How to do Business with HHS
7 Part Video Series Guide

July 2020
Page intentionally left blank
# Table of Contents

**Part 1 – Introduction** .......................................................................................................................... 5
  - How to do Business with HHS Video Series Topics ................................................................. 5
  - Get Started ...................................................................................................................................... 5
  - Evaluation and Selection ............................................................................................................... 5
  - Grants ............................................................................................................................................. 5
  - Historically and Underutilized Business (HUB) .................................................................... 5
  - Interaction with HHS ................................................................................................................... 6
  - Ethics ............................................................................................................................................... 6

**Part 2 – Get Started** .......................................................................................................................... 6
  - Common Vocabulary Terms ....................................................................................................... 6
  - Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts .................................................................................... 7
  - Best Value Standard .................................................................................................................... 8
  - Best Value Factors ......................................................................................................................... 8
  - Solicitation Methods ..................................................................................................................... 8
  - Purpose and Functions of Solicitation Methods ...................................................................... 9
  - Selection Methods for Professional Services .......................................................................... 10

**Part 3 Evaluation and Selection** ..................................................................................................... 10
  - Submission Requirements ......................................................................................................... 10
  - Responsive and Responsible ..................................................................................................... 11
  - Solicitation Point of Contact ...................................................................................................... 11
  - Best Value to the State ................................................................................................................ 11
  - Evaluation Committee ............................................................................................................... 11

**Part 4 - Grants** ................................................................................................................................. 12
  - Grants Versus Contracts ............................................................................................................ 12
  - Grant Funds .................................................................................................................................. 12
  - Request for Applications (RFA)................................................................................................... 12
  - Grants Process ............................................................................................................................. 13
  - HHS Grants Website ................................................................................................................... 13

**Part 5 Historically Underutilized Business (HUB)** ......................................................................... 13
  - Qualification Criteria ..................................................................................................................... 13
  - Texas HUB Directory .................................................................................................................... 14
  - Certification Process .................................................................................................................... 14
Good Faith Effort ................................................................. 14
Utilization Goals ............................................................ 15
Program Website .......................................................... 15

Part 6 – Interaction with HHS ............................................... 15
Vendor Interaction Policy .................................................... 15
Guidelines ................................................................. 15
Quiet Period .................................................................. 16
Debriefing Meeting .......................................................... 16
Texas Public Information Act ................................................ 16
HHS Public Information Process ........................................... 17
Public Information Request .................................................. 17
HHS Customer Service ....................................................... 17

Part 7 – Ethics ................................................................... 17
Important to HHS ............................................................. 18
Standards of Conduct ......................................................... 18
Disclosure of Interested Parties .............................................. 19
HHS Employees ............................................................... 19
Benefit Definition ............................................................. 19
What to Avoid ................................................................. 20

Conclusion ....................................................................... 20

Resources ........................................................................ 21
Websites and Web Pages ....................................................... 21
Documents ..................................................................... 22
Customer Service Contact Information ................................. 22
Welcome to “How to do Business with HHS.” We are so pleased you are interested in doing business with the Texas Health and Human Services.

As a Texas state agency, fairness, transparency, and good stewardship of public funds are top HHS priorities. Annually, Texas Health and Human Services delivers goods and services to Texans through a vast number of contracts expending a significant amount of public and grant funds. This video series is intended to provide you with the various components necessary to do business with HHS.

**How to do Business with HHS Video Series Topics**

The 7 parts of this series are:

- Part 1 – Introduction
- Part 2 – Get Started
- Part 3 – Evaluation and Selection
- Part 4 – Grants
- Part 5 – Historically Underutilized Business (HUB)
- Part 6 – Interaction with HHS
- Part 7 Ethics.

**Get Started**

Get Started includes an introduction to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, the Centralized Master Bidders List (CMBL) and the Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD). This part of the series describes different types of solicitations, also known as business opportunities.

**Evaluation and Selection**

Evaluation and Selection describes how responses to solicitations are assessed and on what basis contracts are awarded, which depends on the type of solicitation.

