

Procurement Processes for Government

An Overview of Methods for Government Entities to Purchase Technology

There are a variety of different ways to purchase government technology. Depending on your criminal justice agency’s specific needs, there are different processes of varying lengths and requirements that can help your agency make a well-researched, sound purchasing decision. Read below to learn more about some common processes for purchasing government technology, and the different qualities of each process.



Formal Purchasing Requests

Request for Information

A Request for Information (RFI) is a formal inquiry used to gather detailed insights from potential suppliers or vendors, aiding organizations in making informed decisions and shaping procurement strategies. RFIs are typically an initial information-gathering step that leads to a comprehensive solicitation via RFQ or RFP.

Request for Quote

A Request for Quote (RFQ) is a procurement process where organizations solicit pricing and commercial proposals from suppliers for specific products or services they intend to purchase. An RFP is a pricing-specific selection, and ultimately, agencies will use an RFQ to purchase the lowest-priced software.

Request for Proposal

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is a formal document inviting vendors to submit comprehensive proposals for providing specific products, services, or solutions to address the needs of an organization or project. Through an RFP, agencies will use detailed rubrics to consider a variety of factors and rank those factors based on importance when selecting their software solution.

Piggybacking & Purchasing Cooperatives

Piggybacking

Prosecutors and law enforcement can efficiently acquire technology by piggybacking on established contracts from other government agencies. This method involves leveraging existing, formal purchasing agreements to procure similar technology. This approach can save both time and resources, as the thorough due diligence of a formal vetting process has already been completed by the previous Request for Proposal (RFP). Moreover, it's essential to consider each state's regulations on piggybacking to ensure compliance when contemplating this strategy.

Purchasing Cooperatives

Law enforcement agencies and prosecutors can informally purchase government technology through purchasing cooperatives, which are collaborative entities in which multiple government agencies or departments come together to aggregate buying power. This collective approach enables government agencies to negotiate better terms, lower prices, and more favorable conditions with technology vendors, including those providing specialized software for law enforcement and prosecutors.

Why consider purchasing through piggybacking or purchasing cooperatives?

Both piggybacking on existing contracts and purchasing through cooperatives allow prosecutors and LEAs to leverage established purchasing agreements of other government entities and confidently procure similar goods or services. Using established contracts can result in better pricing and terms, which is beneficial for criminal justice agencies that have limited budgets. As a result, criminal justice agencies stay up-to-date with the latest technology advancements and ensure that their technology needs are met efficiently and cost-effectively.