

WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC PURCHASERS

Frequently Asked Questions - Onvia DemandStar Service for WAPP

1. **Why is WAPP offering a free Web-based bidding service?**
 - a. **WAPP'S** Cooperative Purchasing Committee's goal is to provide enhanced member services including:
 - i. **Electronic Bid posting** on the Web, with a link on each agencies website
 - ii. **Vendor self-registration** –no manual, paper vendor registration and tracking
 - iii. **Automated vendor notification** of bid solicitations (save labor, paper, envelopes, postage,etc.)
 - iv. **Specification and document library** access that includes the entire United States
 - b. **This service is limited to local units of government; State agencies will continue to use VendorNet**
2. **How do I get my agency setup with DemandStar / Onvia?**
 - a. If you are a **WAPP** member, see the **WAPP** Website, <http://www.wapp.org/members2.htm>
 - b. To become a **WAPP** member, go to the **WAPP** Website, <http://www.wapp.org/>.
3. **What kind of attachments can DemandStar accept for posting?**
 - a. Plain text, Word, WordPerfect, Excel, Photos, PowerPoint, Plot files, RTF, PDF, JTIF, GIF and JPEG files, CAD drawings, ZIP files, etc.
4. **Why was DemandStar selected? Don't they charge vendors for government solicitations?**
 - a. There are numerous bid posting products available. Most have a price tag from \$9,999 to \$30,000+ for full purchasing systems. Many products that are free to public sector entities charge fees to the vendors.
 - b. Onvia has agreed to offer their services for free to all Wisconsin local government and public education units that are **WAPP** members. There will be NO FEE for Vendor or Agency access to Wisconsin solicitations. Onvia may offer additional services to Vendors at various subscription levels.
 - c. Cooperative Purchasing Committee (CPC), represented by member cities, counties, school districts and technical colleges, evaluated Onvia and found them to offer the best product available.
 - d. Since most agencies have their own financial software system in place, Onvia DemandStar will not replace your financial software, but will provide all the stated member services.
5. **What are some agency benefits of using Onvia DemandStar?**
 - a) Retain your current financial software, but use electronic bid posting, vendor registration and bid notification.
 - b) Responsibility shifts to vendors to register and keep their info up-to-date (saves clerical labor associated with vendor registrations)
 - c) Save on postage, paper, envelopes, labels and labor associated with bid mailings and/or faxing
 - d) Reduce calls for bid tabulations; direct vendors to the Onvia DemandStar Website where your bid tabulations are posted
 - e) Bid activity tracking system, monitors plan holders and the bid or quote process
 - f) Onvia DemandStar's extensive library of information and sample documents offers document templates and library will assist local in accomplishing cooperative purchasing goals.
6. **Was this agreement publicly bid?**
 - a. CPC members researched software options, evaluated products and negotiated the Onvia contract.
 - b. The Onvia agreement did not result in any purchase and it was not publicly bid.
7. **What about VendorNet and the State Bureau of Procurement (SBOP)?**
 - a. Helen McCain, Director of SBOP, has been supportive of the municipalities using **WAPP** and Onvia for these services. The SBOP has purchased an enterprise system called PeopleSoft that will eventually provide a replacement for some portions or all of VendorNet.
 - b. VendorNet will continue to be available "as is" to municipalities until the new State bid-posting website is in place. That new website will allow local agencies access to view state contracts, however only state agencies may use the bid posting and other functions.