**Grants**

Grants describes the difference between solicitations for standard contracts versus those for grants, which are a unique type of business opportunity.

**Historically and Underutilized Business (HUB)**

Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) includes the characteristics of a HUB, steps to register as a HUB and business opportunities available to HUBs.
**Interaction with HHS**
Interaction with HHS reviews the HHS Vendor Interaction Policy and the Texas Public Information Act in the context of competitive procurement.

**Ethics**
Ethics provides resources and information about the HHS Ethics Policy, Standards of Conduct for HHS Contracting & Procurement Personnel and Vendor and the Texas Administrative Code.

**Part 2 – Get Started**
Welcome to How to do Business with HHS – Get Started. As the title suggests, in this part of the series we will review how to get started doing business with HHS.

**Common Vocabulary Terms**
The following are common vocabulary terms used by HHS.

**Solicitation**
When HHS needs to conduct business, the agency will issue an invitation or request document called a “solicitation.” A solicitation tells vendors what HHS wants to buy. Think of solicitations as business opportunities.

When a vendor answers a solicitation, that is called a response or bid or proposal. The exact terms depend on the type of solicitation.

**Response**
A response can be considered the primary term for the submission delivered to HHSC by a respondent.

**Respondent**
A respondent is a vendor who responds to a solicitation. A response can be in the form of a bid or proposal.

**Bid**
A bid is submitted in response to an Invitation for Bids (IFB) which are typically commodities and routine services.

**Proposal**
A proposal is submitted in response to solicitations for more complex services which are advertised via a Request for Proposal (RFP), Request for Qualifications (RFQ), or Request for Offers (RFO).

**Offer**
The response to a Request for Offer may also be referred to as an offer.
Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

The Statewide Procurement Division of the Texas Comptroller’s Office governs contract development and management for the state of Texas.

Centralized Master Bidders List (CMBL)

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website has many resources including the Centralized Master Bidders List (CMBL). The CMBL is a master database used by the state of Texas to create a mailing list of potential vendors like you. Once you are registered to the CMBL, you will receive notice of bid opportunities, also called solicitations, for your products or services. The annual registration fee for CMBL is $70. A vendor is not required to be on the CMBL to do business with the state of Texas; however, it is a great way to stay informed of all opportunities as they are posted.

Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD)

On the Texas Comptroller’s main page, you can access the Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD) in the Business Center. The ESBD is a section of the Texas Comptroller’s website where state agencies post bid opportunities valued at $25,000 or more.

When determining if a state agency is required to post to the ESBD, they must first determine the contract value. In deciding the contract value, the agency calculates the estimated dollar amount they may be obligated to pay during the life of the contract and all executed and proposed amendments, extensions and renewals.

After the contract value is determined to be over $25,000, agencies post their solicitation packages to the ESBD.

State agencies can post entire solicitation packages or partial ones.

- Entire packages including all parts, exhibits and attachments are posted for a minimum of fourteen (14) calendar days.
- When partial packages are posted, notice must be provided that includes all information necessary to make a successful bid, proposal, or other applicable expression of interest for the procurement contract. These packages have a minimum of twenty-one (21) calendar days to be posted.

Once solicitations are posted to the ESBD, the vendor is responsible for checking for addendums.

Vendors may view the newest postings for all state agencies, including HHS, and search by myriad of criteria including keywords, closing dates and agency name.
Vendors can use the ESBD site to view closed postings as well as awarded postings. Vendors may also visit the HHS Contracting with HHS web page for a list of upcoming procurements by clicking the Procurement Forecast (PDF) link.

**Best Value Standard**

Best value for commodities is price and meeting specification. This is important with services but may not be the primary consideration as you are considering other relevant factors as well.

While similar, some of the best value considerations in statute can be different depending on whether health services, IT, or Comptroller delegated services is being procured.

Professional services do stand out in this regard because price is not considered a factor in selection. A reasonable price is negotiated after selection. When in doubt, refer to the solicitation to which you are responding. The best value criteria will be reflected in the solicitation’s evaluation criteria.

