

# A CCSD Employee's Guide to Working with Vendors





# CCSD Employee's Guide to (Purchasing Department) Vendors

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# CCSD Employee's Guide to (Purchasing Department) Vendors

## Relationships with Vendors



Vendors provide the District with goods and services required to meet our goals and perform our jobs. They are an integral part of our business. The District contracts with hundreds of vendors each year. The Purchasing Department issues over 60,000 purchase orders for approximately 350 million dollars each year. Good business and accounting practices are followed as the District acts as a responsible, transparent, and accountable guardian of taxpayer and external funds. The District competes purchases whenever possible to attain the best value for each dollar spent and to ensure fair, open, and equal access is offered to all potential vendors in pursuit of the District's business.

## Definitions & References

### Arm's Length Principle

The arm's length principle is one that recognizes that transactions and agreements should be freely entered into by parties who do not have a special relationship or control over one another. An arm's length agreement is indicated by the fairness of price, conditions, and other terms of the agreement and the focus on the business rather than personal or other interests.

### CCSD Policies & Regulations

The Purchasing Department is mainly governed by CCSD Policies & Regulations 3310, 3311, 3312, 3313, 3314, 3315, 3316, 3317, and 3318.

### Accounting and Business Practices

Ethical Accounting and Business practices are essential in operating any business. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) are a set of accounting principles, standards, and procedures that most companies use to compile their financial statements and record and report accounting information. Business practices are the common and acceptable standards of doing business including ethics, documentation, contracting, fair treatment of vendors and employees, and value.

### Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS)

State of Nevada laws that govern business and other transactions. The District's Purchasing activities are primarily governed by NRS 332

### Example

Keeping vendor relationships at arm's length ensures the focus of the transaction is on the business requirements rather than on personal relations or relationships.

When friendships develop between the District employee and the vendor, it may be difficult to enforce performance requirements or end the business without hurting the friendship or feeling pressure to ignore the issues due to the friendship. Other vendors may also feel the friendship restricts their access to the District's business.



## **FAQ- Relationships with Vendors**

### **Q-Why are they called Purchasing Department Vendors?**

*A- The District works with many different types of vendors. These guidelines are in reference to vendors that work with the District through the Purchasing Department and are authorized to do work via a purchase order. Other District vendors include contractors that are managed through Construction Management in the Facilities Division and retirement and benefits vendors that are managed by the Benefits Department.*

### **Q- What is the difference between a vendor and a supplier?**

*A- Today, the terms are used interchangeably. In the past, a vendor provided a one time or simple transaction with little or no services (like a vending machine), while a supplier supplied services and support and was thought to be a more professional provider with a longer term relationship.*

### **Q-I have a relative that sells a great product; can he/she do business with the District?**

*A- Yes, as long as the relationship is disclosed, and the related District employee is not involved in the transaction or the decision making process. The Purchasing Department has a template disclosure statement that may be used to fully disclose the nature of the relationship. The disclosure must be reviewed and approved. Different approvals are required depending on the District employee's position and possible involvement prior to conducting any transaction. Please refer to District Regulation 3312 for additional information.*

### **Q- I am a District employee and I have a side business; can I sell to the District?**

*A- It can be done if it does not create a conflict of interest and does not overlap or interfere with the employee's District work. There must be full disclosure that indicates that there is no conflict of interest and the contract must be approved by the Division Head and the Board of School Trustees. Please contact the Purchasing Department for more information on the disclosure and approval process. This process is required regardless of funding source (general, grant, student generated, etc.)*

### **Q-My nephew is a great painter and my school needs to be painted; can I hire him?**

*A- No. Hiring relatives is not allowed and hiring contractors must be approved by the Facilities Division. If you have received approval to hire a painter (an approved PAF Form), you may not hire a relative. The related employee may recuse (or remove him/herself) from the transaction and other non-related employees may hire your nephew if the relationship is fully disclosed and they have obtained other quotes and are able to prove he is the best person/value for the job.  
Be careful!! Nepotism, which is defined as hiring relatives, is against District policy.*

### **Q- What is "third degree of consanguinity"?**

*A- Consanguinity is a term which defines the level of blood relations that must be considered for various transactions including marriage contracts, adoptions, and inheritances. Third degree of consanguinity is used by the NRS to define Nepotism. Third degree indicates that three generations from the blood line are considered relevant when determining relationships. District policy requires the full disclosure of all employees and all vendors that have relationships with employees up to the third degree of consanguinity. The first degree of consanguinity is defined as one generation from the blood line or the parents or children of the employee. The second degree is the grandparents or grandchildren. The third degree includes the great grandparents, great grandchildren and spouses, and second cousins and spouses.*

## Meeting with Vendors



Vendors provide required services and commodities to the District. They possess industry and product knowledge that is important to doing our jobs better, faster, and cheaper. They also have sales goals that drive them to perform. Meeting with vendors may be greatly beneficial to your area especially if the vendor is providing service and support for existing products. Meetings may also be great time consumers and there are better methods for handling some of the knowledge transfer and product testing needed when looking for new products. It is imperative that all vendors be treated fairly and equally and receive the same opportunities so that they may all compete on an even basis with the same information and knowledge for the District's business.

