

IS STATEWIDE CONTRACTING RIGHT FOR YOU



Have you ever considered doing business with the State? The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Operational Services Division (OSD) establishes and manages Statewide Contracts for goods and services used by Executive Departments and many other public purchasing entities. With more than 100 [contracts](#) and hundreds of thousands of items across a wide spectrum of categories, there is ample opportunity for businesses to profit. There are many reasons to pursue Statewide Contracting and many resources to help you succeed. Statewide Contracting, however, also requires time, has defined reporting obligations, and may require you to work with a partner to meet a Supplier Diversity Program plan. Read on for some considerations if your company is contemplating becoming a Statewide Contractor.



OPERATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

WHY BECOME A STATEWIDE CONTRACTOR?

Benefits of Statewide Contracting

One of the main benefits to becoming a Statewide Contractor is access to new buyers. Massachusetts Executive Departments are required to use [Statewide Contracts](#) (SWCs) for available goods and services purchases as outlined by state law. In addition to Executive Departments, other “eligible entities” or public purchasing organizations may purchase from SWCs. These eligible entities typically include:

- » Cities, towns, districts, counties, and other political subdivisions;
- » Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches, including all Departments and elected offices;
- » Independent public authorities, commissions, and quasi-public departments like water commissions and transportation authorities;
- » Local public libraries, public school districts, and charter schools;
- » Public hospitals owned by the Commonwealth;
- » Public institutions of higher education;
- » Public purchasing cooperatives;
- » Non-profit diverse organizations specified by the Commonwealth;
- » Other states and territories; and
- » Other entities designated by the State Purchasing Agent.



What's Available on Statewide Contract

The Operational Services Division administers more than 100 [contracts](#) for goods and services. Categories include:

- » Clothing and footwear;
- » Energy, utilities, and fuel;
- » Facilities maintenance and repair;
- » Food and groceries;
- » Green cleaning products;
- » Healthcare and lab products;
- » Information technology hardware, software, services, and telecommunications;
- » Janitorial services;
- » Landscaping services and products;
- » Medical;
- » Office and educational supplies;
- » Playground equipment and services;
- » Professional services;
- » Public safety, traffic safety, and disaster management;
- » Security;
- » Tradespersons; and
- » Vehicles, transportation, and road maintenance.

New contracts are created and negotiated on a regular basis and existing contracts occasionally reopen to accept new bids, thus providing an [opportunity](#) for you to bid on a contract and potentially receive an award.

The [COMMBUYS](#) Market Center is the Commonwealth's online procurement platform. To bid on contracts and respond to requests from buyers, all vendors must have an up-to-date profile in COMMBUYS which takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. Be sure to have your legal business name and Tax ID on hand before beginning the registration process, as you'll need to enter this information during [registration](#).

Setting up your COMMBUYS profile also requires the selection of commodity codes [United Nations Standard Products and Services Codes (UNSPSCs)] that match the goods and services your business offers. Selecting the proper UNSPSCs is important since you will receive email notifications when new bids for those commodities are posted in COMMBUYS. For assistance in setting up your COMMBUYS profile or other COMMBUYS requests, the COMMBUYS Help Desk is available Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 888-MA-State or OSDHelpDesk@mass.gov.

POINTS OF CONSIDERATION

Time

Be prepared to commit adequate resources, mainly in the form of time over the life of the contract, on the basic maintenance of your agreement in addition to the time it takes to fulfill your contract. When it comes time to bid on a contract, you will need to dedicate time to produce price lists, contact lists, review the Commonwealth's contract terms, including the Terms and Conditions, Standard Contract Form, RFR terms, and more.

Being awarded a SWC does not guarantee that you will receive business on that contract; rather, you have completed the first step in doing business with the State. Generally speaking, you now must compete with other awarded contractors on the contract and market your business to buyers. We recommend attending the "Selling to the State" [training](#) course to learn tips on how best to connect with eligible buyers.

Reporting

Depending on the contract, Statewide Contractors may be required to submit periodic reports, which may include:

- » Administration Fee Report: a 1% charge of the payments received from Statewide Contract business each quarter;
- » Contract Sales; and
- » Supplier Diversity Program Report; as examples.

Tech-savviness

As mentioned previously, the first step in contracting with the State is to register your business in COMMBUYS. While you are able to view all open bids without a COMMBUYS account, your business must be [registered in COMMBUYS](#) to respond to bids of interest.

Prevailing Wage Requirements

Some service categories, including Tradespersons, moving, and cleaning companies, must adhere to the prevailing wage requirements established by the Division of Labor Standards (DLS), which would be provided by the buyer in advance of starting work from the contract.

