

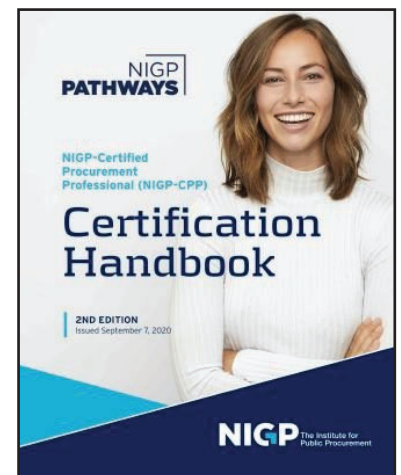
National Procurement Certification Now Eligible for Discretionary Pay Increase

The Division of Personnel (DOP) is now recognizing the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing's Certified Procurement Professional (NIGP-CPP) certification as eligible for a discretionary increase under the Pay Plan Policy. The NIGP-CPP is a new certification available to mid- and executive-level leaders in public procurement.

Launched in 2019, the NIGP-CPP program focuses on procurement techniques (i.e. planning, solicitation, and contract administration) covered in other certification programs, as well as emphasizes the critical areas of strategy, business principles and operations, and leadership. Unlike other certification programs, the NIGP-CPP places more value on competency than years of experience.

This certification qualifies for an in-range salary adjustment of up to five percent. The request for a discretionary increase must meet all other requirements as set forth in the Pay Plan Policy. Upon achieving certification, a Request for Approval form must be submitted to the DOP.

For more information about the certification requirements, visit the NIGP website at www.nigp.org/certification/nigp-cpp.



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Understanding Bid Withdrawal and its Requirements

In some cases, a vendor may find it necessary to make changes to a bid after submitting a response to a solicitation or even withdraw that bid completely. Whether or not these actions are allowed, and what will be required to accomplish them, depends largely on the stage of the solicitation currently underway.

Until bids have opened, a vendor is free to modify or withdraw its bid by submitting documentation to that effect. Vendors may submit changes to a bid prior to the bid opening either electronically through the Vendor Self Service within *wvOASIS* or in writing via fax or paper. If transmitted electronically or via fax, the state of West Virginia accepts no responsibility for unsuccessful or incomplete transmissions. To be effective, any change must be received by the Purchasing Division (or procuring agency if a delegated procurement) prior to the date and time of the bid opening.

For example, a vendor who makes a pricing error may submit

Please see BID WITHDRAWAL, page 3

Ongoing Purchasing Division Projects to Support Transparency Efforts, Bring Efficiencies to Process

While I have always recognized the great work of my Division employees, I always find it gratifying when others recognize their hard work as well. In January, a Letter to the Editor was shared in the Charleston Gazette-Mail touting their participation, as well as that of the Finance Division's, in getting small businesses registered quickly so they could apply for CARES grant money. Both Terra Oliver, our vendor registration coordinator, and Mark Totten, our technical services manager, were mentioned by name. With that said, I would like to offer thanks and recognition for their efforts. Many small businesses depended on their diligence and subsequently received grant funding in an expedient manner as a result, so thank you again to Mark and Terra.

Last month, I mentioned that we have some projects planned for this year that we believe will bring even more efficiencies to the purchasing process, while promoting transparency and making information more easily accessible. As part of those comments, I discussed our ongoing efforts to reformat our statewide contracts webpage, but I am pleased to mention that in addition to that project, we have another concurrent project underway. The Purchasing Division will begin posting all new awards and change orders to its website for a rotating 90-day period.

The plan is to post all new awards and change orders the day following their encumbrance. Subsequently, a notice will be faxed to all successful and unsuccessful vendors pointing to the unofficial copy of the award. This initiative will cut down on the amount of paper printed by the Division, reducing costs and making the information more quickly available to stakeholders. Among the information posted, the page will

include the award or contract number, a link to the award document, a brief description of the good or service awarded, and the date of the award. Additionally, for all new awards, we will include a link to all bids for each solicitation, where applicable.

I would also like to announce that we have made the decision to postpone our in-person conference at Glade Springs, scheduled for August 2021, until next year. Despite the approval of and efforts to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine within our state, there are still too many unknowns, and we believe this was the best decision in the interest of the health and safety of our staff and agency procurement officers. However, because we did not offer a conference in 2020, plans are underway to host a virtual conference this year. That conference will be scheduled for the same week as the original conference, and additional details will be shared once we know more.

With that said, please keep in mind that we offer webinars monthly, and you can participate at any time. Simply go to our website at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/training to view more information on our offerings.

As always, please let us know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, and we will do our best to assist you.