### Definitions & References

<b>Advanced Knowledge or Perceived Advantage</b>	NRS 332.820(2) Disclosure of any information that may create an advantage for one bidder over another bidder shall void all bids.
<b>Disqualification for Collusion or Restraint of Competition</b>	NRS 332.820(1) Any agreement between bidders or potential bidders that will hamper the freedom of competition shall void the bids of those bidders.
<b>Vendor Introduction Letter</b>	A sample vendor letter defining the process for doing business with the District is included in this packet. This letter may be sent by individual schools or departments when a new or potential vendor makes an inquiry or the inquiry may be forwarded to the Purchasing Department.

### Example

The District experiences issues with vendors performing work or delivering goods without authorization. This puts both the District and the vendor at risk. In some cases, the work is authorized "after the fact" and the vendor is eventually paid when the "after the fact" process has been completed. The District will compete the purchase and District funds may only be used for the lowest quote. Both the vendor and requestor may be responsible for the difference in amount, if any.

In other cases, the work is not authorized and/or funding is not available and the vendor is responsible and will try to retrieve the items, collect personally from the requestor, or write the unauthorized work off as a donation. **Buyer and Vendor Beware!!!**

There are scam companies that prey on verbal approvals to ship product and purposely ship unauthorized goods. Use care when meeting or speaking with vendors. Confirm that both employees and vendors understand that a purchase order is required prior to delivery of any service or goods.



## **FAQ - Meeting with Vendors**

### **Q- When is it appropriate to meet with vendors?**

A- *Vendors have a wealth of information, services, and support to offer the District. It is appropriate to meet with them as follows:*

- *When the vendor has an existing contract with the District and there is a need to provide support or updates on service levels.*
- *When there are issues with existing contracts that need to be addressed.*

### **Q- When is it not appropriate to meet with vendors?**

A- *Schools and departments are cautioned not to meet with vendors under the following situations:*

- *When there are changes to the existing contract that needs to be made. Please contact the Purchasing Department to make arrangements for an amendment to the contract and a change order will be issued.*
- *When there is a bid or competitive activity in progress (please check with Purchasing first).*
- *When a special favor or special treatment is requested or you are being pressured to make decisions that do not seem to be in the District's best interest. Make sure that the potential conflict of interest is fully disclosed and then refer the vendor to the Purchasing Department. If it is a new vendor, please direct them to the Purchasing Department. We will contact them and send them the District's Vendor Introduction Letter.*
- *When new products or information on new products is needed. Please see the Research Section of this document. Meeting with a supplier for informational purposes only is acceptable if it does not create any perceived advantage or commitment. Be fair and consistent, if you meet with one vendor, you need to give equal access and opportunity to all vendors that may call in that area.*

### **Q-What is the "silent period"?**

A- *The Silent Period is the time before and during a formal competitive activity (bid or request for proposal). Discussions on the contents and/or results of the bid do not take place until an award recommendation has been submitted for the Board of Trustees. Vendor visits and meetings are strongly discouraged to ensure there is no perception of favoritism nor an opportunity to sway or obtain information on the evaluation. When the recommendation is made, it is posted on the Purchasing website, and the respondents are welcome to make an appointment with the Purchasing Department and come in to review all responses and the evaluation results.*

### **Q-How do Vendors get on the District's Bid List?**

A- *The District uses Onvia's Demandstar.com to maintain our sourcing lists and electronically post and distribute competitive efforts. Potential vendors may register at demandstar.com for no cost.*

### **Q- What is the difference between a supplier and a contractor?**

A- *The District makes the following distinction between the following terms: a supplier or vendor provides goods or services and is managed by the Purchasing Department. A contractor refers to a skilled trades professional that performs construction or public works and is managed by the Facilities Division.*

### **Q-My school needs some new equipment. Who do we contact for information?**

A- *The appropriate buyer in the Purchasing Department is a good source of information and will know which items and suppliers are on contract. Peers at other schools and school districts are also an excellent source of information. For information on various methods of obtaining information from vendors, please see the Research section of this document.*

# Gifts and Donations from Vendors



In compliance with NRS Ethics and District regulations, employees shall not accept personal gifts including food and beverages from vendors or potential vendors. The act of dining with a vendor is often perceived as giving the vendor special treatment and/or a relationship that is closer than arm’s length. Decision makers should be careful when conducting business during lunch hours and/or after work hours.

