

Procurement Professional - Frequently Asked Questions

This Frequently Asked Questions guide is meant to assist new eMaryland Marketplace users from the State of Maryland and cooperative purchasing organizations. The new eMaryland Marketplace will be available as of 01/03/2012. Login access to the old eMaryland Marketplace is set to be cutoff as of 01/31/2012.

Logging In

1. What if I cannot login to eMaryland Marketplace?

If you had a login ID to the old eMaryland Marketplace, you can use this login ID to access the new eMaryland Marketplace by clicking the "Forgot your password" link below the login area. Fill in the blanks on the subsequent screens and you will be emailed a new temporary password to use. Upon logging into the new eMaryland Marketplace for the first time, you will be asked to reset this password to something you can remember.

If you did NOT have a login ID to the old eMaryland Marketplace, you do not have an account to the new eMaryland yet. User accounts must be setup by an administrator. Contact your Organization's administrator to request an account. If you do not know who your Organization's administrator is, please contact emaryland@dgs.state.md.us. Your Organization's administrator can either set up an account for you, or submit a form to emaryland@dgs.state.md.us to have an account set up for you.

2. What if I cannot remember my password?

On the new eMaryland Marketplace Login screen, click the "Forgot your password" link below the login area. Fill in the blanks on the subsequent screens and you will be emailed a new temporary password to use. Upon logging into the new eMaryland Marketplace, you will be asked to reset this password to something you can remember.

Roles

1. Why can't I create a solicitation (Bid) document? Why can't I see administrative screens?

The functions you can view and access are dependent upon what roles you have been assigned, and what role you currently have selected. Once you login, each role that you have been assigned appears as a tab in the top-right of the screen. Ensure that you have selected the role that has rights to the functions you want to utilize.

NOTE: If you have been assigned only one role, then no tabs will appear along the top-right. You are always automatically in that role while you are logged in to eMaryland Marketplace. If you have a question about your roles, please contact emaryland@dgs.state.md.us.

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2. What roles have access to which functions?

Each role automatically has rights to certain functions, but may also permit other functions be assigned to a specific user. Generally, Basic Purchasing users can create, modify and approve any document type; Inquiry users can view any document, but not create or modify any document; and administrative users can add or modify approval paths, users, department/locations, etc.

Error Messages

1. What are the red and yellow error messages?

Red error messages indicate an issue with a document that must be corrected before the document can be processed forward. Examples include:

- No items – There are no line-items on a Bid for which vendors can provide a price quote. Return to the Items tab of the document to add at least one.
- Bid opening date is missing or is not later than current date and time – The Bid Opening Date or response due date has not been entered or has passed. Return to the General tab to enter a Bid Opening Date that is in the future.

Yellow warning messages indicate an issue with a document that does NOT have to be corrected before the document can be processed forward; however it is important that you are aware of them. Examples include:

- No Bid Bidder – No vendors have been selected to be notified about the Bid when you post it. Return to the Bidders tab to add the vendors that need to be notified.

2. Why do I see an error message after saving on the General tab of a Bid?

The error received when saving on the General tab of a Bid is to notify that you must set up at least one line-item before you can post the Bid document. Simply proceed to the next tab – the Items tab – to set up the document's line-items.

Commodity Codes

1. What is the NIGP Code and what is it used for?

The NIGP (National Institute of Government Procurement) code is a classification system or taxonomy used to categorize different goods and services to help organize and facilitate spend management activities including e-procurement. This is the same commodity code structure used in the old eMaryland Marketplace system.

2. Why can't I find the NIGP code I am looking for? Can codes be added to the NIGP code?

Sometimes different terms are used locally to describe a commodity or service than is used in the NIGP descriptions. Text can be added to the NIGP code descriptions that are more commonly used by the state to make searching more intuitive and productive. Usually, new codes are not necessary; however they can be added by the Department of General Services administrators if necessary.

3. What's the difference between the NIGP Class, NIGP Class-item and Commodity Code fields when setting up a line-item?

The NIGP Class is the first three digits of a commodity code. The NIGP Class-item is the second two digits. Together, they make the 5-digit commodity code that was used in the old eMaryland Marketplace. For solicitations in the new eMaryland Marketplace, the NIGP Class and Class-item are all you will use.

The Commodity Code field on this screen allows you to associate the line-item with a full 11-digit commodity code; however this will not be used for solicitations. These are generally only used when setting up contracts.

4. Can I add more than one NIGP code to a line item so that additional vendors will match my Bid?

While more than one NIGP code cannot be added to a single line-item, you can add additional vendors to notify about the solicitation using as many NIGP codes as desired. Upon selecting "Lookup and Add Vendors" from

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the Bidders tab, a search screen appears that allows you to search for vendors using NIGP Class and/or Class-item associations.