Purchasing Updates Training Modules Within CourseMill

The Purchasing Division has moved one often-requested online training module into CourseMill, the state's learning management system, and updated another.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) module is now located within CourseMill. This module defines the RFP method of procurement and highlights some of the steps required prior to utilizing this method, examines the six sections of the RFP Standard Format, and discusses the responsibilities of the agency and Purchasing Division in the RFP evaluation process.

In addition, the Developing Specifications training module has been revamped. This module, which was one of the first modules developed, has a completely new look and contains updated information, such as links to our standard templates and specification repository.

These online training modules were designed for agency procurement officers to review from the convenience of their

own offices, and given the current circumstances, have allowed many procurement officers who are working from home the opportunity to participate in training. Each full module counts as 30 minutes (i.e. .5 hours) of credit toward the Purchasing Division's Certification Program and 10-hour designee training requirement, while the mini-modules count as 15 minutes (i.e. .25 hours) of training credit.

When viewing these modules in CourseMill, viewers need to take no action other than to simply view the module. Upon completion, the participant will receive his or her Certificate of Completion via email. These certificates may also be accessed under the Transcript tab within CourseMill.

To view the online training modules page, visit www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/training/modules.html or <http://onlinetraining.wv.gov>.

What Do They Do? Technical Services Unit Serves Purchasing Division and West Virginia Vendors

Each year, the state of West Virginia purchases millions of dollars in products and services from thousands of vendors. Ensuring those vendors meet all the requirements of state law is the responsibility of the Technical Services unit within Business and Technical Services Section in the Purchasing Division.

Within the BTS section lead by Assistant Director Guy Nisbet, several Technical Services Unit employees are responsible for administering the program, Terra Oliver, Lu Anne Cottrill, and Mark Totten. These Purchasing Division employees are often the first point of contact a new or prospective vendor has with any State of West Virginia government agency, and the program has received accolades for being positive ambassadors for all of state government. In addition, one of the goals of the program is to protect state agencies from fraudulent vendors, a mission the team takes seriously as residents and taxpayers in West Virginia.

All vendors selling products and services to the state of West Virginia are required to register with the Purchasing Division prior to receiving a purchase order or contract. The Purchasing Division requires the disclosure of information, including ownership, all names under which a vendor is doing business, its physical address, its corporate officers, bank information and the payment of

the annual fee, when applicable.

In order to ensure all vendors have a seat at the table for the competitive-bid process, the Technical Services Unit ensures businesses with different levels of technical and procedural familiarity are accommodated when they contact our office. The team often works with vendors over an extended period of time, interacting by phone, email, and (in under regular conditions), in person. Being part of the program over a long-term period of time means any of us are likely to have yearly conversations with the same contact person. Vendor registration employees may work for years with a vendor and never meet them in person, but know details about them and their business.

A vendor is not required to register to submit a bid. However, registering allows the vendor to more fully participate in the competitive bidding process and accept purchase orders or contracts. The process both maximizes the vendor's state government business opportunities and increases the state's vendor base.

Terra, Lu Anne, and Mark interact with vendors not only statewide in West Virginia, but nationally and internationally. In spring 2020, when Terra Oliver was new to the Vendor Registration Coordinator position, video conference calls were even arranged to assist a French vendor registering to do business



Assistant Director Guy Nisbet (top left), Technical Services Manager Mark Totten (top right), Lu Anne Cottrill (bottom left), and Terra Oliver work to ensure vendors register with the Purchasing Division.

with West Virginia. Careful attention had to be given to the differing time zones between France and West Virginia in order to schedule appropriately.

Terra, Lu Anne, and Mark find it fulfilling to assist vendors with the registration process, especially those in West Virginia who are participating in the government

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BID WITHDRAWAL

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documentation with evidence of the original bid's error and attaching the revised bid. It is important, however, that the new bid submission clearly revokes and/or supersedes the old submission. The new or corrected bid should state, "this bid supersedes any and all bids received previously." Failing to revoke the old bid will lead to the conclusion that the vendor had submitted multiple bids rather than correcting a bid.

It is also important to note that all bids submitted become the property of the state of West Virginia, and no bid, revised or canceled, may be physically removed from the Purchasing Division (or the agency in the case of a delegated procurement) after being submitted.

Once bids have opened, changing a bid is no longer permitted, and withdrawing a bid becomes much more difficult. The W. Va.

Code of State Rules states that if a request is made to withdraw a bid after a bid opening has occurred, the Purchasing Director may approve the withdrawal if the vendor affirms in writing that the bid is erroneous and can show that the following conditions exist:

"(1) An error was made; (2) The error materially affected the bid; (3) Rejection of the bid would not cause a hardship on the State spending unit involved, other than losing an opportunity to receive commodities, services or printing at a reduced cost; and (4) Enforcement of the part of the bid in error would be unconscionable." (W. Va. CSR § 148-1-6.3.f.)

The public file must contain documented evidence of the above items if a decision is made to allow a vendor to withdraw its bid after the bid opening has occurred.

