



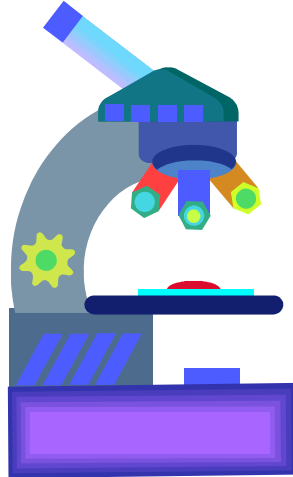
**HOMELAND EQUIPMENT AND LABORATORY  
PRODUCTS CONTRACT**

**(HELP CONTRACT)**

**ISSUED AND ADMINISTERED BY THE  
ARKANSAS OFFICE OF STATE PROCUREMENT**

**EXTENDED UNTIL JUNE 30, 2008**

## BENEFITS OF USING THIS CONTRACT



The Arkansas Office of State Procurement awarded the Multi-State Laboratory Supply and "Homeland Equipment Laboratory Products" Contract (HELP) in August 2004 for the procurement of laboratory supplies, laboratory products and domestic preparedness products. This contract is a permissive use contract for Arkansas state agencies and may be used by counties, cities, school districts and other governmental entities.

This contract was developed and is administered by the Arkansas Office of State Procurement. The intent in establishing a multi-state contract was to combine purchasing volume with other States to realize competitive pricing. Your facility should receive lower costs for the products you have been purchasing in the past, while also having a selection of vendors. Your facility will be able to order and track your orders online as well as research product specifications, print literature, and perform pricing comparisons between similar products by different manufacturers. The contract has many other conveniences that will greatly assist your agency. This contract will allow your agency to make business decisions to use multiple vendors including; VWR International, Fisher Scientific, or OraSure (primarily this company manufactures a rapid HIV testing kit.) The contract was developed to best fit the needs of each facility. The pricing is firm or better during the annual contract to assist your facility in budget planning. The vendors may increase their pricing, once annually, but it must be approved by the Arkansas Office of State Procurement prior to those costs being applied.

Delivery of routine consumable items on this contract is within 72 hours after receipt of order. Special orders or large quantities of orders will be negotiated separately between the vendors and ordering facilities.

On large quantity orders, specialized equipment, or upon establishing a new laboratory, special pricing discounts are available by the vendors. Each vendor has agreed to work with the facility to obtain the best pricing available for your new laboratory.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



This office will continue to closely monitor this contract. We rely on the using agencies to give us feedback on the success and/or problems you may encounter. Please feel free to contact this office with any questions, concerns, or suggestions to improve the quality of this contract.

On the attachment you will find a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) that may assist you. As new questions are asked by our Participating States and ordering facilities, and as changes occur on the contract, this information will be posted on the Arkansas Office of State Purchasing website.

[www.state.ar.us/dfa/purchasing](http://www.state.ar.us/dfa/purchasing)

The Arkansas Office of State Procurement is continually negotiating with the vendors for better pricing on this contract. When additional States or facilities utilize this contract, it allows us leverage to negotiate with the contract vendors to enable better pricing for all Participating States and facilities. Thank you for your interest and hopeful participation in this contract.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or suggestions to this contract. I can be reached at:

**Arkansas Office of State Procurement**

**[rebecca.oneal@dfa.state.ar.us](mailto:rebecca.oneal@dfa.state.ar.us)**

**Phone: 501-324-9314**

**Fax: 501-324-9311**

**Question 1:** Why is this called the "HELP" contract?

**Answer 1:** The actual name is the "Multi-State Laboratory Supply and Homeland Equipment Laboratory Products ("HELP") Contract"

It is much easier to refer to the contract as "HELP".

**Question 2:** Does this mean we don't have to go through sending our requests for laboratory supplies to the Office of State Procurement for formal bidding?

**Answer 2:** Yes. In Arkansas, as long as each item you are ordering is under \$25,000.00. (The formal bid dollar limit for the State of Arkansas. Each Participating State will establish their dollar limits.) **Example:** If you have 10 microscopes and each one is priced at 24,999.99 you can use the HELP contract. But, if you have a microscope that costs 25,000.01 or over, it will be necessary for the Arkansas Office of State Purchasing to issue a formal bid.

**Question 3:** What are all the attachments to the contract? A "Participating Addendum", the "Facility Membership Application", the "Ordering Instructions"?

**Answer 3:** The "Participating Addendum" is only for other States that may want to join the State of Arkansas HELP contract. If you are an Arkansas State Agency you do not need to complete this form. If your facility plans on using the contract, it WILL be necessary for your agency to complete "Facility Membership Application" and send it in to OSP. Please retain a copy for your records. This form will provide our office with information on the agencies using the contract and will assist us if we need to specifically contact your facility for direct information relating to the contract.

The "Ordering Instructions" are a convenient way for your facility to have information readily available concerning the contact information for the vendor, accounts payable information, the vendor's internet address, phone number, your account representative's name and number. The vendor's will also contact each facility that indicates an interest in ordering and establish account numbers, set up computer profiles so ordering on-line is available (or within perimeters established at your facility.)



**Question 4:** How will our facility know what the actual cost of an item is?

**Answer 4:** The vendors have loaded all information in their computer database with the discounts included. If your agency will contact the vendors and establish an account, you have the ability to enter a description of the item you are to order, the manufacturer number, or the vendor product number. The HELP contract price for that item will appear on your computer screen. That will be your contract price for that item.

**Question 5:** What if we already have a contract with one of the vendors or are associated with a different multi-state cooperative contract?

**Answer 5:** The awarded vendors are aware there are existing contracts outstanding between various states and their companies. The vendors are willing to work directly with each State to continue with their present contracts, or to negotiate to assist the States to either complete their existing contracts, or allow the States to merge with other multi-state contracts. The awarded vendors have agreed to work with each situation on a case-by-case basis.

**Question 6:** What if we get poor quality service from a vendor, or they are consistently not meeting the delivery schedule, are invoicing us incorrectly, are shipping partial orders, etc?

**Answer 6:** First, report their performance to this office by completing a "Vendor Performance Report" (VPR) to this office. We will intercede and make a determination on how to resolve the problem. Another solution is you have a choice between vendors. Use those choices to your advantage. You can easily penalize a vendor by simply not electing to use them on future procurements.

**Question 7:** So we have a choice? We don't have to pick just one vendor off of the contract?

**Answer 7:** No. Use the contract effectively by using all the vendors. Compare prices, compare quality of service you receive, compare the products, how easy is their website for you to navigate? Is their customer service department efficient when you need their assistance? Did their account representative contact you and offer their services in helping you learn to order from the contract?

**Question 8:** Still have questions?

**Answer: 8:** Call the Arkansas Office of State Procurement at 501-324-9314.

