

SUPPLIER BROCHURE

COSTARSTM



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of General Services
Bureau of Procurement
COSTARS Program

www.dgs.state.pa.us/costars

COSTARS™



The passage of the Commonwealth Procurement Code, Act 57 of 1998 (“Code”), permitted local public procurement units (LPPUs) and state-affiliated entities to engage in cooperative purchasing with the Commonwealth. Initially, the Department of General Services (DGS) limited the LPPUs’ cooperative purchasing options to certain statewide agency contracts.

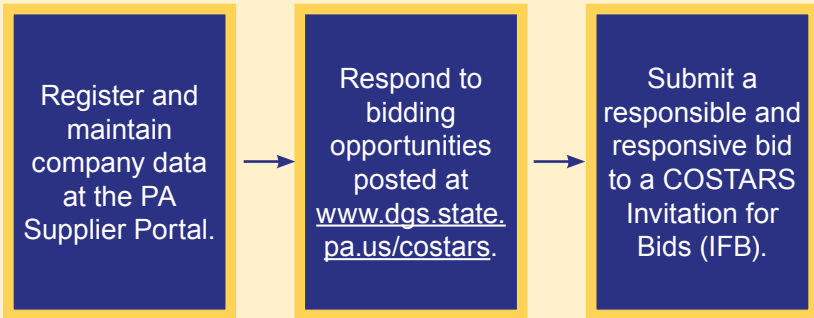
In 2004, the General Assembly passed an amendment to the Code (Act 77, 62 Pa. C.S. Sections 1902 and 2107) that expanded DGS’s responsibility and authority, requiring in some cases and, in other cases, permitting DGS to enter into contracts exclusively for the benefit of LPPUs and state-affiliated entities. DGS included these special non-Commonwealth agency contracts, known as “COSTARS-exclusive contracts,” as part of its new COSTARS Program, administered by the Bureau of Procurement. All DGS contracts through which LPPUs and state-affiliated entities may make purchases, including specific statewide agency contracts as well as COSTARS-exclusive contracts, are part of the COSTARS Program. Local purchasers using these contracts must be registered COSTARS members. Eligible LPPUs are defined as:

- Any political subdivision
- Any public authority
- Any tax exempt, nonprofit educational or public health institution or organization
- Any nonprofit fire, rescue, or ambulance company
- And, to the extent provided by law, any other entity that expends public funds for the procurement of supplies and services.

More than 7,400 eligible entities are currently taking advantage of existing Commonwealth and COSTARS contracts, including commodities such as furniture, LED traffic signals, office supplies, sodium chloride (road salt), vehicles, and IT Hardware.

It is estimated that COSTARS members spend more than \$550 million per year using the COSTARS program. Our goal is to produce contracts with competitive pricing, while providing increased opportunities for suppliers and eligible participants.

HOW TO BECOME A COSTARS-AUTHORIZED SUPPLIER



If your company has never been a supplier with the Commonwealth, you must register your business at the **PA Supplier Portal**. This allows you to search and respond to Commonwealth bidding opportunities and to manage your important account information. If your company already has a six-digit supplier number issued by the Commonwealth, you may already be registered with us.

To register, visit the PA Supplier Portal website at:

www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us



For assistance, call the Help Desk at
(717) 346-2676 or (877) 435-7363.

Bidding Opportunities

All bidding opportunities (with an estimated cost in excess of \$10,000) for supplies and services for Commonwealth agencies and COSTARS contracts are advertised online at:

www.emarketplace.state.pa.us

Opportunities to bid on COSTARS-exclusive contracts are advertised online at:

www.dgs.state.pa.us/costars

BENEFITS OF BEING A COSTARS SUPPLIER

- **Additional Business Opportunities**—There are more than 7,400 COSTARS members taking advantage of existing contracts by purchasing more than \$550 million in goods and services annually. A complete list of currently registered COSTARS members, with contact information, can be accessed by COSTARS suppliers through the COSTARS website.
- **COSTARS Brand**—COSTARS-authorized suppliers may use the trademarked COSTARS name and logo in their marketing materials, in accordance with contract terms and conditions.
- **Flexibility**—COSTARS-exclusive contracts do not dictate any specific lists of items. Rather, a bidder may offer any type or number of items within the scope of the contract. Resellers may bid as many product lines as their manufacturers authorize them to sell. A supplier may supplement its original bid to provide pricing for additional items within the scope of the contract or to remove items or services it no longer wishes to offer at any time. A supplier may adjust its pricing under certain circumstances in accordance with the contract terms and conditions. Suppliers may offer their products state-wide or limit their market area to certain counties.
- **Ancillary Services**—Certain COSTARS-exclusive contracts enable a supplier to offer ancillary services in conjunction with the products it provides to a purchaser. Sample ancillary services include, but are not limited to, installation, training, and post-warranty support and maintenance.
- **Dealer Network**—All COSTARS-exclusive contracts enable a supplier to offer contract items through its designated local dealer network.
- **Negotiate**—Suppliers are able to negotiate prices with members for less than bid prices.
- **Reduced Costs**—The COSTARS process eliminates the need and cost of a formal advertised bidding process. Local governmental units are required to pay within 30 days.



