COSCDA
Council of State Community Development Agencies

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Sharpening Procurement Practices

Procurement to Meet Program Needs

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What Effective Procurement Requires

Clear expectations help proposers compete and grantees select the right partner

Define need	Align the team	Set evaluation criteria	Achieve outcomes

What grantees need	What proposers need
• Qualified partners and timely delivery • Defensible selections • Strong performance	• Clear scope and outcomes • Transparent evaluation criteria • Realistic requirements

The lowest price isn't always the best. Scrutinize pricing both above and below your independent cost estimate.

Procurement Is a Lifecycle, Not a One-Time Event

Needs in Year 5 or Year 10 rarely look like needs in Year 1

Many CDBG-DR grants are active for 7 to 15 years



Manage a procurement portfolio that evolves with recovery, not a series of one-off procurements

Contract Decisions as Program Need Evolve

Use an Existing Vehicle

- Consider state contracts or MSAs
- Confirm scope alignment and federal funding eligibility
- Document task order process and selection

Change Orders and Amendments

- Change is normal, but there's a risk with scope creep
- Assess the proposed change and contract scope
- Evaluate performance
- Document the rationale

Re-Procure

- Contracts will expire before programs end
- Plan before contracts expire
- Assess changing program needs
- Plan for transitions

Is an Existing Contract the Right Fit?

Potential benefits

- Faster mobilization
- Access to specialized expertise
- Flexible task-order assignments

Checks to reduce risk

- ✓ Review the original procurement
- ✓ Confirm federal-fund eligibility
- ✓ Verify scope alignment
- ✓ Document selection and cost
- ✓ Plan ongoing performance monitoring

Be prepared for HUD monitoring and OIG audits. Document why the contract fits and how you selected it.

When to Amend and When to Re-Procure

Amend within scope

- Evaluate performance
- Confirm the change fits the scope
- Document the rationale
- Track cumulative cost growth

Consider re-procurement

The change becomes new work
The contract is nearing expiration
Program needs or milestones shift

Plan the transition early

- ✓ Track expirations and new needs
- ✓ Build transition terms into contracts
- ✓ Maintain a procurement pipeline
- ✓ Preserve decisions and knowledge
- ✓ Align timing to program milestones

Balancing Oversight and Performance Flexibility

Concentrating work with one vendor can limit options if there are performance concerns

1. **Fewer Contracts Can Mean Greater Dependence**
   One vendor may simplify coordination, but assigning it most of the work can make a performance problem harder to isolate and a transition more disruptive.

2. **Defined Scopes Preserve Options**
   Bundle related tasks around clear outcomes without placing every function with one provider. Separate vendor roles let grantees address weak performance without replacing the entire team.

3. **Monitoring Outside of Implementation**
   Perform monitoring separately. Separate monitoring reduces the risk of a contractor reviewing its own decisions.

Bundling many different tasks in a procurement can limit competition

Procurement Is a Team Sport

Align on goals, timelines, budgets, and performance before the solicitation

Align on Goals
Define success and outcomes, not just deliverables; tie evaluation criteria to program objectives

Communicate Timelines
Share program and funding deadlines

Set Budget Expectations
Discuss funding limits early; use market data and cost estimates

Build the Scope Together
Program defines the need; procurement ensures competition and contractibility

Manage Change Together
Coordinate on amendments, change orders, and re-procurements

Focus on Outcomes
Success is delivering program goals, not just awarding a contract

A procurement team cannot build the right procurement without understanding the program

Key Communication Checkpoints

Program and procurement should connect at every stage

1 Plan
What problem are we solving? What does success look like?

2 Scope & Budget
What's truly needed? Is it realistic for the funding?

3 Schedule
When must the contractor start? What milestones drive it?

4 Solicit & Evaluate
Do criteria reflect program goals and balance quality and cost?

5 Award & Mobilize
Are deliverables, reporting, and performance standards clear?

6 Implement
Is performance on track? Have conditions changed?

7 Modify
Is the change within scope, or is a new procurement needed?

8 Close Out
Is contract scope complete and deliverables shared? Do files contain all documentation?

A Stronger Next Procurement

Before issuing your next solicitation, review it from three perspectives:

1

As a Proposer

Is the scope clear enough to propose the right team, a realistic approach, and reliable pricing?

2

As an Evaluator

Will the criteria help distinguish the best-qualified approach from the best-written proposal or lowest price?

3

As a Contract Manager

Are the expectations specific enough to assess performance?

Questions?



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