**Best Value Factors**

The State of Texas Procurement and Contract Management Guide states the following about best value:

“Texas law mandates that contract awards may only be made to responsive vendors providing best value to the state. The best value standard may vary depending on the procurement method, therefore, public procurement personnel ensure that the appropriate best value is used as the basis for the contract award and [will make that clear in the evaluation and selection methodology sections of the solicitation].”

Some best value factors recognized by statute are:

- installation costs
- life cycle costs
- the quality and reliability of the goods and services
- the delivery terms
- past vendor performance
- training costs associated with the purchase
- the vendor’s expected economic impact to the state.

**Solicitation Methods**

There are different methods used to request responses from vendors for HHS contract opportunities. The generic term for these methods is solicitation.
The methods are:

- Invitation for Bids (IFB)
- Request for Proposals (RFP)
- Request for Offers (RFO)
- Request for Qualifications (RFQ).

Each solicitation method has a specific set of rules and criteria for determining best value.

**Purpose and Functions of Solicitation Methods**

**IFB**

HHS will most often issue an IFB when the agency needs to buy goods or services which can be clearly defined or standardized. Office supplies, for example, are something HHS might solicit via an IFB. In this example, responses that meet the solicitation’s specifications would all be considered equally qualified in an IFB procurement. Therefore, the best value award criteria would mainly be price. It is important to note that negotiations are not usually permitted in an IFB procurement method and that is why it is recommended to submit your best price the first time.

**RFP**

HHS may use a RFP solicitation when:

- factors other than lowest price need to be considered
- negotiations are desired
- vendor is expected to provide innovative ideas.

RFPs are typically used for more complex projects. The RFP itself will specify the nature of the project and the proposal evaluation criteria that will be used to determine the best value.

Two key differences between an IFB and a RFP are:

1. Negotiations are allowed when using a RFP.
2. Demonstrations or interviews may be required.

**RFO**

The RFO solicitation method is the primary procurement method HHS uses to acquire Automated Information Services (AIS) which may include hardware, software, or other information technology goods and services.

Like a RFP, the RFO solicitation will include a description of the HHS IT needs and the proposal evaluation criteria that will be used to determine best value. It is also similar to a RFP in that negotiations are allowed in a RFO procurement.
RFQ
A RFQ is a solicitation method required by statute to use for professional services. Professional services are defined by Texas Government Code 2254 Subchapter A and includes nurses, engineers, and other professionals. Awards are made based on the respondent’s qualifications.

Selection Methods for Professional Services
There are two selection methods for professional services in Subchapter A. One is for architects, engineers and surveyors. The other selection method is for all other professional services.

Architects, Engineers and Surveyors
For architects, engineers and surveyors, the most qualified candidate should be selected and then negotiation for a reasonable price should begin. If the negotiation fails, the agency will start negotiation with the next most qualified, and so on.

All Other Professional Services
For all other professional services, the respondent must meet qualifications for a reasonable price. Although the more stringent selection method of ranking used for architects, engineers and surveyors can be used for other professional services, often the criteria for that group is for a single qualified respondent. In the case for other professional services such as with medical professionals, there may be multiple awards issued and not just one single contract and therefore the respondent only needs to meet qualifications outlined in the solicitation for a reasonable price.

Part 3 Evaluation and Selection
Welcome to How to do Business with HHS – Evaluation and Selection. This part of the series will review methods HHS uses to evaluate vendor responses to standard procurement contracts.

Submission Requirements
Each HHS solicitation must clearly indicate the submission requirements.

This includes:

- response content
- evaluation or minimum qualifications criteria
- due date and time
- delivery address
- acceptable delivery method
• required number of copies
• format of the response.

**Responsive and Responsible**
Please read the solicitation thoroughly. Responses must be received by the due date and time specified in the solicitation. Late responses will not be opened or evaluated. Late responses are deemed as non-responsive.

Please make sure your response is responsive. Responsive means it was submitted on time, it is signed and it includes the required information. Incomplete responses may be rejected.