EXAMPLES OF AWARDED COSTARS-EXCLUSIVE CONTRACTS

- ★ Furniture
- ★ Food
- ★ IT Hardware
- ★ Copiers
- ★ Janitorial Supplies
- ★ Software
- ★ Vehicles
- ★ Office Supplies
- ★ Maintenance, Repair & Equipment
- ★ Recreation & Fitness Equipment
- ★ Waste, Recycling & Material Handling Containers
- ★ LED Signals
- ★ Graphic & Printing Services
- ★ Emergency Responder Loose Supplies
- ★ Medical Supplies
- ★ Groundskeeping (Grounds/Turf Maintenance)

Registering with the PA Department of State—If your business is not incorporated or registered in Pennsylvania, your company must register with the Department of State Corporation Bureau prior to being approved for a COSTARS or state agency contract.

Forms for registering with the DOS can be found on their website at <http://www.dos.state.pa.us/corps> (click on “Forms” sidebar link).

GENERAL PROVISIONS

- **Supplier Registration**—Suppliers are required to register their business in the PA Supplier Portal and receive a six-digit vendor number as a prerequisite to bidding on a state agency or COSTARS contract. The Supplier Registration process is available at www.pasupplierportal.state.pa.us. Registering and receiving a vendor number does not mean a supplier has been awarded a contract and is able to sell to COSTARS members. To become a COSTARS supplier, one needs to respond to bidding opportunities that are published on the DGS COSTARS website.
- **Bidding Opportunities**—All COSTARS-exclusive contract bidding opportunities are published on the DGS COSTARS website. DGS does not post on its website any one particular COSTARS member's request to contract for a specific purchase. Any contract that DGS bids as a COSTARS-exclusive contract is available for use to all COSTARS members.
- **Solicitations**—DGS uses the competitive sealed bidding process to establish COSTARS-exclusive contracts. Suppliers participate in the COSTARS Program as contractors by submitting a responsible and responsive bid to a COSTARS Invitation for Bids (IFB) to receive a COSTARS-exclusive contract award.
- **Facsimile Bids**—Facsimile bids are not accepted.
- **Electronic Bidding**—Electronic bidding is not available for COSTARS-exclusive contracts. However, the bidder is encouraged to include in its hard-copy (printed) bid package an electronic submission of all offered items and pricing on a diskette or CD.
- **Bid Opening Date**—All COSTARS-exclusive contract bidding opportunities are continuous. Continuous bidding permits prospective suppliers to submit a bid on a COSTARS-exclusive contract at any time, instead of waiting for a supplemental bidding opportunity. Bids will be accepted on any given Commonwealth business day. Any bid received after the Bid Opening Time (1:30 PM Eastern) will be opened on the next Commonwealth business day.
- **Multiple Awards**—DGS awards COSTARS-exclusive contracts to all responsible and responsive bidders. Because everyone who is responsible and responsive will be awarded a contract, DGS will not compare bidders' pricing submittals for COSTARS-exclusive procurements. Although pricing will not be a factor in awarding a contract, pricing may be considered when members select a contractor and place their orders. Consequently, each bidder should present their very best response to an IFB.

Administrative Fee - Suppliers are required to pay the appropriate fee in each contract period, for each COSTARS-exclusive contract, and according to the following criteria:

Bidder-Contractor Classification	Required Administrative Fee
Qualified Small Business , a business in the United States which is independently owned, employs no more than 100 full-time or full-time equivalent employees, and earns less than \$20 million in gross annual revenues (\$25 million in gross annual revenues for those businesses in the information technology sales or service business).	\$500
All Other Bidders-Contractors	\$1,500

Right-to-Know Law - The Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law, 65 P.S. §§ 67.101-3104, applies to COSTARS-exclusive contracts. This legislation requires most state contracts, including COSTARS-exclusive contracts, to be available for public viewing on an internet website. To comply with this legislation, COSTARS-exclusive contracts are published within the COSTARS Members Area of the COSTARS web-pages and are also accessible from the PA eMarketplace web-pages. This means that you are able to view your competitors' COSTARS-exclusive contracts and they are able to view yours.

Here is a sample of what some COSTARS suppliers are saying:

Vehicles Contract—We've used other cooperative contracts. They were cumbersome with a lot of red tape. Not so with COSTARS. We never expected this to be as successful as it has been. We love the COSTARS contract!

IT Hardware—Clients are more educated and aware about the program. Customers can't figure out what they are getting for the extra fees that other cooperative programs charge to both suppliers and purchasers. COSTARS is widely accepted as a good contract. Our clients love it. We love the flexibility of COSTARS that allows us to add products and to specialize in certain product applications.

For more information regarding
COSTARS, please contact:

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