

# Purchasing Thresholds, Competitive Bidding & Sole Source Procurement & Contract Services (PCS)

California State University Channel Islands promotes **fair and open competition** in the acquisition of goods and services to protect public funds, prevent favoritism, and obtain the best value.

This page provides guidance on:

- When competition is required
  - CSUCI competition thresholds
  - When competition may be limited or avoided (e.g., Sole Source or SB/DVBE Option)
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## Competition Thresholds

The required solicitation method depends on:

- The total estimated value of the purchase (including all years, renewals, and options)
  - Whether the acquisition is Goods & Services or Information Technology Resources (ITR)
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## Goods & Services

<b>Estimated Value</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
<b>Less than \$100,000</b>	Competition not required (PCS may still recommend competition to establish fair and reasonable pricing).
<b>\$100,000 – \$250,000</b>	Informal Competition – Written scope required and typically three competitive quotes coordinated with PCS.
<b>Greater than \$250,000</b>	Formal Competition – Formal solicitation such as an Invitation for Bid (IFB) or Request for Proposal (RFP) conducted by Procurement & Contract Services.

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## Information Technology Resources (ITR)

Estimated Value	Requirement
Less than \$100,000	Competition not required (IT review may still be required depending on scope and risk).
\$100,000 – \$1,000,000	Informal Competition – Minimum of three competitive quotes with a defined scope and IT involvement.
Greater than \$1,000,000	Formal Competition – Formal solicitation required. Additional CSU governance approvals may apply.

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## Quick Reference

- Formal competition begins at **over \$250,000 for Goods & Services**
  - Formal competition begins at **over \$1,000,000 for IT/ITR**
  - “Competition not required” **does not mean automatic approval**. PCS review and policy compliance still apply.
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## SB/DVBE Option (Competition Alternative)

CSU policy allows campuses to award certain contracts **without public advertising** when using the **Small Business / Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (SB/DVBE) Option**.

Under this option:

- Contracts **less than \$250,000** may be awarded to a **certified California Small Business or Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE)**
- The department must obtain **price quotes from at least two certified Small Businesses or two DVBEs**
- If fewer than two responses are received, the procurement file must document outreach efforts and price reasonableness

This option supports CSU’s commitment to expanding opportunities for **Small Businesses and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises** while maintaining fair and reasonable pricing.

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# Sole Source Justification

## When Competition Is Not Feasible

A Sole Source procurement may be used only when one supplier is the only viable source capable of meeting CSUCI's requirements.

Sole source is an exception to competition and must be fully documented and approved.

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## Required Elements of a Sole Source Justification

### 1. Uniqueness

What proprietary capability, compatibility requirement, or exclusive right makes the supplier unique?

### 2. Necessity

Why is that uniqueness required to meet CSUCI's operational needs?

### 3. Market Research

What other suppliers or alternatives were reviewed and why they cannot meet the requirement.

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## Sole Source Approval Thresholds

<b>Contract Value</b>	<b>Required Approval</b>
<b>\$100,000 or more</b>	Written approval by the campus designated procurement authority
<b>\$250,000 or more</b>	Additional approval by a campus authority no lower than the Vice President for Administration & Finance
<b>\$1,000,000 or more</b>	Campus approvals plus Chancellor's Office review and final written approval

All approval documentation must be maintained in the procurement file.

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## Examples of Invalid Sole Source Justifications

The following **do not justify a sole source**:

- Lack of planning or time constraints
  - Budget limitations alone
  - Vendor preference (“we used them before”)
  - Specifications written to restrict competition
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## Public Solicitations (PlanetBids)

CSUCI uses **PlanetBids** as its electronic procurement portal for public solicitations.

Formal solicitations such as **RFPs, IFBs, and RFQs** are posted on PlanetBids, where vendors may:

- View active bid opportunities
- Register to receive bid notifications
- Download solicitation documents
- Submit proposals electronically

Departments and vendors can view CSUCI bid opportunities here:

**<https://pbsystem.planetbids.com/portal/19217/portal-home>**

Vendors interested in doing business with CSUCI are encouraged to register on the platform.

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## Questions

If you are unsure whether your purchase requires competition or may qualify for a sole source or SB/DVBE option, contact Procurement & Contract Services early in the process.

 **[purchasing@csuci.edu](mailto:purchasing@csuci.edu)**