

Inmate Trust-Fund Contracts: Fast Awards, Long-term Potential

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Procurement time frames can vary significantly depending on many factors including whether the project is a rebid of a current contract or a new purchase, as well as the size and type of the procuring agency or department. However, the primary driver in determining how long a procurement process will last is the type of technology being solicited. Complex system build outs like those involved in radio system procurements are often open for several months. Simpler purchases, particularly for commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) products, can sometimes take only a matter of weeks.

Inmate trust fund or commissary accounts contain money that can be used to purchase items in a prison commissary and to make phone calls. The average inmate trust-fund account procurement is open for approximately 24 days from the time the solicitation is released to the time when proposals are due. While it is never out of the question, the majority of inmate trust-fund account procurements do not hold a pre-proposal conference; however, if a conference is held, it is usually held sometime during the second week of procurement. Due to the common nature of these types of contracts, it is unusual for a consultant to be hired prior to the purchase of a system.

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