

## Purchasing Options

EACPA members have several ways goods and services can be purchased:

- Utilize their own contracts,
- Send out their own bids, award, and manage them,
- Use State Contracts, or
- Pool our needs and allow EACPA to issue bids, award, and manage contracts.

When writing, mailing, and awarding bids, the EARPCD and EACPA adhere to the Alabama State Bid Laws. Consequently, members and prospective members can feel assured that our purchasing process is performed in accordance with the law.

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The East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission encourages local governments, school boards, and other public agencies in the region to join the East Alabama Cooperative Purchasing Association. More members, more buying volume, and more individual input from members make the Cooperative stronger. Not every item that is bid by any one city, county, or public agency will be bid through the Cooperative. There will always be items that are specific to a single city, county, or public agency. There will be vendors that an agency feels comfortable with and may want to have that contract kept in-house. The EACPA offers another option for purchases. Local governments, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations have the final say in all purchasing decisions. Our region will become stronger and able to negotiate better prices in the future as the Cooperative grows and proves its worth to vendors here in Alabama and beyond.



Special thanks to the Purchasing Association of Central Alabama for their assistance with this brochure.



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## EACPA

The East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC) serves as host agency for the East Alabama Cooperative Purchasing Association (EACPA). Membership is available to entities within Calhoun, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Etowah, Randolph, Chambers, Tallapoosa and Talladega Counties.

With the assistance of the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA), the EACPA was established by the Board of Directors of the EARPDC in the summer of 2006 with seven (7) charter members. The EACPA serves a ten county area in East Alabama and to date is comprised of the following members:

- \* East Alabama Regional Planning & Development Commission
- \* Calhoun County Commission
- \* Calhoun County School System
- \* City of Alexander City
- \* City of Heflin
- \* City of Jacksonville
- \* City of Lanett
- \* City of Lincoln
- \* City of Piedmont
- \* City of Roanoke
- \* City of Valley

- \* Coosa Valley Youth Services
- \* Etowah County School System
- \* Randolph County School System
- \* Town of Ohatchee
- \* Town of Oak Grove

Other governmental entities, school systems and non-profits within this region may elect to participate in this cooperative.

## Beginning

Similar to several other regional initiatives in the State of Alabama, the EARPDC became concerned about the steadily increasing cost of goods and services for itself and its member governments. Since 2004, EARPDC has sought legal precedence and examples of successful cooperative purchasing associations from around Alabama, and a fiscal bottom line as to why an association would benefit East Alabama.

## Moving Ahead

In late summer of 2006, the first two bids were let. Based on the recommendations from members, bids for office supplies and cut paper were sent out.

The ultimate goal of the EACPA is to conserve revenues of local governments, non-profits and school systems through

collaboration on joint bids. The EACPA is meeting monthly. Each member is responsible for issuing purchase orders and making payments directly to the vendor. EACPA members determine their own level of participation. However, the more participation from our membership, the greater the discounts that our vendors will be able to offer. Communication and active involvement from each member, and the continued growth of the cooperative are fundamental to this and any successful organization.

## EACPA Objectives

As of Winter 2011, fuel, general office supplies, janitorial supplies, tires, copy machines, oil and lubricants, fence/fence installation, cell phones, uniforms and mats, computer hardware/IT, and herbicides/pesticides have been bid and awarded. Discounts are expected from the pooling of the purchasing power of the participating members. The participants will not increase their volume of purchases individually; they will simply combine their present volume of purchases. Additional storage space is not necessary. We are *not* buying in bulk, warehousing the material or distributing any purchased goods. The expense of the cooperative will be recovered through volume discounts and savings realized by each member.