Your response should also be responsible. Responsible means that if HHS selects your response as the best value, you will be willing, ready and able to accept a contract. This includes accepting contract terms and conditions and producing evidence of any required insurance.

**Solicitation Point of Contact**
The solicitation will provide the name and contact information of the HHS personnel designated as the point of contact. Respondents with questions pertaining to the solicitation must only communicate with the individual identified as the point of contact.

**Best Value to the State**
HHS is obligated to award contracts to vendors which will result in the best value to the state. As you may recall from How to do Business with HHS Part II – Get Started, best value does include cost, but cost is not the only factor.

Depending on the complexity of the award, determining best value may involve:

• past vendor performance
• an evaluation matrix
• oral presentations
• evaluation committees.

**Evaluation Committee**
Situations that require an evaluation committee must have safeguards to protect the integrity of the process. The evaluation committee is comprised of subject matter experts and stakeholders who will evaluate responses according to the criteria published in the solicitation. The committee should have diverse relevant disciplinary expertise and knowledge of the product or service being procured.
Evaluation committee members must sign a Non-disclosure and Conflict of Interest form which attest that evaluators are non-biased, objective and have no conflicts of interest with any of the respondents. There are also measures in place to ensure each evaluation team member’s subjective evaluation of a response is in an acceptable range.

Finally, HHS takes steps to ensure that the evaluation matrix used to determine best value is complete, accurate and truly reflects a best value selection.

**Part 4 - Grants**

Welcome to How to do Business with HHS – Grants. This part of the series highlights the differences between standard procurement contracts and grant awards, with an emphasis on grant award requirements.

**Grants Versus Contracts**

It is important to understand there are many differences between the application and selection process for grant awards and standard procurement contracts. Standard procurement contracts and grant awards are also managed and monitored very differently. For example, a contract is a legally binding document in which the parties make promises to deliver a product or service in exchange for payment and is governed by applicable federal or state procurement law while a grant is when funds are awarded to support a public purpose or program and governed by the Uniform Grant Guidance or Uniform Grant Management Standards.

**Grant Funds**

Grant funds are tied to designated funds for a specific purpose, usually a public program like the Texas Opioid Crisis Response. Grants are important funding mechanisms used to improve the health, safety, and well-being of Texans. Grants can be thought of as a strategic investment into our state and its future. Through careful design and planning, grants can be a powerful tool that drives public policy while improving outcomes for Texas.

**Request for Applications (RFA)**

HHS will solicit applications for grant awards using a RFA.

The RFA will include key information such as:

- program purpose and description
- available funding
- applicant eligibility criteria
- key dates
- project period or grant term
- eligible activities or costs (things you can do)
- prohibitions (things you cannot do)
- response submission requirements
- terms and conditions.

The RFA will also specify the evaluation criteria that will determine which applications are funded. These criteria should be based on clear predictors of success and identify proposals that would serve Texans in an appropriate and cost-effective manner.

**Grants Process**
HHS considers the entire grant process when making grant funding available and encourages applicants to do so as well. By envisioning what we want to accomplish, designing the program, investing funds in quality projects, monitoring project progress and compliance, and assuring the end results, the grant process is a continuous cycle intended to fund high-performing programs that benefit all Texans.

**HHS Grants Website**
HHS publishes all RFA documents on the publicly available Grants Request for Applications (RFA) web page.

Grant opportunities are generally posted for a minimum of 30 calendar days. Additionally, closed grant opportunities and funded grantees information are also posted for public review.

**Part 5 Historically Underutilized Business (HUB)**
Welcome to How to do Business with HHS – Historically Underutilized Business (HUB). This part of the series discusses HUB characteristics, steps to become certified and the business opportunities available to HUBs.

**Qualification Criteria**
A HUB is a for-profit, Texas-based business that has not exceeded the size established by the United States Small Business Administration. The business owner must be a US citizen and the principal place of business must be in Texas.

