

# THE BUYERS NETWORK

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**THE BUYERS NETWORK** is Published Monthly by the Purchasing Division of the West Virginia Department of Administration to Promote Better Value in Public Purchasing.

## Requirements for Procurement Certification Program Updated

The Purchasing Division would like to make procurement officers aware of changes to the requirements in the West Virginia Procurement: Basic and Advanced Certification programs.

While the changes are mostly minor, some of the major ones include:

- All certification applicants must be permanently employed by agencies that fall primarily under the authority of W. Va. Code § 5A-3. Procurement officers from agencies exempt in full or in part from this authority are not eligible to participate, unless 75% or more of their job duties relate to transactions under the Purchasing Division's authority.
- A description of job duties will now be required as part of the verification form.



Please see **CERTIFICATION**, page 5

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## Tell Me More: Specifications Backbone of Any Solicitation

Successful purchases begin with quality specifications. There are many resources available to assist state employees when drafting specifications. W. Va. 148 C.S.R. 1-6.5.1 explains how specifications are written to encourage competition and meet the needs of the spending units.

When it comes to specifications, the Purchasing Division serves as a final set of eyes to ensure the specifications are not so narrow that they limit competition, but also not too vague that the agency runs the risk of not receiving what it needs. However, before the Purchasing Division should receive any requisition and its accompanying specifications, the agency, and more notably, the agency's designated procurement officer, has the responsibility of drafting, proofing, editing, and reviewing the specifications for the solicitation in question.

What does this mean for your agency? For a smaller agency with only a handful of employees, this could mean reaching out to other agencies who have procured the good or service previously and enlisting their help, whether that help comes in the form of sharing their previous solicitation's specifications or simply lending an eye and ear to the agency's current solicitation before it goes out for bid.

For larger agencies, it could mean requesting that an agency employee serving

Please see **SPECIFICATIONS**, page 4

## A New Year, New Beginnings, and New Challenges

During the last months of 2019, the Purchasing Division has worked to make sure the start of the new year kicks off smoothly and that processing continues expediently. As part of this effort, the Division has had to reassign some buyer files due to staff departures. We have also been interviewing for multiple positions to fill vacancies within the agency. While this process is a normal part of any business, we ask that you be patient with us during this time as we make some transitions and take on new roles. Meanwhile, we will continue to put our best foot forward in building and maintaining our agency partner relationships.

To that end, we get questions from time to time about our responsibilities and what the agency should be doing. To help clarify some of the roles of the agency and the Purchasing Division, we will be offering a 12-part *Tell Me More* series in this year's issues of *The Buyers Network*, beginning this month with an article on specifications. As you know, every agency is organized slightly different. Therefore, your processes may vary from those described. However, within these articles, we will try to address various approaches to give a broader perspective of the topic at hand. To view this month's article on specifications, see the article on Page 1.

To help the Purchasing Division focus its efforts this year on improving the state purchasing process, we recently distributed an Agency Satisfaction Survey to find out what we did well in 2019 and where we can improve moving forward. Thank you to those of you who took time to complete this survey. We are reviewing that feedback and will use it to better our services. Most notably, we were pleased to see that many of you felt that training offered by the Purchasing Division is its most beneficial service. To see a list of upcoming trainings offered in January and February by the Purchasing

Division, see the list on Page 5. To see more on the results of this year's survey, see the article on Page 3.

As part of the feedback, it was mentioned that checklists would be a helpful tool to agencies. We would like to remind procurement officers of the checklists we maintain on our website for various procurement types. While these lists are geared to centralized purchases, they can be modified to fit your agency's requirements for agency delegated purchases. Currently, there are checklists for requests for quotations, change orders, direct awards, central delivery orders, emergency purchases, expressions of interest, and requests for proposals. These checklists can be accessed online on the Forms page located at [www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/forms.html](http://www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/forms.html) or as Appendix M in the *Purchasing Division Procedures Handbook*. We always welcome feedback on these checklists and any process we oversee. If you have any suggestions regarding these checklists or any of the tools in our toolbox, feel free to email us at [Purchasing.Division@wv.gov](mailto:Purchasing.Division@wv.gov).

As we head into the new year, let's make it count. Dust off your past procurement goals or make new ones. Whether it's to expedite processing time or attend more trainings, we are here to help any way we can. Happy new year and best wishes to you all!



## Procurement Officials Share Their 2020 Goals

Happy New Year from the West Virginia Purchasing Division! In the December issue of *The Buyers Network*, we asked readers to share their professional procurement goals for the new year. The Purchasing Division is committed to helping you reach your goals in 2020 and hopes you will take advantage of the resources available to you. Below are some of the responses.