Supplier Diversity Plan (SDP) Commitments

When bidding on a SWC Contract, prospective contractors must indicate the percent of sales they commit to spending with Commonwealth-certified, diverse (Woman-owned, Minority-owned, Veteran-owned, etc.) companies. Even if the contractor itself is a certified business, it may not reference its own sales as qualifying SDP spend.

Please be aware that the goods and services purchased toward the [SDP commitment](#) do not have to be related to the services you provide to the Commonwealth, rather it may be goods and services that your business purchases on a regular basis from outside vendors. Some examples include:

- » Landscaping and grounds maintenance;
- » Vehicle and equipment maintenance;
- » Florists;
- » Printing – business cards, stationery, folders;
- » Promotional materials such as pens, giveaway items, name badges;
- » Cleaning, cleaning equipment, and cleaning equipment maintenance;
- » Catering and food service disposable items such as paper plates, napkins, containers;
- » Electrical, plumbing, and building services;
- » Waste disposal, recycling, and shredding;
- » Clothing, uniforms, footwear, and accessories;
- » Security equipment and supplies; and/or
- » Information Technology services or supplies.

It takes time to find these companies and build these relationships. The Supplier Diversity Office maintains a [database of certified diverse and small businesses](#) on its website, mass.gov/sdo. Use this database to find potential partners or subcontractors and start building those relationships early on, so that there's no last-minute scramble to meet the SDP requirements at the end of the fiscal year.

Staff Resources

Personnel must be available to manage all aspects of the contract, including sales tracking and reporting, to remain in compliance with SWC terms.

ALTERNATIVES TO STATEWIDE CONTRACTING

If it appears that Statewide Contracting might not be a good fit for your business after all, you may want to consider the following:

Certification as a Diverse Business

Visit mass.gov/sdo/start to complete a short assessment to determine if you qualify as a diverse business. The [Supplier Diversity Office](#) recognizes the following types of diverse businesses:

- » Minority-Owned;
- » Woman-Owned;
- » Veteran-Owned;
- » Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned;
- » Portuguese-Owned;
- » Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender-Owned;
- » Disadvantaged-Owned; and
- » Disability-Owned



Subcontracting

If you qualify as a diverse business, you may be able to partner with awarded contractors to fulfill their Supplier Diversity Plan commitments. These partnerships may be ancillary (providing goods or services for their company that are unrelated to the contract) or subcontracting (providing goods or services for a particular part of their contract).

Reach out to the awarded contractors on the Statewide Contract for which you had contemplated bidding. It may be that you can help them fulfill part of their contracted goods or services in a way that makes them more competitive.

Departmental Contracts

For goods and services not available on SWC, Executive Departments may opt to issue a Departmental Contract to obtain those items. Additionally, many local government organizations (cities and towns) post their bid opportunities in [COMMBUYS](#), though they are not required to do so. If your vendor profile is up to date with the proper UNSPSCs, you will be alerted to matching bids that are posted on COMMBUYS, regardless of the contract type.

Small Business Purchasing Program (SBPP)

The goal of the [SBPP](#) is to provide special consideration to eligible small businesses when Executive Departments conduct procurements for goods and services not available on SWC with total values of \$250,000 or less on an annualized basis. The SBPP does not apply to construction projects. The Commonwealth's Executive Departments are required to award contracts to SBPP-participating small businesses if their bids meet or exceed the solicitation/bid criteria. Additionally, Executive Departments have an annual benchmark spending goal of 3.3% with SBPP members.

To participate in the SBPP, you must complete your business registration in COMMBUYS, accept the COMMBUYS participation agreement, and meet certain eligibility requirements.

Resources Available for Success

The OSD website provides a wealth of information for everything Statewide Contract-related. [Contract User Guides](#) are available for each contract, outlining the details of the contract and how buyers may use the contract to purchase goods and services. They are an excellent resource for vendors becoming familiar with Statewide Contracting to learn the process and language commonly found in contracts that match your category of business.

The [OSD website](#) also is home to the SWC Index and Procurement Schedule. The [SWC Index](#) allows users to search contracts by type, end date, and a number of other filters. The [Procurement Schedule](#) outlines the contracts that are newly established, being renewed or extended, those that are being rebid as new contracts, and those that are ending. The Procurement Schedule also contains the contact information of the Contract Manager for each contract. Prospective bidders always should consult [COMMBUYS](#) for current bid information and dates.

[Free training](#) is available for all prospective vendors and courses are offered through online webinars and pre-recorded webcasts covering topics such as COMMBUYS Essentials for Sellers, How to Locate and Respond to Bids, and Connecting Your Business to the Commonwealth.