

have become obsolete and unusable, when the estimated value shall exceed ~~Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00)~~ TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$2,500.00) shall be sold by formal written contract to the highest responsible bidder after public notice inviting proposals. The method and extent of notice involving purchases or sales shall be prescribed in detail in the rules and regulations adopted pursuant to this subtitle. Except for emergency purchases, no order for purchase of supplies or contractual services as provided in this Section, shall be issued until and unless the Director of Finance shall first certify that funds for the designated purpose are available. No contract or purchase shall be subdivided to avoid the requirements of this Section. In addition, the following procedure shall be observed in the award of formal contracts estimated to exceed ~~Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00)~~ TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$2,500.00) in value, except as provided herein:

(1) Newspaper notice, when used, shall include a general description of the articles to be purchased or sold, shall state where bid blanks and specifications may be secured, and shall state the time and place for opening bids.

(2) The purchasing agent shall also solicit sealed bids from all responsible prospective suppliers who have requested their names to be added to the "bidder's list" which the purchasing agent shall maintain, by sending them a copy of such newspaper notice or such other written notice as will acquaint the supplier or interested party with the proposed purchase or sale. In all cases, regardless of estimated value, notices of pending purchases or sale shall be posted on a bulletin board located in the main offices of the purchasing agent; with a permanent notice posted on the official County Bulletin Board advising where such notices can be found.

(3) It shall be the duty of the purchasing agent to discourage uniform bidding by every possible means and to endeavor to obtain as full and open competition as possible on all purchases and sales. Accordingly, the purchasing agent shall require each bidder to accompany his bid with a statement made under oath that he has not been a party with other bidders to an agreement to bid a fixed or uniform price. Violation of such statement shall render void the bid of such bidders. Any disclosure to or acquisition by a competitive bidder, in advance of the opening of the bids, of the terms or conditions of the bid submitted by another competitor shall render the bid of such bidder or bidders void. Any violation of this subsection shall constitute an offense punishable upon conviction by imprisonment for a period not to exceed six (6) months or a fine not to exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) or both.

(4) Bids shall be submitted and sealed AND SHALL REMAIN SEALED UNTIL THE ADVERTISED OPENING DATE, to the purchasing agent and identified as bids on the envelope. When deemed necessary by the purchasing agent, deposits shall be prescribed in the public notices inviting bids. Unsuccessful bidders shall be entitled to a return of their bid deposits where the agent has required such. In any case, where a successful bidder fails to execute a contract within ten (10) days after the award, his bid deposit shall be taken and considered as liquidated damages, and not as a penalty, for failure of such bidder to execute the contract. Upon the proper execution of such contract by a successful bidder, his bid deposit shall be returned to him.

(5) A tabulation of all bids received shall be posted on the bulletin board maintained in the main offices of the purchasing agent until the