- Process things faster and get a handle on overall Department spending. Learn more about the vendor preference process and more about *wvOASIS*.
- Continue to broaden my procurement knowledge by participating in courses offered by the Purchasing Division.
- Attend more training sessions that are beneficial to my Chapter 30 board.
- Process solicitations faster and provide more staff training.

- After a recent purchasing audit — Increase accuracy and help others purchase products correctly.
- To learn how to complete an AMA and ADO without all the rejects and corrections.
- I would like to achieve my basic certification and continue my personal and professional growth with more education.
- To be more accurate, efficient, and organized in executing purchasing procedures and practices.
- I plan to hire and train a replacement who will serve as the agency's backup procurement officer and perform procurement duties in my absence.

If you have a goal you would like to complete in 2020 and aren't sure how to begin, contact [Purchasing.Division@wv.gov](mailto:Purchasing.Division@wv.gov) or your agency's designated buyer to see how we can help.

# Agency Satisfaction Survey Provides Insights for Strengths, Future Purchasing Improvements

The Purchasing Division recently conducted an Agency Satisfaction Survey to gain feedback from our agency customers and learn how we can better improve our offerings. As the Purchasing Division plans for 2020, these responses will be reviewed and used to help improve our programs and services.

Here is a look at some of the information we learned from this survey:

- 93% of respondents indicated they had attended or participated in the Purchasing Division training program in the last year;
- 89% of respondents said the professionalism of the staff was Good or Excellent;
- 89% said the availability of information in the Purchasing Division Procedures Handbook was Good or Excellent;
- 89% of respondents rated their overall satisfaction of issued statewide contracts as Good or Excellent;
- 87% of respondents rated the knowledge of the West Virginia State Agency for Surplus Property's knowledge as Excellent;
- 82% of respondents found *The Buyer's Network* to be Good or Excellent;
- 81% of respondents rated the Purchasing Division's training program as Good or Excellent; and,
- 39% of respondents reported that they use 10 or more statewide contracts each year.

Thank you to everyone who took this survey and allowed the Purchasing Division to review its services. While this survey is conducted only once per year, your comments, concerns or suggestions are always welcome. To provide your feedback throughout the year, please contact us at [Purchasing.Division@wv.gov](mailto:Purchasing.Division@wv.gov).



The graphic above contains some of the responses received to the question, "What do you believe to be the most beneficial service provided by the Purchasing Division?"

## TOP 20 UTILIZED STATEWIDE CONTRACTS ACCORDING TO SURVEY RESPONDENTS

- |  |                                      |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Office Supplies                       | 7. Wireless Technology               | 15. Tires, New                             |
| 2. Computers (including Desktop/ Laptop) | 8. Pest Control                      | 16. Vehicle Rental Services                |
| 3. Digital Copiers                       | 9. Industrial Supplies and Equipment | 17. Batteries, Automotive and Equipment    |
| 4. WVARF — Commodities and Services      | 10. Paper Supplies                   | 18. Fuel, Gasoline, Diesel, Heating, Motor |
| 5. WVARF — Janitorial Services           | 11. Can Liners, Trash                | 19. Light Bulbs and Ballast                |
| 6. Purchasing Card Services              | 12. Office Furniture                 | 20. Paint and Supplies                     |
|  | 13. Household Cleaning Supplies      |  |
|  | 14. Record Management Services       |  |

## Checklists Available Online to Help Compile Documentation

The Purchasing Division maintains checklists to help state procurement officers make the procurement process easier and more efficient. Each list, organized by procurement type, has a breakdown of the documentation that is required at each step before the process can move forward.

Currently, there are 8 different checklists. These include: Request for Quotation; Change Order; Direct Award; Central Delivery Order; Emergency Purchase; Expression of Interest for projects *over/under* \$250,000; and Request for Proposal.

Each checklist is available in Appendix M of the *Purchasing Division Procedures Handbook* or on the forms page at [WVPurchasing.gov](http://WVPurchasing.gov). These checklists can be further modified by the agency to fit their processes. While the information on each checklist is accurate in most cases, there may be occasion where additional information may be needed or required. If you have any questions regarding these checklists, please contact your Purchasing Division buyer.





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## SPECIFICATIONS

Continued from Page 1

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as a subject matter expert in the field draft the specifications, then send them for review to the agency procurement officer for accuracy, consistency, clarity, and completeness.

For all agencies, it can mean looking at past purchases and determining if the market and specifications have remained the same, or if the market has changed, updating the specifications to reflect that. Whatever method an agency uses to draft specifications for a solicitation, the purpose of good specifications remains the same—to describe what an agency needs.