Additionally, gifts or donations of product from vendors may be perceived as trying to circumvent the competitive process. Should an employee be interested in piloting or sampling a new or different product, the Purchasing Department will assist by issuing a competitive activity to request information from all interested parties. If a Vendor wishes to donate items to the District, they will be considered a donor and the donation shall be reported as prescribed by the District’s gift policy.

Should a Vendor offer a free pilot or donation to the District, the following limitations will apply on future business:

- 1) Those involved in the pilot may not be a member of the evaluation committee for that product, a similar product, or any evaluations by the same vendor for at least one competitive cycle, and
- 2) The product may not be purchased by the District until it has been competed during the normal cycle.

## Reference

Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 281.400A

A code of ethical standards is hereby established to govern the conduct of public officers and employees:

1. A public officer or employee shall not seek or accept any gift, service, favor, employment, engagement, emolument or economic opportunity which would tend improperly to influence a reasonable person in the public officer’s or employee’s position to depart from the faithful and impartial discharge of the public officer’s or employee’s public duties.

CCSD Regulations 3316 Section III

District employees may not accept or receive, directly or indirectly, a personal financial benefit; or accept any gift, token, membership, or service, as a result of a District purchase entered into, or anticipated in the future, from any person, firm, or corporation. District employees within the course of their employment, are prohibited from accepting any gratuity (including food or beverages) from a supplier of goods or services to the District.

## Example

A school accepted a donation of a copier. Initially it worked, but the maintenance and supply costs were cost prohibitive as it was the only model of that type in the District and volume discounts were not available. In order to purchase a maintenance agreement, an inspection and overhaul were necessary. In the end, the donated copier was more costly than purchasing a new one.

Another example of a donation that was accepted but was not in the District’s best interest was a donation of specialized physical education equipment. The vendor had some demonstration items from a trade show and offered to donate them to the District rather than pay for return shipping. The equipment required special training which was expensive and required several sessions. The donated equipment, even though it was perceived to be free, was more costly than other similar products and its acquisition circumvented the competitive process as initially it did not fairly give all interested parties an opportunity to compete.



## FAQ - Gifts and Donations from Vendors

### Q-Is it okay to accept promotional materials (such as pens or calendars) from vendors?

A- *If the gifts are used for District purposes, they may be accepted if the District has a need for them. Employees that will serve on evaluation panels for these products may not accept any gratuities or donations, even though they may be used for District purposes, as it may be perceived as endorsing the product and/or company. When offered these types of products, we try to find a school that might use them, direct the vendor to the Foundation, or simply say “no thank you”.*

### Q- We received an invitation to a product viewing lunch sponsored by a vendor. Is it acceptable to attend?

A- *No, vendor gifts including meals are not allowed by NRS laws and District regulations. Additionally, attending the lunch may be perceived as giving the vendor an advantage.*

### Q-One of our current vendors has a new product that we would like to consider. They have offered a free sample. Can we accept it?

A- *Work with the Purchasing Department to issue an Evaluation Purchase Order. If it is replacing an existing contract, it may be as easy as adding it to the current contract. However, if it is an item that other suppliers may offer, it would be best to compete the new product and find out what other new products are out there and evaluate them at the same time. Vendors may not donate “free materials” to the District to circumvent the competitive process and/or create an advantage or perceived advantage toward future business.*

### Q- A local company is going out of business and would like to donate its furniture and equipment to us. How do we make this happen?

A- *The Warehouse manages large donations. Please contact them at 702-799-5225, x 5463. They can help evaluate the donation to ensure that it would provide value to the District. Some items will actually cost more in repairs and re-installation than the purchase of new items. Without the District’s volume and negotiated discounts, support is often very costly. Additionally, all furniture and equipment should be commercial or industrial grade to withstand District daily usage.*

### Q- My uncle is retiring and used to operate a photography studio. He has some very expensive older photography equipment. Can he donate it to the District? Can he write off his donation?