Registration Now Open for March 18th Vendor Webinar

The Purchasing Division is set to host its spring vendor webinar, Doing Business with West Virginia, in March and is requesting the help of agency procurement officers to promote it when talking to vendors. This free webinar, scheduled for March 18, 2021, is currently open for registration on the state's public-facing CourseMill site, onlinelearning.wv.gov/student.

During the webinar, Purchasing Division staff will highlight pertinent information to current and potential vendors wishing to conduct business with the state of West Virginia. Vendors will learn how they can increase their understanding of West Virginia state government solicitations and how they can submit a bid. Additional information will be shared on how the state evaluates bids, awards contracts, the different procurement methods utilized, and guidelines on how to market commodities and services to state agencies.

While this event is free, registration is required and limited to the first 100 individuals. Details on how to register can be found at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/VendorWebinarPromotion.pdf.

Questions regarding this training and registration should be directed to Purchasing.Training@wv.gov.

DOING BUSINESS WITH WEST VIRGINIA - AN INFORMATIVE WEBINAR FOR BUSINESSES - OFFERED BY THE WEST VIRGINIA PURCHASING DIVISION

West Virginia Purchasing Division staff will offer current and potential vendors valuable information on how to maximize their opportunity to bid and perform work for West Virginia state government.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021
10:00 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.**

**REGISTER TODAY FOR THIS *FREE* WEBINAR
SPACE IS LIMITED TO THE FIRST 100 REGISTRANTS**

How to Register:

- Go to <http://www.onlinelearning.wv.gov/student>
- Click on Create New User button
- Choose "Purchasing" from the Organization drop-down list
- Fill out the Create New User profile. All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required fields, and both forms under the User Profile and Sub Orgs tabs must be completed.
- Once completed, click Create New User button and Accept the User Agreement.
- Select Enroll next to the VEN101 session. You will receive an automatic email confirmation upon successfully enrolling.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR VENDORS TO REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR

- Go to www.onlinelearning.wv.gov/student.
- Click on Create New User button, or log in using existing login credentials.
- Choose "Purchasing" from the Organization drop-down list.
- Fill out the Create New User profile. All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required fields, and both forms under the User Profile and Sub Orgs tabs must be completed.
- Once completed, click Create New User button and Accept the User Agreement.
- Select "Enroll" next to the VEN101 session. You will receive an automatic email confirmation upon successfully enrolling.

Purchasing Division Conducts Mid-Year Review of Designated Procurement Officers' Training Hours

We are past the halfway point of Fiscal Year 2021, and the Purchasing Division has completed its mid-year review of required training hours for agency designated procurement officers. The Code of State Rules requires all designees to participate in 10 hours of training offered by the Purchasing Division each fiscal year. Training that is eligible toward this requirement includes webinars, online modules, and in-person workshops (when groups can safely meet again.)

Procurement officers can also track their own training participation for the year. To view the transcript of complete trainings, individuals should log in to CourseMill at www.onlinelearning.wv.gov and click on "Transcript" tab at the top of the page. All completed courses will be listed. This report can be downloaded or printed. Certificates of completion for individual classes can also be printed.

Any discrepancy in the hours reported and those that the designee believes he or she attended should be brought to

the Purchasing Division's attention.

Those interested in obtaining basic certification are required to complete 15 hours of training, while 30 hours are required for the advanced certification. Any individual who has obtained the WV Procurement: Basic or Advanced Certification must participate in 20 hours of training offered by the Purchasing Division in the three years from the date they obtain that certification to comply with recertification guidelines.

If you are a designated procurement officer and did not receive an email with your total completed hours for Fiscal Year 2021, or for additional questions on how to view your transcript or training hours within CourseMill, email Purchasing.Training@wv.gov.



Purchasing Division's Stringing Report Submitted to Legislature for First Half of Fiscal Year 2021

The Purchasing Division submitted its legislatively-mandated semi-annual Stringing Report in accordance with W. Va. Code § 5A-3-10(b). This report is submitted electronically to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance in January and July each year. Stringing is defined as “issuing a series of requisitions or dividing or planning procurements to circumvent the twenty-five thousand dollar threshold or otherwise avoid the use of sealed bids” in the Purchasing Division Procedures Handbook.

For the period of July 1, 2020, through December 30, 2020, there were no spending units that reported the award of multiple contracts for the same or similar commodity or service to an individual vendor over any 12-month period where the total value exceeded \$25,000. However, Purchasing Division inspectors discovered one finding of stringing related to one spending unit during their inspections.

It is important that agencies be aware that stringing is viewed on a 12-month rolling period, beginning with the date a new order is placed. In many cases, stringing may be avoided by properly and continuously monitoring expenditures with vendors to ensure that the total amount spent with a given vendor, in any 12-month period, of same or similar commodity or service does not exceed a bid threshold without the proper level of documentation and bidding. For those commodities and services procured frequently, agencies are encouraged to process open-ended contracts to eliminate the potential for stringing.