- 8. SMALLER AGENCIES:** We are a small agency and do not post our bids on the Web. Why should we take the time to change over to this? How will it help us now?
- a. **WAPP'S** Onvia DemandStar option is an inexpensive way for any agency to transition to the Internet for vendor registration, bid posting and automated bid notifications.
 - b. If you manually register vendors and send bids via mail or fax now, you can save a lot of staff time by:
 - i. allowing the vendors to register on-line
 - ii. expanding your vendor base and increase competition for tax dollars
 - iii. eliminating or greatly reduce mailing and faxing bids
 - iv. gaining access to Wisconsin (and national) sample documents
- 9. LARGER AGENCIES -** We are already setup for on-line vendor registration, bid posting, etc. Why should we use DemandStar?
- a. Your agency is welcome to post bids on both websites. The additional posting requires minimal clerical effort, may net some additional competition for your bids and allows access to the document library.
 - b. To expand cooperative purchasing opportunities in Wisconsin
- 10. Do I need to get approval before signing on with **WAPP'S** Onvia DemandStar Web-based bidding service?**
- a. Wisconsin laws require open, fair competition for procurement transactions paid for by public dollars
 - b. Each agency is governed by their own laws, policies and procedures
 - c. Each **WAPP** member is responsible to verify that this option is allowed and is suitable for their agency
- 11. Are there benefits for having several agencies in our area sign on at the same time?**
- a. You don't have to wait for any other agency to start using Onvia DemandStar.
 - b. Your agency may benefit by starting at the same time as another agency in your area. It may be easier to promote this idea to management and local elected officials if several agencies in the area are choosing the same program.
 - c. Multiple agencies can share responsibility for vendor notification, registration and advertising when they start the process at about the same time. This reduces the work in transitioning the vendors.
- 12. IT HELP -** What if our IT department does not have time to help with this project?
- a. There is not much assistance needed from your Info Technology department to get started so start talking with your IT folks early, so that they have a "buy-in" to the change.
 - b. Browse the Onvia DemandStar Website, and contact Onvia to request a training session.
 - c. Keep yourself and your IT staff informed as the early-adopter agencies progress through the transition.
- 13. NIGP Codes –**
- a. **Are we required to use NIGP codes if we use Onvia DemandStar?**
 - i. **YES**, the NIGP code was created specifically for public sector procurement and is a standardized commodity-based system used by over 1,400 U.S. entities (including the State of Wisconsin).
 - ii. For those agencies not familiar with the NIGP codes, DemandStar has a search capability for use when posting bids.
 - iii. Periscope Holdings, Inc., an NIGP partner and custodian of its NIGP Code software, is offering free 30 minute Webinars about the NIGP Code every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. (CT). Webinar participants receive a temporary ID and password to the NIGP Living Code Website to evaluate the Code firsthand. Call 1-800-757-6064 or e-mail info@nigp.org to register for the next Webinar. Or for more information about the Code, visit www.nigp.com.
 - b. **Would we have to use NIGP codes for our internal financial software or manual systems? NO**
- 14. VENDOR SELECTION – Will we get a larger vendor base? Will Onvia DemandStar post our bids all over the U.S.?**
- a. For each solicitation, agencies may either broadcast the bid to ALL registered vendors or agencies set parameters or the agency may send the bid to certain approved vendor lists, geographic areas, local preference, MBE, DBE, WBE, etc. Only designated vendors will receive a notification, however other vendors may find the solicitation if they do a search within the Onvia DemandStar system.

- b. It is likely that your vendor base will increase. Our references stated that, although there are some new vendors, they continue to receive bids from vendors in their area.

15. VENDOR PREQUALIFICATION:

- a. **Do vendors have to pre-qualify in Onvia DemandStar to obtain our bids? NO.** Vendors have to register by visiting www.onvia.com/wapp
- b. What if our agency requires pre-qualification for certain purchases, such as construction?
There are several options to address this:
 - i. Post the solicitation and indicate the agency qualification process in those documents
 - ii. Post the solicitation and limit the broadcast as per Item 15.a. above
 - iii. Post a Request for Qualifications prior to broadcasting the bid / solicitation
- c. **SMALL, MINORITY, DISADVANTAGED AND/OR WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES - Will on-line vendor registration be a problem for small, minority or disadvantaged vendors?**
 - i. The on-line vendor registration should be an advantage to both large and small companies. Sales support can be very costly for any vendor, but especially for disadvantaged or small vendors. Web-based vendor registration and bidding will simplify doing business with local gov't in Wisc.

16. What if a vendor does not have a computer to register and accept bids?

- a. Several options are available for the small number of vendors who are not on-line capable:
 - 1. Onvia may assist these vendors with their registration and can send solicitation notices via fax.
 - 2. Your agency may have those vendors register at your office or at the local library to get bids.
 - 3. Your agency may choose to continue sending bids to such vendors via fax, mail or pickup.

17. WEBSITE and AGENCY LOGO – Can we put a link to DemandStar on our Website? Can the Website be customized for our agencies?

- a. Yes, each agency may put a link to the software on their Website.
- b. See www.wapp.org/members2.htm for agency templates that may be customized with your agency info by your IT staff

18. Where should I refer interested vendors?

- a. Interested vendors may visit www.onvia.com/wapp for registration and service information.

19. FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- a. Contact Onvia Agency Services Toll free: 1-800-331-5337 E-mail address: agencyervices@onvia.com
- b. Contact Linda Dupuis, City of Green Bay Purchasing Manager and **WAPP** Chair of Cooperative Purchasing Committee, E-mail address: PurchasingAg@ci.green-bay.wi.us