Also, the business must be at least 51% owned by an Asian Pacific American, Black American, Hispanic American, Native American, American female or a Service Disabled Veteran with a service-related disability of at least 20% due to service.
HUB certification is free and valid for up to four years, provided that the business continues to meet the eligibility requirements.

**Texas HUB Directory**
Certified HUBs are listed in the online Texas HUB Directory. HHS uses the HUB Directory in conjunction with the Centralized Master Bidders List to request bids from certified Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs).

**Certification Process**
If your business meets the eligibility requirements, you may begin the certification process on the [Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website](http://www.tre.state.tx.us) by following these steps:

1. Select the **Purchasing** tab.
2. Select **Historically Underutilized Business (HUB)** from the **Vendor Resources** menu.
3. Select **How to Apply for CMBL or HUB** from the Related Links menu on the right.
4. Follow the steps shown on the page to complete a company profile.
5. Print out the application summary and the list of supporting documentation that will be required to complete the application.
6. Have your HUB application notarized and then mail along with the required supporting documentation.

**Good Faith Effort**

Like other state agencies and universities, HHS is required to make a good faith effort to provide HUBs access to the agency’s business opportunities. Good faith efforts are measured by the value of the potential contract. If it is less than $5,000, HHS will reach out to a HUB to provide a response.

Potential contracts that are worth between $5,000 and $25,000 are referred to as informal bids. In those cases, HHS is required to contact a minimum of two HUBs and one that is not a HUB.

For potential contracts valued at $100,000 or more, the law requires the agency to evaluate whether subcontracts are likely. When HHS determines that subcontracting is likely, then all businesses that bid are required to submit a plan for subcontracting with HUBs. This ensures that HUBs are given an opportunity to participate not only directly as prime contractors, but also indirectly as subcontractors.

Regardless of the value of the potential contract or good faith efforts HHS makes, all HHS contract awards are based on the best value to the state of Texas.
Utilization Goals
HHS contracts with certified HUBs whenever possible to achieve HUB utilization goals. The Statewide HUB goals are based on the 2009 Texas Disparity Study and established by category. For example, the HUB goal for HHS professional services contracts is 23.7%. This means HHS strives to award at least 23.7% of its contracts for professional services to HUBs.

Visit the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website to see more state contracting goals by category.

Program Website
For additional information pertaining to HUB please visit the HHS Historically Underutilized Business Opportunities Program website.

Part 6 – Interaction with HHS
Welcome to How to do Business with HHS – Interaction with HHS. This part of the series will review interactions with HHS in the context of competitive procurement. Competition is a basic premise of Texas procurement and contracting.

Vendor Interaction Policy
The Texas Health and Human Services system (HHS) Vendor Interaction Policy assures fairness and an even competitive playing field for all participants.

Communication between HHS procurement staff and the vendor community is imperative. Effective communication with vendors like you helps provide the best products, resources, and services. However, communication must be balanced with the HHS top priority of maintaining an equal playing field among all eligible vendors during competitive procurements.

Guidelines
To assure appropriate communications and efficient use of time, HHS staff must abide by the following guidelines:

- HHS staff are prohibited from discussing active procurement projects or providing specifications or information about potential, future procurements.
- HHS staff cannot accept confidential information.
- HHS staff are prohibited from accepting gifts or donations.
- All meetings must be thoroughly documented.
- All vendors must be treated equally and impartially.

Visit the HHS Contracting with HHS web page to read the HHS Vendor Interaction Policy found in the Handbooks and Policies section for more information.
The policy includes guidelines for meetings held between HHS staff and external vendors. There is also valuable information on potential vendor requirements under Texas State Lobby Laws and Representation Before State Agencies.

**Quiet Period**
Texas Government Code allows communication between HHS and a vendor. However, once HHS begins drafting a solicitation, all communications with vendors related to that solicitation must stop. This is called a Quiet Period.

The Quiet Period encompasses:
- the entire time the solicitation is being drafted
- the time the solicitation is posted
- the time during contract negotiations.

The HHS solicitation will identify a single point of contact for the duration of the Quiet Period. Any communication coming from vendors about that solicitation must be addressed to that point of contact.