Selecting a NIGP Class and/or Class-item and clicking “Find It” will return all vendors associated with those codes and allow you to add them to your Bid to notify them.

Solicitations (Bids)

1. If we don't allow solicitation responses online, how do we use the system?

The general process for using the system will be the same regardless of whether responses will be allowed online not, with two exceptions:

- A. On the General tab of the Bid, ensure “Allow Electronic Response” is NOT checked and click “Save & Continue” on the bottom of the screen before posting it.
- B. When it comes time to post the award, you first must enter the Quote(s) on behalf of the vendor(s) you are awarding from the Bid Tabulation document. Then, you will be able to indicate, submit and post the award(s).

2. Why don't I see a document number when I create a new Bid?

Document numbers are not assigned to any document until the first tab – the General tab – has been completed and saved successfully. Once the General tab has been saved successfully, a number will appear along the top of the document. This indicates that the document is in the system permanently, meaning you can leave the document or the system and access it any time later.

3. Why are there three numbers for the time when I click on the calendar icon?

The third set of numbers allows you indicate seconds. This is usually ignored and left at “00.”

4. Why is the date and time not staying as selected?

First select the time, and then click on the date required. You can not just enter as it will default back to the current date and time.

5. What is the Available Date field?

The Available Date field controls when the solicitation will post online. If online responses are allowed, it is also the date the vendors can begin to respond online. If the date is set in the future, you can finish the posting process in the system, and the solicitation will not be visible publicly until the date specified. If the date is set in the past, the solicitation will be visible publicly immediately upon clicking the “Send Bid” button.

6. What is the Purchase Method field?

The Purchase Method field describes the type of award that is anticipated will be made, however it does not bind you to making a specific type of award. There are two types that can be selected in eMaryland Marketplace on the General tab of a Bid – **Open Market or Blanket**. Open Market indicates that a one-time Purchase Order will be awarded. Blanket indicates that a term agreement with a beginning and end date will be awarded. Only select Blanket if you are able to estimate what the beginning and end dates of the agreement will be, as these fields will appear and require completion if you choose Blanket as the Purchase Method.

Note that the option of “Contract” also appears in this field. This option should NOT be selected. While this option works similarly to selecting “Blanket,” the State of Maryland will only be using the Blanket Purchase Order document.

7. Why do I see an error message after saving on the General tab of a Bid?

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8. Will vendors see unit costs if I enter one for my line-item(s)?

By default they will not be shown to the vendor. On the Bidders tab there is an option to show the vendors your unit cost estimates if you provided them, but this would not be done except in specific unusual circumstances.

9. Are there any limitations on the number, size or type of attachments used?

The only system limitation on attachments is that they cannot contain special characters in the file name, including < > & ' ? # [] %, and they cannot end in the file extension “.exe.” Note however that extremely large files may take additional time to upload.

10. When adding vendors to my Bid to notify, do I have to select them on every page?

Yes, the new eMaryland Marketplace currently allows selecting only one page of vendors (25) at a time. If more than one page of vendors matches your search, you will need to select all on each page, and then click “Save & Next Page” on the bottom of the screen, until you have reached the last page of vendors. (An enhancement has been requested to allow select all pages. This will be available in the near future and we apologize for the inconvenience.)

11. How can I tell which of the vendors I'm notifying are SBR or MBE?

As soon as you have added vendors to your Bid, you can run a report that will tell you which are SBR and MBE by clicking on the pie chart icon on the top-left of the screen. Next, click on the report entitled “SBR-MBE Status of Bidder List” and input the Bid # in the screen that displays. Lastly, click the format you would like to view the report in, either .pdf, .rtf (word), .xls (excel) or .csv.

12. How do Notes work?

Notes are internal only, meaning that the vendors and public will not be able to view any notes you enter on the Notes tab of a Bid. You can use this field to document information about the solicitation that is not necessary for the vendors to know.

13. How does Q&A work?

Q&A is an optional feature that allows you to post questions you've received from vendors and your answers. The goal is to limit the number of repeat questions you get from the vendor community.

There is also the ability with the Q&A feature to allow vendors to submit questions online through eMaryland Marketplace. If turned on, the questions vendors submit will appear on the Q&A tab to be answered. When answering a question submitted through the system, you have the option to answer only the vendor that asked the question, or to post the question and answer to everyone.

NOTE: This feature does NOT replace addendum requirements related to vendor Q&A.

14. Do my documents have to be approved before they can be posted or awarded?

No, the new eMaryland supports an approval process at both points in the process, but you do not have to get documents approved unless an administrator has set up a required approval process.

If you need to have an approval process set up in the new eMaryland Marketplace, please contact emaryland@dgs.state.md.us.

