TO: Child and Adult Care Food Program Institutions
FROM: Kyle L. Guerrant, Director
       Office of School Support Services
DATE: October 22, 2012
SUBJECT: Guidance on Procurement Procedures for U.S. Department of
          Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs – Replaces
          previous version of Fiscal Year 2012, Memorandum #4
ACTION: Update procedures to include items in bold

As a result of recent United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) memoranda
and recent legislation passed in Michigan, procurement procedures have been
modified. The purpose of this memorandum is to (1) describe the required
threshold for the purchase of food, services, and/or supplies (non-food items)
used in USDA Child Nutrition Programs and funded by a non-profit food service
account, and (2) provide specific guidelines and procurement methods (formal and
informal) applicable to all participants in the Child Nutrition Programs for the
purchase of food, services, and/or supplies.

All participants in the Child Nutrition Programs, including public schools, public
school academies, intermediate school districts, non-public schools, and non-school
institutions are required to obtain competitive bids (formal purchase method
declared later in this guidance) for procuring food and/or services purchased in a
single transaction if the purchase is $150,000 or more. This is referred to as the
small purchase threshold. However, a school’s board of education or an
institution’s board of directors can set small purchase thresholds lower than
$150,000 for food and/or services. Participants must use a lower, more restrictive

1 Non-school institutions are non-profit and for-profit institutions, local government agencies, and community
   service agencies.
2 Single transaction is a single purchase order or contract.
threshold if their respective organizational thresholds are set at a lower amount as indicated in the agencies’ adopted policies. All participants in the Child Nutrition Programs must have policies in place regarding procurement, and all transactions must be conducted as outlined in these policies.

In addition, non-public schools and non-school institutions are required to obtain competitive bids for procuring supplies (non-food items) purchased in a single transaction if the purchase is $150,000 or more. However, school boards or boards of directors can set thresholds lower than $150,000 for supplies and the lower threshold must be used.

The small purchase threshold for the purchase of supplies (non-food items) is lower for public schools, public school academies, and intermediate school districts. Schools are required to obtain competitive bids for purchasing supplies (non-food items) purchased in a single transaction if the purchase is $22,386 or more. However, school boards can set thresholds lower than $22,386 for supplies. The lower threshold must be used in these situations. This base amount, or threshold, is for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013. It is set by Michigan legislation and is adjusted annually. The Michigan Department of Education communicates changes to this base amount on an annual basis to all affected schools.

In order to assist participants in the Child Nutrition Programs in determining which method of procurement, formal or informal, to use, a flow chart is attached. The chart is divided into two sections: one for the purchase of Food and/or Services, and one for the purchase of Supplies (Non-Food Items). Note that all participants follow the same thresholds for Food and/or Services. However, thresholds for Supplies (Non-Food Items) vary by type of organization.

As the flow chart indicates, there are two types of procurement methods that all participants in the Child Nutrition Programs must use when purchasing food, services, and/or supplies (non-food items): formal or informal.

**Formal Procurement** procedures are used to purchase food or services when the single transaction cost exceeds the small purchase threshold. Schools and non-school institutions must use a competitive process by issuing an Invitation for Bid (IFB) or a Request for Proposal (RFP) for any procurement over the small purchase threshold. Both must be formally advertised and contain reasonable bid specifications.

- **Invitation for Bid**, also called a sealed bid, is a formal competitive procurement procedure used to publicly solicit bids for securing food, services, and/or supplies that cost more than the small purchase threshold. A firm fixed price contract is awarded to the responsible bidder whose bid conforms to all of the material terms and conditions of the Invitation for Bid and is the lowest in price.
• Request for Proposal, also called a competitive proposal, is a procedure conducted where more than one source submits an offer for securing food, services, and/or supplies; that costs more than the small purchase threshold; and where either a fixed price or cost reimbursable contract is awarded. It is generally used when conditions are not appropriate for the use of sealed bids.

*Informal Procurement* procedures are used when the purchase of food, services, and/or supplies from a supplier (wholesaler, retailer, and/or vendor) for a single transaction is less than the small purchase threshold. The school and non-school institution must contact at least three known suppliers of the food, services, and/or supplies needed and obtain competitive price quotations. Bid quotes obtained by telephone should be followed up with a written document or communication from the vendor confirming items and prices discussed. **It is highly recommended that bid quotes be obtained in writing.** The negotiation of prices and terms with one or more of the suppliers contacted is permitted. All information and prices discussed must be documented in the program's procurement files.

Schools and non-school institutions must ensure that all suppliers receive the same information about the food, services, and/or supplies. To the extent possible, a comparison should be made of equivalent food, services, and/or supplies, and all suppliers should be informed of any special need that could affect the price. An example of a special need would be the delivery of the product to a specific building or kitchen. A sample procurement log and instructions for completing this log are provided to facilitate documentation of purchases using the informal procurement process by the school or non-school institution. (Refer to attachment – Instructions for Completing Informal Procurement Log.)