The quiet period ends once a fully executed contract is awarded.

**Debriefing Meeting**
Vendors who were not successful during the bidding process may request a debriefing meeting.

These meetings are arranged to discuss the vendor’s response to the advertised evaluation criteria. During the meeting, the vendor may obtain information as to why its response was unsuccessful.

Debriefing meetings are beneficial for both the vendor and the agency. The vendor will obtain information to apply to lessons learned for future procurement initiatives with the state. Similarly, the meetings provide an opportunity for the agency to obtain valuable insight from the vendor’s perspective of the procurement process.

**Texas Public Information Act**
You have probably heard of the Texas Public Information Act. But, you may be wondering how the Public Information Act affects your communication with HHS, a public entity.

With some exceptions, the Texas Public Information Act guarantees the public access to internal HHS documents, including documents related to the procurement process such as bid tabs and evaluation scoresheets.

If you would like to see such documentation, it may be accessed through the public information process by following the instructions on the HHS Open Records Policy and Procedures website.
For more information about the Texas Public Information Act, visit the Office of the Attorney General of Texas website.

**HHS Public Information Process**

For more information about the HHS Public Information Process, you can email your inquiries to OpenRecordsRequest@hhsc.state.tx.us or Openrecords@dshs.texas.gov

The Department of Family and Protective Services uses a consolidated GovQA portal for processing public information requests. Go to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Public Request Menu portal to create an account and make a request.

**Public Information Request**

For best results, please be sure to include the procurement number in any public information request related to a specific procurement.

If you do not have a procurement number, be sure to include other identifying information such as:

- point of contact name
- approximate date of the solicitation posting or approximate date of the contract award
- the goods or services sought by the solicitation.

Please note that there are exceptions to the release of public information related to procurements. The Texas Public Information Act allows HHS to request a ruling from the Office of the Attorney General to withhold procurement-related documentation prior to execution of a contract. For this reason, it is best to wait until after contract execution to seek documentation.

**HHS Customer Service**

HHS has staff to answer the customer service line and respond to customer service email inquiries and complaints. They serve as the front line of customer service and support. They can also help you with requests for demonstration meetings and general questions.

The main contact number is (512) 424-6500 and the text telephone number is (512) 424-5697.

**Part 7 – Ethics**

Welcome to How to do Business with HHS – Ethics. This part of the series will review the HHS Ethics Policy, which incorporates standards of ethical conduct, guidance from statutory law, and other sources.
Important to HHS
HHS recognizes that communication between public procurement professionals, agency staff, and the vendor community is imperative and encouraged to provide the best products, resources, and services to meet the needs of the citizens of Texas served by the agency.

HHS also recognizes the importance of maintaining an equal playing field among all contractors and vendors who do business with HHS. To maintain this equal playing field and integrity in the contracting and procurement system, HHS personnel as well as contractors, respondents and vendors must comply with all applicable state laws, as well as agency rules and policies.

Standards of Conduct
Contractors, respondents, and vendors must all comply with the Standards of Conduct for Vendors and HHSC Procurement And Contracting Personnel set forth in the Texas Administrative Code.

Contractors, respondents, and vendors interested in working with HHSC are required to implement standards of conduct for their own personnel and agents on terms at least as restrictive as those applicable to HHSC contracting personnel.

These standards must adhere to ethics requirements adopted in rule, in addition to any ethics policy, or code of ethics approved by the executive head of the agency.

Texas Administrative Code §391.503 (c)
The Standards of Conduct also require that no potential contractor or respondent, or agent of a potential contractor or respondent, may, in connection with the development of a contract or procurement, directly contact an HHSC employee, unless that HHSC employee is the designated point of contact for that contract or procurement.

Texas Administrative Code § 391.503(d)
Every respondent to a contract must disclose potential or actual conflicts of interest with HHSC.

