

NIH RESOURCE SHEET FOR NON-ACQUISITION STAFF

What governs Federal Government purchasing?

Purchasing for the Federal Government is different than commercial purchasing since the Government has a responsibility to use taxpayer dollars wisely to achieve mission requirements while meeting public policy objectives. As a result, there are a myriad of statutes, executive orders, regulations, policies, procedures and instruction that govern Government purchasing. The government applies standardized procedures to buy the products and services it needs from responsible suppliers who meet certain qualifications at fair and reasonable prices. The Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) is the primary document for the codification and publication of uniform policies and procedures for acquisition. The HHS Acquisition Regulation (HHSAR) is an agency acquisition regulation that implements or supplements the FAR. NIH also has specific policies and procedures.

NIH Acquisition Structure

The Office of Acquisition and Logistics Management (OALM), under the direction of Ms. Diane Frasier, OALM Director and Head of the Contracting Activity (HCA), provides leadership, guidance and oversight for acquisition and logistics to the 27 Institutes and Centers which comprise the NIH. OALM works in conjunction with the ten (10) operating Offices of Acquisitions, which carry out the Research & Development and large station support contracting, and the Delegated Acquisition Community that performs day-to-day purchases.

Are there thresholds I should be aware of when requesting supplies or services for my office/lab?

Yes, there are several thresholds that regulate government purchases. Most orders will fall under the micro-purchase threshold (MPT). The micro-purchase threshold means \$10,000 for most orders, \$2,500 for services requiring wage determinations (Service Contract Labor Standards) and \$2,000 for construction orders. Orders over these established thresholds require additional documentation. Additionally, certain purchases may be subject to the fair opportunity procedures for awards exceeding \$3,500. Work with your designated acquisition professional for these types of orders. For specific questions, please reach out to your Delegated Office of Acquisition or [servicing Office of Acquisition](#).

How do I request supplies or services for my office/lab?

IMPORTANT: Only a contracting officer or purchase card holder, acting within their delegation of procurement authority may contact a vendor to place orders on behalf of the government.

The process for requesting supplies or services usually involves completing a purchase request then obtaining the necessary approvals. Approvals will include a programmatic needs justification and then a budget or finance officer approving and certifying funds. Once the purchase request has been approved it will be assigned to an acquisition professional for processing.

Basic steps in the process include:

- Identify the needed supplies or services which must be a necessary expense of the government.
- Check within your office, the NIH Supply Center and surplus to see if the item(s) are already available.
- Check required sources to see if supplies and services can be obtained from or through mandatory government sources (See [Required and Priority Sources and Pre-Negotiated Instruments](#) list)
- Complete purchase request or follow procedures for requesting orders within your office/lab.
 - The purchase request must contain a purchase description or Statement of Work, requested delivery date or period of performance and a Certification of Funds.
 - Depending on the specific requirement, additional documentation, coordination, clearances and/or approvals may be required.
 - Under no circumstances may requirements be broken down into several purchases to avoid competition or thresholds. Splitting requirements is prohibited.

September 25, 2019

- Wait until the contracting officer or purchase card holder completes the procurement process and issues an award document or places the order. Verify the period of performance or delivery date as stated on the award document so you know when to expect delivery or the service start date.
- Once you have received, inspected and accepted the goods or services, complete and sign a receiving report and provide the receiving report to the person who placed the order for you.

This process may vary in your specific office, so work with your acquisition professional for specifics.

What do I need to do once I receive my supplies or services?

Once products have been delivered (received) or the services have been performed, you need to inspect and accept the product or service to ensure that the Government received what it ordered. Acceptance is documented on a receiving report. The receiving report may be issued using the OF-347, packing slip, [or other report form](#), as long as all of the required elements are included. Please refer to this [receiving training](#) resource link. The receiving report must be completed and forwarded to your contracting officer or purchase card holder within 5 working days of receipt of the item or service.

Failure to complete receiving in a timely manner could result in the following:

- Government giving up inspection rights
- Improper payments
- Penalties and interest charges for late payments
- Vendors placing credit holds on NIH accounts
- Vendors not accepting orders due to delinquent payments

HELPFUL LINKS

A repository of the regulations governing federal purchasing

[FEDERAL ACQUISITION REGULATION](#)

A repository of the Department's acquisition policies and regulations

[HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ACQUISITION REGULATION \(HHSAR\)](#)

The NIH Office of Acquisition and Logistics Management (OALM)

[NIH OFFICE OF ACQUISITION AND LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT](#)

Required and Priority Sources and Pre-Negotiated Instruments list

[LIST OF REQUIRED SOURCES AND PRIORITY SOURCES AND PRE-NEGOTIATED INSTRUMENTS](#)

For simplified acquisition policy questions:

[Acquisition Services and Review Branch \(ASRB\)](#)

[Simplified Acquisition Helpline](#) 301-496-0400

For purchase card questions:

[Purchase Card Program](#)

[Purchase Card Helpline](#) 301-435-6606

For BPA questions:

[Blanket Purchase Agreement \(BPA\) Program](#)

[BPA Helpline](#) 301-496-5212

For Property questions:

[Personal Property Section](#)

Disclaimer: The information on this resource sheet is for general information only. Every purchase is different and must be evaluated and processed according to its own merits. For specific questions, please reach out to your Delegated Office of Acquisition or [servicing Office of Acquisition](#).