A copy of the submitted Stringing Report has been posted on the Purchasing Division's website at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/LegisReports.html.

TECHNICAL

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procurement process for the first time. A steady stream of communication from all vendors comes into (and, in turn, are sent out of) the office constantly by phone, email, fax, and U.S. Mail. All of these methods of communication are necessary to utilize as a result of diverse vendor size and technical access. Regardless of the method of communication and the avenue for registration a vendor must choose, the team ensures any vendor who meets the program's legislative requirements end up equally registered.

Vendors are encouraged to register through the Vendor Self-Service (VSS) portal within the *wvOASIS* system at wvOASIS.gov. At this site, vendors may view advertised bidding opportunities in the West Virginia Purchasing Bulletin, review their account information, sign up for bid alerts and respond to solicitations electronically. Although the VSS is the preferred method of registration, vendors may also register by completing a *Vendor Registration & Disclosure Statement* and *Small, Women, & Minority-Owned Business Certification* (WV-1 or WV-1A) form.

All vendors doing business with the state must be in good standing with other local and state entities, such as the Secretary of State's office, the West Virginia Insurance Commission and the State Tax Department, in addition to being registered with the Purchasing Division.

All vendors must pay an annual registration fee of \$125 to the Purchasing Division in order to receive purchase orders or contracts exceeding an aggregate amount of \$2,500. The registration year begins at the time the Purchasing Division processes the vendor's registration and receives the fee.

To learn more about vendor registration, visit www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/VendorReg.html.

Buyers Network

WVSASP Newsletter Now Online

The West Virginia State Agency for Surplus Property (WVSASP) recently published its fourth quarter newsletter for 2020. Within this issue of *The Property Connection*, WVSASP takes a look at its scheduled events for 2021, website updates, the results from a late 2020 agency satisfaction survey, a recap of its 2020 Holiday Gift Guide, and updated information on the Veterans Small Business Enhancement Act of 2018.

While much of this information has been previously shared in past issues of *The Buyers Network*, this publication from WVSASP provides an opportunity to educate eligible organizations and members of the public who utilize their services.

A copy of this and past newsletters can be found online at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/surplus/propertyconnection.

THE BUYERS NETWORK

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

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

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Current Statewide Contract Update

(As of January 19, 2021)

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. For more information, please contact the buyer assigned to statewide contracts.

New Contracts

Contract	Vendor	Commodity	Effective Date
AEBATTERY21	Aylor & Blackburn Battery Co Inc	Automotive and Equip. Batteries	01/15/21 -01/14/22
LDPHONE19A	Touchtone Communications	Long Distance Communication	02/01/21 -01/31/22

Contract Renewals

Contract	Vendor	Commodity	Effective Date
DEBT19B	Penn Credit Corp	Debt Collection	01/01/21 -12/31/21
DEBT19C	Ars National Services Inc	Debt Collection	01/01/21 -12/31/21

DEBT19D	I.C. System, Inc.	Debt Collection	01/01/21 -12/31/21
MSMENTPRZ	Microsoft Corporation	Software	03/21/21 -05/31/25

Miscellaneous Actions

Contract	Vendor	Commodity	Description of Change
OFFICE15	Office Depot	Office Supplies	To update vendor name

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

BUYER	E-MAIL	PHONE
<i>Supervisors</i>		
Tara Lyle	Tara.L.Lyle@wv.gov	558-2544
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
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Crystal Hustead	Crystal.G.Hustead@wv.gov	558-2402
Melissa Pettrey	Melissa.K.Pettrey@wv.gov	558-0094
David Pauline	David.H.Pauline@wv.gov	558-0067
<i>Buyers</i>		
John Estep	John.W.Estep@wv.gov	558-2566
Dusty Smith	Dusty.J.Smith@wv.gov	558-2063
Toby Welch	Toby.L.Welch@wv.gov	558-8802

Purchasing Welcomes Newest Employee

The Purchasing Division is pleased to announce that Toby Welch has joined its staff. Welch will serve as a buyer for the Acquisitions and Contract Administration Section.

Welch is originally from Ashland, Kentucky, and currently resides in South Charleston. He served eight years in the U.S. Army and worked at a local furniture store for 17 years before joining state government more than two years ago.

"I have been fortunate to work with some superstars at both DHHR – Bureau for Public Health and the Department of Homeland Security – Division of Administrative Services," he said. "I am very excited to be joining the team at the Purchasing Division and I look forward to the variety of challenges and responsibilities that it offers."

When he is not working, he enjoys spending time with family and friends, traveling, golfing, and watching college football.

Welcome Welch to the Purchasing Division!



Toby Welch
Purchasing Division