

LETTER FOR BOARD PACKET -

To be included when using your first Illinois Together cooperative contract.

This letter explains the importance of the Master Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing Agreement (MICPA). The MICPA must be signed by your district before utilizing your first Illinois Together contract. Once signed, it remains in effect and covers all future contracts supported by Bespoke Community.

Illinois Together Cooperative Purchasing

Owned by Illinois ASBO – Powered by Bespoke Community

Introduction:

Illinois Together is a cooperative purchasing group owned by the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (Illinois ASBO). It exists to give Illinois school districts access to high-quality, competitively bid contracts. The cooperative is powered by Bespoke Community Cooperatives, a public benefit corporation that provides the administrative support needed to run community purchasing groups across the country. While Bespoke Community itself is not a cooperative, it ensures that Illinois Together and other member-driven groups can operate effectively, from bid development through contract administration. Cooperative contracts deliver value to the entire community, including the districts that lead the bidding, the schools that utilize the contracts, and the businesses that participate.

Why Illinois Together Exists:

Illinois Together was created by Illinois ASBO to provide its members with locally owned and governed cooperative contracts. These contracts are designed by Illinois schools, for Illinois schools, and give districts access to pricing and terms that may not be available on their own. By leveraging the power of collaboration, Illinois Together helps districts reduce procurement time, achieve cost savings, and support vendor diversity goals. The Master Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing Agreement (MICPA) is the framework that allows this collaboration to happen. It covers all Bespoke-supported communities, including Illinois Together, ensuring that districts have both the authority and legal protections needed to participate in cooperative contracts across multiple groups.

Locally Bid Contracts for Statewide Benefit:

Each Illinois Together contract is competitively procured by an Illinois school district on behalf of all IASBO members. Which is allowed under Illinois Governmental Joint Purchasing Act, 30 ILCS 525. This means that the contract before your board was bid by an Illinois school district for the benefit of other districts across the state, as part of the IASBO-owned Illinois Together cooperative purchasing group. Once a contract is awarded, Bespoke Community provides administrative support to the leading district, the awarded vendor, and participating members, ensuring smooth execution and broader awareness.

The Importance of the MICPA:

To participate in Illinois Together cooperative contracts, districts must sign the Master Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing Agreement (MICPA). This document is signed once and acknowledges the mutual benefits of cooperative purchasing and confirms that all procurements are conducted in accordance with relevant statutes. It also indemnifies both the district leading the bid and the districts choosing to participate.

Summary:

- Illinois Together is a cooperative purchasing group owned by Illinois ASBO and powered by Bespoke Community.
- Contracts are competitively procured by Illinois school districts for the benefit of peers statewide.
- Utilizing Illinois Together contracts are allowed under Illinois Governmental Joint Purchasing Act, 30 ILCS 525. This act allows public entities in Illinois to collaboratively purchase goods and services through competitive bidding or cooperative programs to achieve cost savings and efficiency.
- Signing the MICPA allows districts to take advantage of these locally bid contracts, while ensuring legal compliance and shared protections.
- There is no fee to sign the MICPA and it does not obligate the district to ever buy off any contract supported by Bespoke Community.

Draft Cover Note / Email to Board

Subject: Approval Request – Illinois Together Cooperative Purchasing Agreement

Dear Board Members,

I am requesting approval for our district to sign the Master Intergovernmental Cooperative Purchasing Agreement (MICPA) with *Illinois Together*, a cooperative purchasing group owned by Illinois ASBO and powered by Bespoke Community.

This agreement allows our district to access competitively bid contracts that are led by other Illinois school districts on behalf of peers statewide. In other words, the contracts we may choose to use through Illinois Together were bid by Illinois schools, for Illinois schools. By participating, we gain access to better pricing, reduce the time and cost of conducting our own bids, and ensure we remain in compliance with procurement statutes.

The MICPA also protects both the district leading the bid and our district as a participant. There is no fee to sign and signing it does not commit us to use any contract, but it gives us the ability to do so when it is in our best interest.

I recommend approval so we can take advantage of these cooperative opportunities to save time, reduce costs, and support Illinois schools working together.

Respectfully,

[Name]

[Title]