

Understanding CUNY Guidelines, Dollar Thresholds, and Key Contacts

Navigating the procurement process at John Jay College requires a solid understanding of **CUNY policies**, the **CUNYBuy system**, and **appropriate purchasing protocols**. Whether you're a new employee or a long-time staff member, following these guidelines ensures transparency, efficiency, and compliance with state and university rules.

Below is a comprehensive list of the **Do's and Don'ts of Procurement**—customized for John Jay College—and supported by helpful contacts and threshold requirements.

Important Notice: *You are not authorized to make any purchasing commitments on behalf of the College. Only the Procurement Office has the legal authority to commit the College to a purchase. Engaging with a vendor or authorizing work prior to completing procurement procedures and receiving an approved Purchase Order (PO) is strictly prohibited and violates CUNY policy. Individuals who make unauthorized commitments may be held personally and financially liable.*

Do's: Best Practices for Successful Procurement

- **Plan Ahead:** Allow enough lead time for approvals, vendor registration, quotes, and competitive bidding if required. Rushed purchases risk non-compliance or delays.
- **Use CUNYBuy:** All purchase requests, quotes, and orders must be processed through the **CUNYBuy system**. No outside arrangements should be made without the issuance of a PO.
- **Know the Thresholds:** CUNY's dollar thresholds determine the type of procurement process required:

Purchase Amount	Procurement Requirement
\$0 – \$999	Small purchase – Quote required if not through Marketplace; pricing must be reasonable
\$1,000 – \$19,999	Informal Purchase – Requires 3 written quotes, may require written justification over \$5K.
\$20,000 – \$49,999	Formal Quote Process – Requires 3 written quotes, written justification
\$50,000 and above	Competitive Procurement – Requires public advertising and sealed bids/RFP

- **Use Preferred Vendors:** Prioritize using vendors already on **NYS OGS, CUNY contracts**, or **State-authorized lists** whenever possible.
- **Support MWBE and SDVOB Goals:**
New York State requires that agencies—including CUNY colleges—actively seek and include:
 - **MWBE vendors:** Certified **Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises**
 - **SDVOB vendors:** Certified **Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Businesses**

Departments are encouraged to work with the Purchasing Office to meet state-mandated diversity goals in procurement.

- **Verify Vendor Registration:** CUNY policy prohibits doing business with vendors who are not registered in CUNYBuy.

- **Secure Pre-Approval:** All purchases must be pre-approved by appropriate department heads and/or the Purchasing Office before initiating.
- **Keep Documentation:** Save all related materials—quotes, justifications, emails, and vendor communications—for compliance and audit readiness.
- **Act Ethically:** Follow CUNY’s Code of Conduct. Always disclose potential conflicts of interest and avoid any preferential treatment of vendors.
- **Engage Purchasing Early:** For complex purchases (e.g., services, large-dollar items, software, or multi-year contracts), contact the Purchasing Office at the start of your planning.

Don’ts: Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Don’t Split Purchases:** Splitting a single purchase into smaller transactions to stay below a quote or bid threshold is prohibited.
- **Don’t Circumvent CUNYBuy:** All transactions must run through CUNYBuy—no verbal agreements, side emails, or unofficial arrangements.
- **Don’t Sign Contracts Yourself:** Only designated contracting officers have legal authority to sign vendor contracts on behalf of the College.
- **Don’t Skip Requirements:** If your purchase falls into a higher threshold, the associated documentation (quotes, bids, etc.) is mandatory.
- **Don’t Make After-the-Fact Purchases:** Any purchase made without prior approval is considered unauthorized and may not be paid or reimbursed.
- **Don’t Use Unregistered Vendors:** Business cannot proceed until the vendor is approved and registered in CUNYBuy.
- **Don’t Accept Gifts or Perks:** Accepting incentives or gifts from vendors violates ethical guidelines and may result in disciplinary action.
- **Don’t Delay Invoice Submissions:** Prompt invoice processing protects vendor relationships and ensures compliance with State prompt payment rules.
- **Don’t Use Personal Funds:** Reimbursement is not guaranteed for unauthorized out-of-pocket purchases.
- **Don’t Ignore Updates:** CUNY procurement policies and systems evolve—keep current by attending training or reading official announcements.

Key Purchasing Contacts

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Staying informed and compliant protects the College, supports accountability, and ensures that public funds are used responsibly. When in doubt—ask first. The Purchasing Office is here to help every step of the way.