Texas Administrative Code § 391.503(e)
Also, any vendor or contractor, as a condition of contracting with HHSC, must:
(1) cooperate with any audit conducted by the state auditor; and
(2) cooperate with any audit conducted by HHSC or any entity designated by HHSC, including the Office of Inspector General.
In addition to restriction noted above, all vendors and contractors should be familiar with the post-employment, also known as revolving door, laws and policies that apply to state employees leaving state employment.

Contractors and vendors employing former employees that violate these revolving door restrictions may be in violation of the terms of their agreement to comply with all ethics rules and policies of the agency.

**Violations**

Any vendor or contractor that violates a provision of the Standards of Conduct discussed above may be barred from receiving future contracts or have an existing contract canceled. Additionally, HHSC may report the vendor's actions to the Comptroller of Public Accounts for statewide debarment, or law enforcement.

**Disclosure of Interested Parties**

The Texas Government Code Section 2252.908 requires a successful respondent awarded a contract with a value of $1 million dollars or more or awarded a contract that would require the successful respondent to register as a lobbyist under Texas Government Code Chapter 305 to submit a disclosure of interested parties form (Form 1295) to HHS at the time the successful respondent submits the signed contract.

For more information concerning this requirement, see the Texas Ethics Commission website.

**HHS Employees**

Among other things, HHS employees are prohibited from accepting or soliciting any gift, favor or service that may appear to influence the employee. Public servants are generally prohibited from accepting gifts or benefits. Violations of these laws carry criminal penalties, and complaints alleging such violations are handled by local prosecutors. For more information, please review the HHS Ethics Policy.

**Benefit Definition**

A benefit is anything reasonably regarded as gain, including the benefit of a third party such as an HHS employee family member.

As examples, the Texas Ethics Commission has issued the opinion that benefits include gifts such as:

- a $50 clock
- a hotel room
- a hunting trip
- football game tickets
- a $160 rifle
- a $60 restaurant meal.
What to Avoid
We understand that in the private sector, it may be usual for businesses to exchange gifts in appreciation for a job well done. However, HHS is a state agency and a steward of the public trust, so it is best to avoid offering any gift, gratuity, or entertainment whatsoever to an HHS employee.

Conclusion
This concludes the How to do Business with HHS 7 Part Video Series Guide. The information in this series provided you a foundation to be familiar with common vocabulary terms, the concept of best value and standards of conduct, an overview of solicitation methods, evaluation and selection, grant award requirements, how to become certified as a HUB, and the expectations regarding ethics and interactions with HHS.

Thank you for your attention and interest in doing business with HHS.
Resources

Websites and Web Pages

Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website
(https://comptroller.texas.gov/)

Centralized Master Bidders List (CMBL) web page
(https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/vendor/cmbl/)

Electronic State Business Daily (ESBD) Search web page
(http://www.txsmartbuy.com/esbd)

HHS Contracting with HHS website
(https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/contracting-hhs)

HHS Grants web page
(https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/pcs/rfa.cfm)

HHS Historically Underutilized Business Opportunities Program web page
(https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/contracting-hhs/historically-underutilized-business-opportunities-program)

HHS Open Records Policy and Procedures web page
(https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/communications-events/open-records-policy-procedures)

Office of the Attorney General of Texas website
(https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government)

Texas Ethics Commission website
(https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/)

Texas Secretary of State Administrative Code web page
(https://www.sos.state.tx.us/tac/index.shtml)

Texas Administrative Code web page
(https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.viewtac)

Standards of Conduct for Vendors and HHSC Procurement and Contracting Personnel
HHS Find Us Contact Information web page
(https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/find-us#customer-service)

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Public Request web page
(https://texasdfps.govqa.us/WEBAPP/_rs/(S(f501azqws0c4mm3alm401wz))/RequestLogin.aspx)

Documents

Procurement Forecast (PDF)
(https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/procurement-calendar/procurement-forecast.pdf)

HHS Vendor Interaction Policy (PDF)

HHS Ethics Policy (PDF)

Customer Service Contact Information

Main contact number (512) 424-6500

Text telephone number (512) 424-5697

OpenRecordsRequest@hhsc.state.tx.us

openrecords@dshs.texas.gov