Informal and formal procurement must be done to assure compliance with all applicable federal regulations and guidance, including:

• Standard of conduct
• Open and full competition
• Equal employment opportunity
• Any price adjustments allowed for changes in the base price of a product are validated using standards (Consumer Price Index, Market Basket, etc.) specified in the bid. It should be noted that methods allowing “cost plus a percentage of cost” or “cost plus percentage of income” are not allowed
• Procedures are properly documented and all documentation is kept for three years after the close of the fiscal year or as long as there are unresolved audit findings or investigations related to those records
• Bid specifications do not limit supplier companies’ operation or structure based on geographic preference. However, the purchase of unprocessed, locally grown and locally raised agricultural products is exempt from the geographic preference requirement
• Any person that develops specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bid, requests for proposals, contract terms and conditions, or other documents is excluded from competing for contract awards resulting from that procurement.

Questions regarding this memo may be directed to the Child and Adult Care Food Program at 517-373-7391.

Attachments:  
Procurement Procedures Flow Chart  
Instructions for Completing Informal Procurement Log  
Informal Procurement Log
## Michigan Department of Education
Office of School Support Services

### Procurement Procedures Flow Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOD and/or SERVICES *</th>
<th>SUPPLIES (NON-FOOD ITEMS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Schools, Public School Academies, Intermediate School Districts, Non-Public Schools, and Non-School Institutions</td>
<td>Non-Public Schools and Non-School Institutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If purchase by single transaction is:

- **Less than $150,000, use informal method**
  - Contact three (3) known suppliers and document price quotes
  - Complete "Informal Procurement Log"
  - Select and notify suppliers according to informal procurement procedures in the agency's policy
  - Award contract according to pre-determined criteria

- **$150,000 or more, use formal method**
  - Determine bid specifications
  - Advertise

If purchase by single transaction is:

- **Less than $150,000, use informal method**
  - Contact three (3) known suppliers and document price quotes
  - Determine bid specifications
  - Complete "Informal Procurement Log"

- **$150,000 or more, use formal method**
  - Determine bid specifications
  - Advertise

If purchase by single transaction is:

- **Less than $22,386, use informal method**
  - Contact three (3) known suppliers and document price quotes
  - Determine bid specifications
  - Complete "Informal Procurement Log"

- **$22,386 or more, use formal method**
  - Determine bid specifications
  - Advertise

- **Select and notify suppliers according to informal procurement procedures in the agency's policy**
  - Issue Invitation For Bid (IFB) or Request For Proposal (RFP)
  - Select and notify suppliers according to informal procurement procedures in the agency's policy
  - Award contract according to pre-determined criteria

- **Select and notify suppliers according to formal procurement procedures**
  - Issue Invitation For Bid (IFB) or Request For Proposal (RFP)
  - Select and notify suppliers according to formal procurement procedures in the agency's policy
  - Award contract according to pre-determined criteria

*For the procurement of a food service management company or vended meal contracts, School Food Authorities are required to notify Michigan Department of Education before beginning formal and informal procurement to obtain prior written approval before issuing Request For Proposal or Request For Quotation and prior to executing final contracts.*

Updated: 10/22/12
Instructions for Completing Informal Procurement Log

The Informal Procurement Log is to be used to document all competitive price quotations during the informal procurement procedure. The institution must contact at least three known suppliers of the food, services, and/or supplies needed and obtain competitive price quotations. The negotiation of prices and terms with one or more of the suppliers contacted is permitted. All information and prices discussed should be followed up with a written document or communication from the vendor and must be documented in program files. It is highly recommended that bid quotes be obtained in writing. Institutions must ensure that all potential vendors receive the same information about the food, services, and/or supplies required. It is not permissible for the institution to split a purchase into smaller units or subgroups for the purpose of avoiding the formal procurement process. Procurement records must be kept for three years after the close of the fiscal year.

Attached to this document is an "Informal Procurement Log" that may be used or may guide you in developing your own form. Below is a sample of how this form can be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items to be Purchased</th>
<th>Quantity Expected to Buy</th>
<th>Vendor #1: XYZ Company</th>
<th>Vendor #2: ABC Company</th>
<th>Vendor #3: LMN Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unit Price</td>
<td>Extended Price (Quantity x Unit Price)</td>
<td>Unit Price</td>
<td>Extended Price (Quantity x Unit Price)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaches, diced 6/10 cans</td>
<td>25 cs</td>
<td>$20.19</td>
<td>$504.75</td>
<td>$18.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pears, sliced 6/10 cans</td>
<td>10 cs</td>
<td>$20.94</td>
<td>$209.40</td>
<td>$23.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pineapple, chunks 6/10 cans</td>
<td>15 cs</td>
<td>$25.98</td>
<td>$389.70</td>
<td>$28.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,103.85</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,122.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vendor Selected: [ ] [ ] [ ]

Date and Method of Contact:
- September 27: Faxed in price quotes (quote sheets must be attached).
- September 28: Price given per phone. Will confirm in writing.
- September 28: Visited store and obtained prices (price sheets must be attached).

Additional Notes:
- Best price but will need to drive 15 miles to pick up product. Estimate that this will raise costs by 10%, making this a more costly alternative than Vendor #2.
- Slightly higher price, but 5 minute drive from site.

Signature of person completing this form: [ ]

Date: 10/30/12

Although this example only compares three items, school and non-school institutions are expected to compare all the food, services, and/or supplies they plan to purchase.