

## **Frequently Asked Questions:** **Broome County Purchasing**

**Q: Do I need to sign up for Empire State Purchasing Group to receive Broome County bid documents?**

**A:** Yes. Broome County will only post its official bids, requests for proposals (RFPs), requests for qualifications, and award information on Empire State Purchasing Group.

**Q: Is there a link to register for Empire State Purchasing Group on the Broome County website?**

**A:** Yes. <http://www.gobroomecounty.com/purchasing>. From there, you can click on “Empire State Purchasing Group” on the main page, or click [here](#).

**Q: Does it cost money to register for Empire State Purchasing Group?**

**A:** There is a free version and a paid version. The free (search only) version allows you to view and download all of Broome County’s bid documents. The paid (standard) version is \$89/year and sends you email notifications about bids that may interest you. Instructions and more information about the different versions go to [www.gobroomecounty.com/purchasing](http://www.gobroomecounty.com/purchasing) and click on the “Vendor Resources” tab on the left hand side. The first link on the page instructs you on how to register as a vendor and provides additional information for both versions.

**Q: How do I find Broome County bid documents on Empire State Purchasing Group?**

**A:** Once you register as a vendor, click “Open Bids by Agency” under the “Participation Agency Bids” header. Click “Broome County”. Here, you can view all of the open bids for Broome County.

**Q: What information is needed to register for Empire State Purchasing Group?**

**A:** Federal tax ID or Social Security is required, along with general company information, and a valid email address.

**Q: Are site visits and pre-bid conferences mandatory?**

*A: No. However, vendors are strongly encouraged to attend. Site visits and pre-bid conferences offer a time to ask questions and get a better understanding of the specifications.*

**Q: Does Broome County accept bids electronically?**

*A: No.*

**Q: How can bid documents be obtained?**

*A: Broome County posts its bid documents on the Empire State Purchasing Group website ([www.empirestatebidsystem.com](http://www.empirestatebidsystem.com)). If it is not possible for you to sign up for Empire State Purchasing Group, then there are copies of the bid documents available at the county office building.*

**Q: What are the differences between a bid, quote, or RFP?**

*A: Bids are formal documents governed by NYS municipal law. Quotes have lower dollar thresholds, are less formal and are regulated by County Purchasing procedures. RFPs (request of proposal) are a formal invitation from the County to provide a solution to a problem or a need of the county. An award from an RFP is made based on a committee determination using weighed criteria as stated in the specification document, which usually includes experience, qualifications, proposed plan to provide service and price/fee.*

**Q: Where are legal notices published for Broome County?**

*A: In the Binghamton Press on Wednesdays. Notifications of bids are also posted on the Broome County website, [www.gobroomecounty.com/purchasing](http://www.gobroomecounty.com/purchasing), and NYS contract reporter.*

**Q: Can someone obtain past bid results?**

**A:** *Yes. Unofficial bid results are posted to the county website and the Empire State Purchasing Group website. A FOIL request can also be made using the county website. Official bid results are posted once the award is made.*

**Q: Do municipalities have to purchase off State Contracts?**

**A:** *No. The county and other municipalities by law have the option to buy off State contracts as well as other government or municipal bids if permitted by the originator's specifications.*