactly how buyers will see your bid after the bidding period closes.

After reviewing your bid, you will electronically sign the bid sheet by typing in your full name.

BY CLICKING "SUBMIT FINAL BID" BELOW, YOU ARE FORMALLY SUBMITTING YOUR BID TO THE CITY OF HOUSTON. AS OUTLINED IN THE WEB SITE USER AGREEMENT, CLICKING THIS BUTTON TAKES THE PLACE OF AN INK SIGNATURE. ONLY CLICK THE BUTTON BELOW IF YOU ARE, OR ARE ACTING ON BEHALF OF

1. AN OWNER/MANAGING PARTNER OF YOUR COMPANY,
2. A COMPANY OFFICER OR OTHER AUTHORIZED EMPLOYEE THAT CAN ENTER YOUR COMPANY INTO A LEGALLY BINDING CONTRACT.

TYPE YOUR FULL NAME INTO THE FOLLOWING BOX IF YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE ABOVE AND THE WEB SITE USER AGREEMENT.

After submitting your Final Bid, you will be taken to a page where you will be able to print or save your Bid Sheet.

Figure 13. Signing the Bid

**Legal Information Regarding Online Bidding**

When you submit a bid to the City of Houston, you are signing a contract. Therefore you must have the ability to bind your organization or company to a contract. Usually this includes company owners, partners, or officers.

By City ordinance, for Informal Bids (under \$25,000 value) your electronic signature is equivalent to an ink signature. No additional signature is required beyond the online bid.

Formal bids (over \$25,000), however, still require a signed Bid Sheet to be delivered to the Office of the City Secretary by the due date of the bid. The web site makes this process very simple. After the submission you will be able to print your bid sheet. (See below).

## Final Submission and Receipt

After you have entered your full name in the space provided, you may click the Submit Final Bid to the City button.



Figure 14. Confirmation of submission

Your final bid is now saved in the system. When the due date of the bid is past, the bidding period will be over and Buyers will be granted access to view your bid.

The Confirmation page, shown above in Figure 14, allows you to print or save your bid sheet.

At any time before the bidding period closes, you may edit or withdraw your bid. However, after the bidding period closes, you will no longer have access to your bid.

## Returning to Edit or View Your Bid

At any time, you may return to edit or view your bid. To do this, simply

1. Find the Bid using the Bid/RFP Search Engine.
2. Click on the Bid Number to go to its Document Display page.
3. Click on PLACE ONLINE BID

This will return you to the Vendor Home Page.

**Vendor Home**

Welcome Patrick Plummer

To place a NEW bid, select the Bid Number using the [Bid/RFP Search Engine](#).

You may edit your placed bids up until the close date by clicking on the Bid Number. To view the documents for this bid, click on the Description.

A status of **Pending** applies to bids you have created but not submitted to the City. A status of **Final** applies to bids you have completed and submitted to the City.

**Your Current and Past Bids**

Item #	Bid Number (Edit Bid)	Description	Post Date	Due Date	Status
1	S20791	<a href="#">Spheres, Reflective Glass for Various Departments</a>	9/15/2005	10/30/2005	Final
2	S11111	<a href="#">Test</a>	9/15/2005	10/1/2005	Pending
3	L20647	<a href="#">Jail Food Services</a>	8/11/2005	9/15/2005	Pending

Figure 15. Vendor Home page

You will see your bid in the list of current bids. By clicking on the Bid Number, you will be able to view and edit your bid.

As shown in Figure 15, the status for the vendor's bid for Bid Number S20791 is Final. This means that when the bidding period closes, the bid will go to the City Buyers.

**Note: Make sure that the status of your bid is Final.** Otherwise, when the bidding period closes, Buyers will not see your bid. You make your bid final by clicking the Submit Bid to the City button on the Place/Edit Bid page.