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15. When posting my solicitation, should I include the attachments with the email notifications?

This is NOT recommended. If you have attached large files and/or are notifying many vendors, this may affect the performance of your email system. Vendors will be able to see and download the solicitation attachments when viewing the document online, so there is no need to include them in the email notification.

16. When a vendor downloads the solicitation, will I be notified?

No, you are not notified each time a vendor downloads a solicitation. However, you can review the list of interested vendors by looking at the Bid Holder List. You can view the Bid Holder List while the Bid is published by logging in, then hovering your mouse over Documents->Bids and selecting "Sent." The list of your Organization's published Bids will then appear. The far right column has a link to view the Bid Holder List. Click this "List" link for your Bid.

17. Will I be able to see vendor responses submitted online before the due date (Bid Opening Date)?

No, responses submitted online are not viewable until the Bid Opening Date has been reached you click the "Open Bid" button on the Summary tab of the document.

If you want to see who has submitted online responses, you can do this by clicking the Quote Activity tab on your Bid, which is accessibly by first clicking the Bidders tab.

18. How do I process an amendment to update an attachment?

If you want to update a document that's already attached to your Bid via amendment, you will need to update the document outside of the system, then save and attach this new version on the Attachments tab of the Amendment document.

You can then either delete the old version, or if you want to retain a history of the attachments, you can simply provide a new description of the old version, referring vendors to the new version. Note that you will then need to review and apply this change by clicking "Apply Bid Amendment" from the Summary tab of the document.

19. What changes can and can't be made by an amendment? And if they can't then what do I do?

Once a Bid has been submitted, the ability to make changes to it is reduced to what can be changed via amendment. The following information can be changed via a Bid Amendment:

- Allow Electronic Response – When checked, vendors can respond to this solicitation online (does not prohibit offline response). When unchecked, vendors must respond offline.
- Bid Opening Date – Due date and time for vendor responses to the solicitation. No responses can be submitted after this date (select a time in the future).
- Available Date – Date and time that vendors will be able to view the solicitation online and respond (select a time in the past to have the solicitation be immediately published after sending).
- Info Contact – The contact information that should be used by vendors for the solicitation.
- Pre-Bid Conference – Date, time and other information about the pre-bid conference (if applicable).
- All Line-item Information – Line-items can be fully edited, added and cancelled.
- All Attachments – Attachments can be added and deleted.

The information that CANNOT be changed via a Bid Amendment includes the Short and Bulletin Descriptions, the Bid Type (Open/Closed), and the Department / Location. If one or more of these fields must be edited, the only option is to cancel the current Bid, make a copy of it, then edit and post the new copy.

This can be done by accessing the Bid that needs to be cancelled, going to the Summary tab, clicking "Cancel Bid" (which notifies all of the vendors), clicking "Clone Bid," then editing the new document that appears.

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20. Will vendors' online responses be withdrawn once a solicitation amendment is processed like the old eMaryland Marketplace?

No, the new eMaryland Marketplace does NOT automatically withdraw vendors' online responses when an amendment is applied. Instead, the new system notifies the vendors about the amendment and informs them that they must log in to view and acknowledge the amendment, and that not doing so may affect whether they can be awarded.

Upon acknowledging amendments, the vendor is told they must re-visit any responses they have previously submitted or are currently working on to ensure they conform to the solicitation as amended. If a vendor fails to acknowledge an amendment, a yellow warning appears on their online response and you can see which amendments they did not acknowledge and make the determination whether they are still eligible for award.

21. Do I have to create a Purchase Order if my Organization will not use the new eMaryland Marketplace to manage contracts or Purchase Orders?

Yes, the final step to publishing a solicitation award is to create a Purchase Order. However, you do not have to complete or do anything with this Purchase Order after creating it. Note that Purchase Orders will not be sent to the vendor or be visible publicly unless completed, submitted and sent.

22. List doesn't always show on public screen for bids. Everyone can see who downloaded/acknowledge bid if the List is shown.

The ability to see this list by the vendors and the public is controlled by the Buyer when setting up the Bid. By default, this list is hidden from public view; they have to uncheck "Hide Bid Holder List on Vendor Side" on the Bidders tab of the Bid. However, the buyer can always see this list when logged in by going to Documents->Bids->Sent. When the list of Bids appears, the "List" link appears on the far right. If they allowed electronic response, they can also see who responded by going to the Bidders tab of their Bid, then clicking the Quote Activity tab underneath it.

23. How do I look at buyer's bid after it is Posted to make sure they have a complete bidders list, without affecting their bid?

You can search for it through Advanced Search and view the Summary tab. All of the selected Bidders are listed in the Bidders table.