“As the end user, the agency has a duty to draft, review, and finalize any specifications required to solicit needed goods and/or services prior to submitting those specifications to the Purchasing Division,” said Assistant Purchasing Director Frank Whittaker. “While the Purchasing Division makes it a best practice to review the specifications it receives prior to publishing a solicitation, the agency must ensure those specifications are in a shape requiring very few, if any, changes prior to submitting them to the Purchasing Division. Doing so will allow the process to move much more quickly and minimize the need for back and forth between the agency and the Purchasing Division.”

When writing specifications, the drafter of those specifications must first understand the need so that he or she can effectively communicate what is required by the vendor when submitting a bid. The drafter should understand what, how much, how big, where, and when, as well as know what type of contract it’s looking for. The solicitation might seek a fixed amount contract for a single purchase or an open-end contract where multiple, reoccurring purchases are expected to occur. Having answers to these questions before the agency begins the competitive solicitation process will ensure that the agency knows

exactly what it needs and relays that information effectively to vendors.

Once those questions have been answered, the agency should conduct market research for the good or service, to include finding out what's available and who provides it. Market research can take on many forms, including talking to other agency procurement officers, as mentioned previously, or talking to vendors themselves. There are some restrictions, however, when talking to vendors. They cannot be paid and cannot influence specifications in their favor. To maintain fairness, the agency should contact more than one vendor. Agencies may conduct a pre-specification meeting with known vendors of the good or service. This would give the agency the opportunity to talk to vendors equally and openly. Only objective information should be obtained as part of these discussions.

Finally, an agency should consider the acquisition and delivery time before it submits a requisition to the Purchasing Division. If a solicitation is expected to be complex in nature, the agency should allow for additional lead time. The Purchasing Division emails a monthly *Expiring Contracts* report to all designated procurement officers to assist them in planning for upcoming purchases. The report includes all open-ended contracts that are scheduled to expire within 90 days. The December 2019 report can be viewed online at [http://intranet.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/eArchive/ExpiringContractReports/ECR\\_2019\\_12\\_December.pdf](http://intranet.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/eArchive/ExpiringContractReports/ECR_2019_12_December.pdf).

Once the agency feels that it has acceptable specifications, it should then submit those specifications along with the requisition to its Purchasing Division buyer, who will perform a review of the specifications to ensure they meet the letter of the law.

## Department of Administration's Employee of the Year



Purchasing Division Senior Buyer Jessica S. Chambers was awarded the Department of Administration's *Employee of the Year* for 2019.

A state employee for 20 years, Chambers has worked at the Purchasing Division for almost four years. She serves as the agency procurement officer for the Office of Technology and all boards and commissions.

Chambers was nominated by her peers and was selected as the August *Employee of the Month* which made her eligible for the *Employee of the Year* award. Following a vote of Department of Administration employees, Chambers was announced as the winner in December.

Congratulations, Jessica, on this recognition. We are thankful to have you as a Purchasing Division employee.

## CERTIFICATION

Continued from Page 1

The new rules also clarify that training hours accumulated at the annual Agency Purchasing Conference count toward the number of training hours required for certification.

Additional updates were made to the re-certification requirements for those individuals who have already achieved basic and/or advanced certification. The new requirements, which must be completed every three years in order to maintain certification, are as follows:

- Attend one of the next three Agency Purchasing Conferences, from the date of the certification/re-certification. Formerly, attendance was required at two conferences of the next three.
- An employee must be permanently employed by the agency for which it completes the purchasing duties under W. Va. Code § 5A-3. This applies to those individuals who seek certification for the first time and those who wish to recertify.

The following re-certification requirements have not changed:

- Attend a minimum of 20 hours of training offered by the Purchasing Division within the three-year period beginning with the date of the recipient's certification/re-certification.
- Submit a re-certification verification form that includes the signatures of the recipient's immediate supervisor and agency head, as well as confirmation from the department's designated procurement officer when applicable.

The complete list of certification recipients is posted on the Purchasing Division's website at [www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/training/Certification](http://www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/training/Certification). The list includes each recipient's date of certification/re-certification and the expiration date of his or her certification/re-certification. At the time of this publication, there were 67 Basic Certification recipients and 14 Advanced Certification recipients.

The certification program recognizes state procurement officials who exhibit excellence in procurement procedures within state government. Procurement officers who have questions about their re-certification progress or are interested in participating in the certification program should contact Courtney Johnson at 304.558.4213 or [Courtney.S.Johnson@wv.gov](mailto:Courtney.S.Johnson@wv.gov).

## Purchasing Division Recognizes its Latest Advanced Certification Recipient

The Purchasing Division is pleased to announce Shane Hall as the latest recipient in its West Virginia Procurement: Advanced Certification program.

Hall, an Inspector 3 for the Purchasing Division, has worked for the state for 20 years.

