

Supporting the community by digitizing purchasing processes

eProcurement helps connect vendors with opportunities in Placer County



We have always struggled to get enough bids. We would put out requests for bids on multimillion-dollar contracts that would offer three to four years of work and still not hit our threshold for submissions. We needed to change that.

— **BRETT WOOD,**
Purchasing Manager, Placer County

THE BACKSTORY

Placer County is a destination in California best known for all it offers to folks who love the great outdoors. Boasting North Lake Tahoe as its main attraction, more than one million tourists visit the County each year. But the residents have even more to be proud of: Placer County is recognized time and again for being one of the areas in California that offers a great quality of life.

This accolade is thanks to the hard work and commitment shown by the Placer County government and its civil servants. They are on a mission to provide efficient and effective public services that promote the prosperity of their citizens. And with new development projects in the works every year, they wanted to better support their community by digitizing their purchasing processes.

THE CHALLENGE

While Placer has a staff of about 2,500 people, its procurement team is made up of only 10. Together, they manage a budget of up to \$150 million a year to purchase essential goods and services, as well as award anywhere from 20 to 25 construction contracts across the county. Despite having valuable opportunities available, Placer was having trouble attracting bids from vendors.

Unfortunately, part of the problem was something Brett's team and Placer County had no control over. California state law requires all large construction contracts to be advertised in the local newspaper nearest to the location where the project will take place. Over the years, this proved to be an ineffective formality that cost time and money but rarely brought in bids.

The Placer County procurement team tried supplementing the newspaper ads with other methods for attracting bids and receiving submissions. But between expensive bidding portals and free public service solutions with very limited functionality, they had trouble finding a reliable way to increase bid volume and competitiveness.

THE SOLUTION

In an effort to attract more bids from existing and potential suppliers, Brett's team started shopping for a leading eProcurement provider. Along with looking to solve this part of their process, they decided to look for a platform that could offer as many of the features and functionalities on their "procurement wish list" as possible.

That included features for notifying suppliers of bids, RFPs, and RFQs, but also accepting submissions and improving bid compliance. They also wanted to streamline evaluations as part of their switch to eProcurement by setting up evaluation templates and bringing them online. This would help Placer expedite the process with automatic bid analysis and digital scorecard tools, while cutting down on printing paper.

Plus, the Placer County procurement department wanted to move away from using multiple siloed platforms and bring all of their purchasing online in one place. By transitioning to **bids&tenders** eProcurement platform, Placer took their process to the next level.

THE RESULT

Within months of using **bids&tenders**, Brett's team started receiving a higher quantity of bids that are both competitive and compliant. They no longer have to disqualify vendors for clerical errors or incomplete entries because **bids&tenders** checks submissions for accuracy and completion – flagging necessary changes in real time.

*The process of getting the eProcurement system up and running was surprisingly painless. The **bids&tenders** team worked with us to transition staff onto the platform, customize and upload templates, and even create a branded submission portal for vendors.*

The improved compliance and ability to archive forms and submissions in one place has made handling audits a lot easier as well, giving the procurement team greater peace of mind.

By digitizing, and ultimately modernizing the procurement process, the purchasing department is confident they are truly helping the County's government and civil servants provide more efficient and effective public services.



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