

THE BUYERS NETWORK

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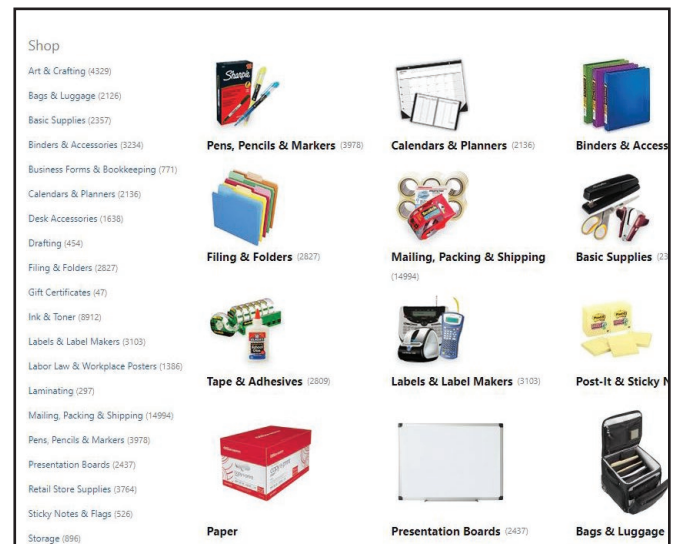
Statewide Contracts Save Agencies Time and Money

Statewide contracts provide many benefits to state agencies, including cost savings, accessibility, and efficiency in the process. In some cases, agency procurement officers may find a commodity for less than what it costs to buy it off a statewide contract, but sometimes what appears to be less expensive may not actually be.

Like evaluating vendor bids, agencies should be diligent when comparing goods on statewide contracts to those available outside of the statewide contracts to determine if they are in fact the same. The following are some questions the agency procurement officer can ask to further investigate the true cost of obtaining an item outside of a statewide contract.

- Is the item found outside of the statewide contract manufactured the exact same as that on contract, including make, model, material, thickness, performance, or other?
- Does one offer something additional that the other does not, such as additional features, components, accessories, or a better warranty?
- What hidden costs are involved (e.g. travel time for the state employee to drive to the location to pick up the commodity, fuel, or shipping, etc.)?

Please see **STATEWIDE CONTRACTS**, page 3



One of West Virginia's many statewide contracts is for office supplies. Through this contract, the state can purchase thousands of items negotiated quickly. This is one of two "convenience" contracts made available by the Purchasing Division.

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Agency and Purchasing Roles: There are Experts in the Process and Experts in the Product

The purchase of commodities and services for state government involves various stakeholders, and all play an important role in maintaining an efficient and effective purchasing process. Knowing and understanding the roles of those stakeholders is the first step in obtaining the goods and/or services needed in a timely manner while ensuring the lowest cost to the state for the quality needed. Stakeholders include but are not limited to the Purchasing Division buyers, agency procurement officers, and product end users.

All procurements begin with the agency. Whether the agency procurement officer is the requestor or is fielding a request from another agency employee,

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Purchasing Uses Agency Feedback to Make Changes

Having a goal with no plan of action is like wanting to travel to a new destination without having a map. The Purchasing Division's goal is to make the purchasing process easier for our agency partners to navigate, ensure the timely and efficient acquisition of goods and services, and operate in compliance with all laws, rules, and procedures. Action can sometimes take the form of compromise, especially when various stakeholders are involved. As Eleanor Roosevelt once said, if you must compromise, compromise up.

The Purchasing Division, in an effort to show our agencies that we value their input, is working hard to make some big changes with two primary goals in mind: 1) to better educate our agency procurement officers through the development of useful public procurement resources and 2) to give agencies more autonomy to complete the bidding process (if the spending threshold for a purchase requires) in lieu of purchasing from a pre-approved list of cooperative contracts.

The Purchasing Division is in the process of making significant changes to its Procedures Handbook, and meanwhile, is looking at some of its additional resources available to procurement officers. We often hear feedback that educating state employees and end users on the purchasing process, as well as obtaining their buy-in, can be challenging. We hope that some of the things we're working on will make your jobs a little bit easier when it comes to communicating effectively with your internal agency staff about purchasing, both at a high level and when it comes to more specific needs.

Last month, we sent a two-question survey to designated procurement officers to obtain their feedback on both objectives. While nearly 22% of respondents said making certain cooperative contracts non-mandatory would not impact their agency at all, about 65% of the remaining respondents said the move would be extremely positive or somewhat posi-

tive for their agency. Making this change would still allow agency procurement officers who wish to purchase from cooperative contracts to do so, while giving other agencies the option to go outside of those contracts, as long as they follow the appropriate bidding guidelines for the spending threshold. After all, as James Russell Lowell said, "compromise makes a good umbrella, but a poor roof." Ultimately, requiring the purchasing process be followed for the spending threshold in lieu of a cooperative contract provides an extra layer of protection for the state.