A- *If the District has a need for the equipment and it is cost effective to operate the equipment, the District will accept the donation and place the items in service. The Warehousing Department works with potential donors to find potential users for the items. As most schools operate digital photography classes, if a suitable use was not identified, the District would not accept the donation. The District does not have warehouse space to store donated items that cannot be put into immediate use. If a user is found and the donation is accepted, a receipt for the donation will be issued to the donor. The donor is responsible for determining the value of the donation and whether it may be deductible on his/her taxes.*



## Research



Looking for new products or new ideas?

The District has many resources to assist you. In addition to asking peers, co-workers, and other school districts and government agencies, the District belongs to the following organizations that share information:

- CGCS Council of Great City Schools
- ISM Institute of Supply Management
- NAEP National Association of Educational Procurement
- NIGP National Institute for Governmental Purchasing
- NPPC Nevada Public Purchasing Consortium
- RBDAC Regional Business Development Advisory Committee

The District works with several groups that will share current and previous competitive efforts.

## New Products & New Vendors Testing, Evaluating, & Piloting



Evaluating and testing new products, services, and vendors is done as part of the competitive process. End users that would like to participate in a pilot or test new materials or products shall submit a shopping cart. Purchasing will compete the material or product to allow a fair and equitable opportunity for all vendors to participate in the pilot or evaluation. Respondents submit proposals or bids and the products or services are evaluated by an evaluation committee in a side-by-side comparison. It is essential to the integrity of the evaluation process to evaluate items at the same time, in the same place. The District will coordinate Viewing Fairs or Product Exhibits to allow users to view like products at the same time after they have been awarded the competitive effort.

## Definitions & Reference

Evaluation Purchase Order	A purchase order written to define the evaluation of a product. The evaluation may include the purchase of the product and/or the terms of the loan, such as who pays shipping and how long the test lasts.
CCSD Policies & Regulations 3312	The Clark County School District will promote open and fair procurement practices. In serving the community, the District desires to create an environment in its procurement and contracting practices which is representative of the entire community it serves. Therefore, the District encourages the participation of minority, women-owned, and disadvantaged businesses in all of the District's purchasing and contracting activities.

## Contracts & Signature Authority



The District recognizes the Purchase Order to be the District’s documented commitment of an agreement to purchase goods or services. A contract or an agreement may also be created to define more complex projects and provide a statement of work and deliverables agreed to by both parties. Contracts and purchase orders are executed by the Purchasing Department. Whenever possible, the District will use its own contract templates. Vendor contracts may be executed when necessary, but will take longer to process as they are reviewed and approved by the Legal Department.

### Reference

CCSD Regulation 3312                      An authorized Purchasing Department administrator must sign all District contracts. A purchase order will be issued by the Purchasing Department to formally recognize the District’s obligation. Obligations are not recognized by the District until the purchase order is processed.

### Example

**Read the fine print!** On several occasions, employees have signed contracts not realizing that they were contracts or that the employee was making a personal commitment by signing the paperwork.

### FAQ

**Q-When is it acceptable for a school principal to sign a contract?**

*A- If the school will be paying for the contract with school or student generated funds, the principal may sign the contract after it has been approved by the Legal Department. CCSD contract templates shall be used whenever possible.*

**Q- The contract has been completed; may the vendor begin to work?**

*A- If you are using school or student generated funds, work may begin after the principal and the company both have signed the contract. If District funds are involved, the vendor shall not begin work until a purchase order has been issued and sent to the vendor.*

## Purchase Orders

**PURCHASE ORDER**

Purchase orders are issued to obligate the District to purchase the goods and services described within the order. At the time the purchase order is written, the system automatically commits the required funds, by encumbering them, to ensure funding is available to honor the commitment.

### Reference

CCSD Regulation 3312                      An authorized Purchasing Department administrator must sign all District funded contracts. A purchase order will be issued by the Purchasing Department to formally recognize the District’s obligation. Obligations are not recognized by the District until the purchase order is processed.

