

GENERAL LETTER NUMBER: 71

Authorization:

Pursuant to the authority granted in Title 4a, Chapter 58, of the Connecticut General Statutes, as it may be amended from time to time, purchases of goods and/or services costing less than \$200,000 may be made, subject to the limitations set forth in sections a) through c) below, without prior and specific approval of the Department of Administrative Services (DAS), as appropriate, **provided that a DAS contract does not exist for the goods and/or services being acquired.**

Additionally, purchases of goods and/or services specifically listed in section d) below may be made, as appropriate, **provided that a DAS contract does not exist for the goods and/or services being acquired.** Non-competitive purchases, as defined in section “d” below, are not subject to any monetary or date limitations.

THE AUTHORITY GRANTED BY THIS GENERAL LETTER 71 TO AGENCIES IS PERMISSIVE, NOT MANDATORY; DAS WILL SOLICIT QUOTATIONS, BIDS OR PROPOSALS ON BEHALF OF ANY AGENCY UPON REQUEST.

Application:

a) Minor nonrecurring purchases of any type of goods or services up to \$5,000 (annually, per item) ., also known as direct or open market purchases, may be made without obtaining quotations or bids.

b) Purchases over \$5,000 and up to \$50,000 (annually, per item) must be based upon, when possible, at least three written quotations or bids, from responsible and qualified sources of supply.

c) Purchases over \$50,000 and less than \$200,000 (annually, per item) must be based upon, when possible, at least three written quotations or bids, from responsible and qualified sources of supply. Agencies must also publish their request for quotation or bid notice on the State Contracting Portal in accordance with the provisions in Connecticut General Statutes Section 4e-13. Instruction on posting bids to the State Contracting Portal can be found here: <https://portal.ct.gov/DAS/Procurement/Contracting/DAS-Procurement-Biznet-Instructions-to-Post-Solicitations>

d) The nature of certain purchases preclude competition and may be purchased directly without obtaining competitive quotations or bids. Such non-competitive purchases are limited to the following items only:

- Seminar or Certification Fees for Employees (i.e., Skill Path, Fred Pryor (or other local) seminars and/or professional designation/certification type trainings or workshops)
- Rental of conference and/or hotel facilities
- Publications
- Subscriptions (including electronic subscriptions)
- Advertising (including online and/or social media advertising fees)
- Dues, Fees, Tuitions, Honorariums, Sponsorships, Mentorships
- Certain public utility services (electric generation services, electric distribution services; water services, and natural gas distribution services)
- Cable and satellite television equipment and services (excluding internet services and excluding telephone services)
- Renewal of software licenses and Renewal of software maintenance
- Postage
- Licenses (*excluding software licenses*)
- Eyeglasses
- Dentures
- Hearing aids and hearing aid supplies
- Transportation of persons and freight
- Prosthetics
- Rehabilitation technology and placement equipment

d) Continued

- Donations to charitable organizations and scholarship funds
- Gift cards
- Exhibit space and booths at trade-shows/conventions or other events
- Hiring of guest speakers (i.e., notable persons or personalities) for conferences and/or other events
- Catering services
- Car wash services
- Florist services
- Payments of parking fees (including validations)
- Law enforcement service dogs
- Products or services from professional associations to which the agency is a member
- Railroad or utility flagging services, materials and/or installation of materials for railroad and utility services required by the Department of Transportation
- Reimbursements to educational institutions (i.e., regional education service centers) for training, professional development and program evaluation services required by the Department of Education
- Purchases by the Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) and Department of Correction Enterprise Program of commodities for resale to BESB and DOC Enterprise customers
- Historical document conservation treatment
- Purchases by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection of various services to support the maintenance and operation of “undercover” residential homes throughout the state.
- Expert Witnesses
- Purchases by the Department of Economic and Community Development of Fine Arts and Fine Art related services

No annual limits or restrictions are established for the specific categories of items listed in this section. Upon the request of one or more agencies, DAS may supplement on a case-by-case basis the above categories of items and issue a revised General Letter 71 evidencing the change.

e) Emergency repairs and emergency purchases costing up to \$200,000 may be made without obtaining quotations or bids (excluding real property). An “emergency” exists where the normal operation of an agency (or portions thereof), the health or safety of any person, or the preservation of property would be seriously impaired, threatened or jeopardized if immediate action were not taken to correct the situation. All emergency purchases exceeding \$200,000 must be directed to DAS for processing through a Standardization Transaction request. Such emergency requests must be submitted in writing to DAS for approval. **Purchases for repairs, changes or renovations to real property must be made in accordance with the Department of Administrative Services/Division of Construction Services (“DAS/DCS”) guidelines and procedures for Agency Administered Projects.**

f) Purchase transactions between or among State agencies do not require competitive quotes and are not subject to annual limits or restrictions.

g) Agencies may purchase goods or contractual services from the United States Government, a federal agency, and any state government or any of their political subdivisions without obtaining quotes or competitive bids and without being subject to annual limits or restrictions. Agencies may not purchase from persons or entities who have contracts with any department, agency or instrumentality of the federal government (including cooperative purchase agreements and the use of federal contracts) without first obtaining the written approval from DAS, as appropriate.

h) Agencies are required to ensure that purchases for equipment or appliances meet or exceed the federal energy conservation standards and meet or exceed the federal Energy Star standards consistent with Connecticut General Statutes Section 4a-67c.

Review

An agency’s failure to follow any of the terms or conditions in this General Letter 71 may result in DAS rescinding the agency’s authority to purchase under this General Letter until such time as DAS is satisfied that the failure is not likely to recur. DAS may review any purchases made under this authority at any time. Agencies must retain copies of their request for quotations or invitations to bids, purchase orders, specifications, proposals and all corresponding documentation for the normal legal retention period or as otherwise provided for in Connecticut General Statutes Sections 11-8 and 11-8a. Agencies should not send to DAS copies of these documents unless otherwise requested. Agencies shall comply with Connecticut General Statute Section 4a-52a(e), as it may be amended from time to time, and all other applicable statutes, regulations and procedures..

Limitations

1. Agencies may not use the authority granted by this General Letter to purchase goods and contractual services that are already the subject of existing DAS contracts. Those goods and contractual services must be purchased against those existing contracts.
2. Agencies may not use the authority granted by this General Letter to enter into Personal Services Agreements or Purchase of Services Agreements.
3. Agencies may not issue Requests for Proposals (“RFPs”) to make purchases of goods and contractual services unless previously so authorized in writing by DAS for each particular purchase.
4. As used in this General Letter, the terms “purchase” and “purchases” shall also mean “rent” and “rentals” (excluding purchases and rentals of real property).
5. When issuing bids or RFPs, agencies must follow all of the applicable requirements found in the DAS statutes, regulations and procedures governing purchases.
6. Agencies shall only allow purchasing under GL71 by staff holding any of the “Fiscal/Administrative” series of state job classifications.
7. Agencies shall establish procedures for Purchasing Card (p-card) holders that do not hold one of the above mentioned job classifications to ensure the p-card holders are trained in the use of state contracts and GL71, and to have an oversight and/or approval process in place for p-card purchases. This p-card oversight and/or approval process should be handled by agency fiscal staff who have sufficient purchasing experience and expertise.
8. All information technology purchases are required to have the approval of the DAS, Bureau of Enterprise Systems and Technology (BEST) prior to the purchase being made, regardless if it’s a GL71 or a contract purchase.

Other Information:

To obtain instructions and assistance in publishing your bid notices under the authority of this General Letter or for other related questions, please contact the DAS Procurement Division at 860-713-5095.