

Frequently Asked Questions to 4/15 Preferred Supplier Contracts for Purchases

First, I would like to thank everyone for reading the Preferred Supplier Agreement memo of 4/15 and for responding with your suggestions and concerns. I am confident after communicating with many of you that our goals are aligned and that further work is necessary to ensure the preferred supplier partners the university designates deliver the value intended.

Secondly, allow me to clarify some of the frequently asked questions/concerns as presented.

1. **Can I suggest other suppliers or other categories of spend for preferred consideration?**

Answer: Yes, we will continue to add categories/suppliers and refine existing categories strategically by adding, changing or in some instances deleting suppliers, where appropriate.

2. **What if the item I need to purchase is not available from a preferred supplier?**

Answer: Continue to make your purchase as you have been and forward this information to purchasing so that we may investigate adding to a preferred supplier or negotiate with new supplier.

3. **I can get my item cheaper elsewhere rather than from the preferred supplier.**

Response: We understand and acknowledge there will be instances in which this will occur. This initiative will be highly successful by jointly working together to identify price sensitivity issues. We ask that if the price differential is not significant, that you purchase with the preferred supplier. When we can demonstrate aggregation of spend over time, we can then negotiate further cost considerations with these suppliers. For large price disparities, we ask you to bring those instances to our attention. If we cannot resolve with the preferred supplier, we will work with the departments on alternative sources.

4. **Are these the only suppliers I can use?**

Answer: No, there are several categories of spend not represented currently on the website. As we work together to identify category/contract gaps, we'll continue to add information as agreements are negotiated and finalized. Continue to send forward information of who you currently use and purchasing will work on vetting the supplier and current contract status.

5. **Are grants excluded from this requirement to purchase from preferred suppliers?**

Answer: There are no exclusions from this requirement. All funding sources should be purchasing their items from the preferred agreements, where applicable.

6. **What if I have a need to purchase specialized research supplies?**

Answer: If a preferred supplier cannot be utilized, then continue to purchase your specialized supplies from the existing vendor. Purchasing will be working on identifying additional categories of supplies in which to negotiate agreements.

Special Note: There is a large competitive bid event occurring at the state level for scientific supplies covering several categories. When this event concludes and information becomes available, we will add these options to our website.

7. I have concerns about the preferred supplier chosen as I have had issues with them in the past.

Response: Please bring any supplier concerns to purchasing's attention. We will work to understand the issues and address them with the supplier, where appropriate.

The use of preferred supplier agreements is a State of Ohio initiative aimed at efficiencies and cost savings. The University of Toledo supports this initiative. As indicated above, we acknowledge that not all purchases will fit within the framework of designated preferred suppliers we have initially established and encourage you to continue to feed information our way. By working together we will strengthen the buying power of the university.

Lastly, please consider having me visit your next staff meeting. I welcome the opportunity to further understand your buying needs and to share examples as to why we must pursue a preferred vendor strategy.

Jen