## Contact Information

### How to Contact the Purchasing Department

**Purchasing & Warehousing Department**  
4212 Eucalyptus Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89121  
(702) 799-5225  
(702) 799-5018 fax

<http://ccsd.net/resources/purchasing-warehousing/pdf/purchasing-directory.pdf>

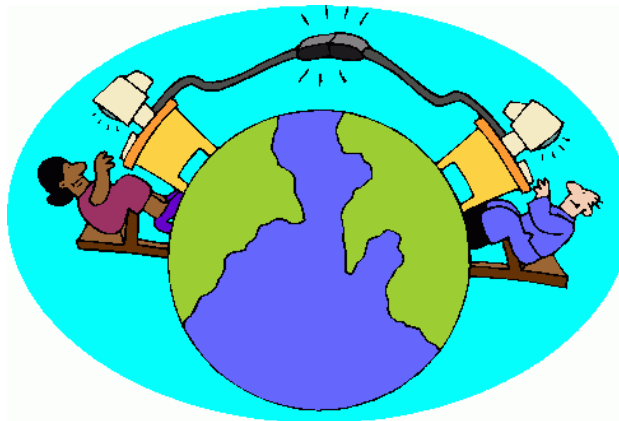
### How to Contact Construction Management

**Public Works and Construction**  
Construction Management  
4170 McLeod Drive  
Las Vegas, NV 89121  
(702) 799-7600  
(702) 799-8745 fax

<http://ccsd.net/divisions/facilities/construction>

### How to Contact the Accounts Payable Department

**Accounts Payable**  
5100 W. Sahara Avenue  
Las Vegas, 89146  
Phone: (702) 799-5360  
Fax: (702) 799-5482



# Vendor Introduction Letter-Sample

DATE

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for contacting the Superintendent's Office regarding your interest in doing business with the Clark County School District. Superintendent Jones appreciates your interest but cannot meet with potential vendors in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes. He has asked me to give you more details on the District and our procurement process.

We are a diverse community of more than 300,000 students and 30,000 employees covering almost 9,000 square miles. The District's procurement functions are divided into two separate departments. The Construction Management Department oversees all public works and construction projects and related purchases. The Purchasing Department handles all commodities, goods, and service purchases.

In response to your inquiry, we would like to direct you to the District's Purchasing Department. Purchasing is tasked with managing supplier relationships and will work with you to ensure that you receive all the information needed to compete for the District's business and/or participate in our many events.

There are several different ways to receive more information on how to become a supplier to the District. For the Purchasing Department, the following options are available:

1. **Visit our Website:** "Doing Business with the CCSD" is a section dedicated to providing information for new suppliers. Find us online at <http://pur.ccsd.net>
2. **Sourcing Lists:** The District uses Onvia Demandstar to post and distribute our informal quotes, formal bids and request for proposals (RFPs). Suppliers may register with Demandstar.com at no cost to receive automatic notifications of quotes, bids, and RFPs from the District. Formal competitive action is required for annual requirements exceeding \$50,000.00 per year.
3. **Bid List:** The current list of bids and RFPs is posted on our website, <http://pur.ccsd.net>
4. **Open Houses and Vendor Fairs:** The Purchasing Department periodically holds open houses to welcome new contracted suppliers. Our staff will be on hand to answer questions, assist with registering on DemandStar, and review the District's competition process and documents. Additionally, the District participates in vendor fairs offered each year by the

local chapter of the Institute for Supply Management and several other government agencies. Please email [Pami@interact.ccsd.net](mailto:Pami@interact.ccsd.net) or call (702) 799-5225 x5474 for additional information.

5. **Product Tests, Viewing Fairs and Pilot Programs:** The Purchasing Department works with end-users to compare, test and evaluate new products and services. The Purchasing Department will issue a Request for Information or a Request for Proposal to allow all suppliers an opportunity to respond and provide information about their products and services. Individual outreach events will be concentrated on specific types of goods or services. Please email [RobinR@interact.ccsd.net](mailto:RobinR@interact.ccsd.net) or call (702) 799-5225 x5425 for additional information.
6. **Buyer Meet and Greet:** Please call ahead and make an appointment to meet with the appropriate Buyer. Buyers welcome suppliers and will schedule meetings. Please email [RobinR@interact.ccsd.net](mailto:RobinR@interact.ccsd.net) or call (702) 799-5225 x5425 to receive a list of Buyers and their commodity assignment.
7. **FaxBack System:** The Purchasing Department also posts competitive activities and information on our faxback system. Call (702) 799-6117, and the system will fax documents as requested.

Thank you for your interest in the Clark County School District.

Please feel free to contact my office in the Purchasing Department at 702-799-5225, ext 5425 directly should you have any questions or concerns. If you are interested in doing business with the Construction Management Department, please contact Luci Davis in Facilities at 702-799-8710. Again, we appreciate your interest in doing business with CCSD and being a part of our community.

Sincerely,

Robin Rankow  
Coordinator  
Clark County School District  
Purchasing Department  
4212 Eucalyptus Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89121  
702-799-5225, x 5425  
Fax 702-799-5018  
[robinr@interact.ccsd.net](mailto:robinr@interact.ccsd.net)