"I am very grateful and appreciate the opportunity to obtain the Advanced Certification," he said.

State agency procurement officers interested in obtaining the basic and/or advanced certification may review the requirements at [www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/training/Certification](http://www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/training/Certification). Information regarding recent updates to the certification program can be found on Page 1.

Questions regarding the certification program may be directed to Courtney Johnson at [Courtney.S.Johnson@wv.gov](mailto:Courtney.S.Johnson@wv.gov) or 304.558.4213.

The Purchasing Division would like to congratulate Hall on this noteworthy accomplishment!

Buyers Network

## Dates to Remember

For more information on these events, contact us at [Purchasing.Training@wv.gov](mailto:Purchasing.Training@wv.gov) or visit [WVPurchasing.gov](http://WVPurchasing.gov) and click on the Training link.

To register, visit [onlinelearning.wv.gov](http://onlinelearning.wv.gov).

**Public Procurement Basics and Tools/Resources** — Webinar  
Jan. 15, 2020 | 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

**Developing Specifications and Contracting** — Webinar  
Jan. 29, 2020 | 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

**Preparing and Evaluating RFPs**  
Feb. 12, 2020 | 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

**Vendor Registration** — Webinar  
Feb. 26, 2020 | 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

## THE BUYERS NETWORK

Purchasing Division  
State Capitol Complex  
2019 Washington Street, East  
Charleston, WV 25305-0130

Telephone: 304.558.2306  
8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (M-F)

**Jim Justice**  
Governor

**Mike Sheets**  
Director  
Purchasing Division

Editor  
**Samantha Knapp**

Contributing Reporters  
**Jessica Chambers**  
**Courtney Johnson**

# Current Statewide Contract Update

(As of December 13, 2019)

This page includes a listing of current changes made to statewide contracts issued by the Purchasing Division. Information and dates listed in this **Current Statewide Contract Update** are subject to change. All statewide contracts are available online at [www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/swc](http://www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/swc). For more information, please contact the buyer assigned to statewide contracts.

## New Contracts

<b>Contract</b>	<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
CRENTAL20A	Enterprise	Vehicle Leasing Services	11/15/19 -09/15/21
CRENTAL20B	Hertz	Vehicle Leasing Services	11/15/19 -09/15/21
FIRETRK20B	HME INC	Firefighting equipment	12/01/19 -08/31/21
SBUS20A	Blue Bird Bus Sales of Pittsburgh	Busses	01/01/20 -12/31/20
SBUS20B	Matheny Motor Truck Co	Busses	01/01/20 -12/31/20
SBUS20C	Worldwide Equip of WV Inc	Busses	01/01/20 -12/31/20

## Contract Renewals

<b>Contract</b>	<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
CPHONE13AA	AT&T Mobility	Cellular telephone	12/31/19 -12/31/20
CPHONE13B	Verizon	Cellular telephone	01/01/20 -12/31/20
FOOD16A	A F Wendling Inc	Food Distribution Services	12/01/19 -12/31/19
NTIRE18	Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co	Tires	11/15/19 -11/14/20

## Miscellaneous Actions

<b>Contract</b>	<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>
DEBT19A	Quality Asset Recovery Llc	Debt collection	To change the Start Date to the original contract 01/01/2019.

DEBT19B	Penn Credit Corp	Debt collection	To change the Start Date to the original contract 01/01/2019. <i>This applies to all DEBT19* contracts listed.</i>
DEBT19C	Ars National Services Inc	Debt collection	
DEBT19D	I.C. System, Inc.	Debt collection	
DEBT19E	Pioneer Credit	Debt collection	
ESRI	Environmental Systems Research	Geographic info system	To publish the updated pricing pages
PKGSVS17	FedEx	Delivery services	To publish the 2019/2020 Service Guide

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Below is a list of Purchasing Division buyers assigned to specific state agencies.

<b>BUYER</b>	<b>E-MAIL</b>	<b>PHONE</b>
<i>Supervisors</i>		
Tara Lyle	Tara.L.Lyle@wv.gov	558-2544
Guy Nisbet	Guy.L.Nisbet@wv.gov	558-2596
Linda Harper	Linda.B.Harper@wv.gov	558-0468
<i>Senior Buyers</i>		
Mark Atkins	Mark.A.Atkins@wv.gov	558-2307
Jessica Chambers	Jessica.S.Chambers@wv.gov	558-0246
Crystal Husted	Crystal.G.Husted@wv.gov	558-2402
Brittany Ingraham	Brittany.E.Ingraham@wv.gov	558-2157
Melissa Pettrey	Melissa.K.Pettrey@wv.gov	558-0094
<i>Buyers</i>		
Dusty Smith	Dusty.J.Smith@wv.gov	558-2063