



Spring Spending: Your contracts are ready

How National Joint Powers Alliance® (NJPA) awards contracts to its vendors



Chris Robinson, NJPA procurement manager, shares insight into NJPA's process for finding the best possible solutions for its members.

As we enter the spring months, many higher education institutions look to maximize what's left of their budget. This can be a good time to place orders for items your campus has been considering for a while – things like furniture or flooring. It can also be an opportunity to stock up on bulk consumables, like janitorial and maintenance supplies. Whatever the need – big or small – National Joint Powers Alliance®

(NJPA) likely has an awarded vendor on contract who can help you place an order faster than the traditional procurement process.

“We exist to serve our members,” says Chris Robinson, NJPA procurement manager. “For our Procurement Team, this means conducting national solicitations on behalf of our members to save them time, energy, and resources once they're ready to buy. Our focus is on bringing our members the best solutions possible so they can focus on what matters most – their students and staff.”

NJPA achieves this by working with the best vendors. Robinson shares insight into how NJPA ensures this.

Q: How many awarded vendors work with NJPA?

A: NJPA has 275 contracts with 260 awarded vendors who provide everything from pencils and pens; to technology, turf, and even vehicles. NJPA also has 243 Indefinite Quantity Construction (eziQC) contracts in 15 states, allowing colleges and universities of all sizes and types to save time in the construction procurement process.

Our number of contracts and awarded vendors continues to grow as we add resources to our team and can better respond to member needs and inquiries. For example, we currently have six open solicitations and five solicitations in review.

Q: Does NJPA initiate the relationship, or do vendors have to apply?

A: All prospective vendors compete for contract award in response to an NJPA solicitation. In addition to posting it on our own website, NJPA advertises our Requests for Proposal (RFP) in national and regional print and online publications, and on select e-commerce sites. On multiple occasions recently, NJPA has opened RFP responses from 20-plus prospective vendors in a single RFP category.

We feel that the level of competition is very high, and that allows NJPA to award those vendors that have demonstrated the ability to deliver strong value to our members.

Q: How do you “vet” a prospective vendor?

A: Prospective vendor proposals are reviewed and evaluated by the NJPA Evaluation Committee using criteria outlined in each RFP. The primary intent of the evaluation process is to identify and award those vendors that can provide solutions nationwide, offering opportunities for NJPA and our member agencies to purchase quality products, equipment, and services as desired and needed.

Our weighted scoring system gives primary importance to a prospective vendor's pricing proposal, but

considers factors such as life-cycle costs, total cost of ownership, quality, and service capabilities. Vendors are expected to demonstrate the offered pricing levels are reflective of the potential and collective volume of NJPA and the nationally established NJPA membership base.

NJPA gives additional consideration for vendors with “green” and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise statuses.

Q: What oversight to the sale and service process does NJPA provide?

A: Once awarded, every vendor is connected with an NJPA contract administrator with whom the vendor will work very closely throughout the duration of the contract. The NJPA Contract Administration team utilizes an annual planning tool to outline specific goals and performance measurements with each awarded vendor, communicates at least quarterly with each vendor in evaluating progress toward achievement of the plan, and conducts a formal annual review.

In addition, NJPA members play an active role in monitoring the accuracy and validity of vendor contract quoting. Members routinely communicate with NJPA to validate pricing received from vendors. The NJPA Contract Administration team is able to quickly access the awarded

contract pricing database to rapidly verify the accuracy of a quote.

Members are never alone when they use our contracts. We're here to help and advise them – before, during, and after the purchase or service acquisition.

Q: What might cause a vendor to lose its contract with NJPA?

A: If an awarded vendor fails to live up to the terms of its proposal and contract, NJPA reserves the right to terminate the contract before the end of the term, or take other remedial measures.

However, as a result of proactive contract administration efforts, NJPA has rarely had an awarded vendor whose performance has resulted in the early termination of the contract.

Q: How can I find out if a product/service or vendor is on contract with NJPA?

A: Members can search our awarded contracts and find all contract documentation on our website.

Visit njpa.co/searchvendors to browse contracts by category, see an alphabetical list of vendors, or use the search navigation box to type in keywords or a vendor name.

NJPA's Membership Team is also a great resource, and is available by phone (877-858-9706) or email (membership@njpacoop.org).

3 Easy Steps to Purchase



1. Join NJPA – membership is at no-cost, no-obligation or liability

Eligible members include any unit of government, education (K-12 or higher ed) or non-profit agency.



2. Browse Awarded Vendor Contracts – hundreds to choose from

Find what you need at njpa.co/searchvendors.



3. Contact Awarded Vendors – contact info is easy to find on NJPA's website

Each vendor has a landing page on NJPA's website with vendor's contact name, email, and phone number. Contact them and let them know you're interested in using the NJPA contract and they'll do the rest.