The second question on the survey dealt with the presentation of the "Purchasing Decision Path." In my time with the Division, the path has changed a few times, notably increasing from 10 steps to 11 after inspections were added back to the Division's duties in FY 2007. Senior staff here thought, and the survey results supported the idea, that a new presentation of the purchasing process would make it more understandable to all involved.

As we wade through the pros and cons of making these changes and how to implement them, we encourage you to continue sending any questions, comments, or concerns to Purchasing.Division@wv.gov so we can take into account all considerations. As always, we will communicate any changes in advance, so that you are able to relay them to your agencies.

We know we could not do our jobs efficiently without your support and participation, and for that, we are truly grateful.



WVSASP Invites State Agencies and Public to Customer Appreciation Day Reception in June

The West Virginia State Agency for Surplus Property (WVSASP) is hosting a Customer Appreciation Day Reception on June 24, 2021, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. State employees and members of the public are invited to take advantage of special extended hours and light refreshments while WVSASP says "thank you" to its customers.

"Like many organizations, WVSASP has had many changes in our operations due to COVID-19," shared WVSASP Manager Elizabeth Cooper. "Our Customer Appreciation Day reception will allow us to thank our loyal shoppers for their support during this time and see what new items are in the warehouse."

Currently, WVSASP's regular hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. which can be difficult for state employees. Cooper

hopes this evening reception will encourage individuals who may not normally be able to visit the warehouse to stop by and shop.

While it is not required, individuals interested in attending this reception are asked to RSVP at <https://fb.me/e/2jmNRSEg9> or by emailing Jessica.L.Chambers@wv.gov.

State employees, except for those in the Purchasing Division, may acquire property from WVSASP for personal use as long as they purchase as a member of the public. To learn more about shopping at WVSASP, visit WVSurplus.gov or call 304.766.2626. WVSASP also maintains a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/wvsurplus with information regarding weekly deals, available vehicles, and unique inventory.

Fiscal Year 2022 Agency Procurement Designation Forms Deadline Set for June 11

Designated procurement officers are reminded of the annual Agency Procurement Designation Form for Fiscal Year 2022, which was emailed to all current designees in mid-May. This form is required each fiscal year, in accordance with 148 C.S.R. 1, which states that all purchases be approved by the secretary or head of the spending unit, or a designee, whose name must be filed with the Purchasing Director. The designee is responsible for the procurement function of his or her agency, and all purchases for that spending unit must be processed through that person. Additionally, the designee serves as the liaison between the Purchasing Division and the agency, and as the purchasing process expert and point of contact for agency delegated procedures.

The Agency Procurement Designation Form must be completed for each designee, indicating whether the individual will serve as the primary or backup contact for the agency, and must be submitted for all state agencies under the Purchasing Division's authority regardless of whether the designee is expected to change or remain the same from the previous fiscal year. This form must be signed by the agency head prior to submission. A list of current agency designated procurement officers can be viewed online at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/vrc/agencyli.html.

All designation forms for Fiscal Year 2022 must be received by the Purchasing Division no later than Friday, June 11, 2021, and should be emailed to Purchasing.Training@wv.gov. All questions can be directed to Assistant Purchasing Director Samantha Knapp at 304.558.7022 or Samantha.S.Knapp@wv.gov.

STATEWIDE CONTRACTS

Continued from Page 1

- How much time did agency personnel spend searching for different sources offering the good, taking time away from their primary job responsibilities?

"Imagine that your agency needs an 8-foot ladder that is available on a statewide contract for \$100," said Assistant Purchasing Director Frank Whittaker. "Through an online search, you find one for \$47 at a home improvement store. Perhaps they are both made of fiberglass, but one is industrial grade while the other is manufactured for home or light duty use. Those differences can have a major impact on the asset's intended use, useful life, and price."

He also gave a battery-operated drill as another example. The home improvement store may have a 20-volt drill for a given price, but the one on the existing statewide contract comes with two batteries instead of one, a quick charger instead of a standard charger, or a carrying case. Perhaps it comes with all three. These additional items or features could account for the difference in price, to the agency's benefit.

There are two major statewide contracts for state agency use that are often referred to as convenience contracts: one for office supplies and one for maintenance, repair, and operations supplies.

"Both contracts have thousands or millions of items," Whittaker said. "Every item is not going to be the cheapest version of that item, but day in and day out, if our agencies are buying from those contracts, they are going to save money for the agency and state as a whole."

All statewide contracts bid by the Purchasing Division are mandatory for use, and most offer free or discounted shipping and delivery in days. If the commodity is needed in an emergency, the procedures for emergency purchases should be followed. For situations in which the items truly are the same and substantially cheaper, the agency procurement officer may request a waiver from Senior Buyer Mark Atkins.

WVSASP Once Again Makes Tulip Bulbs Available for Eligible Organizations and Public

Each year, tulip bulbs are planted around the West Virginia state capitol complex to the delight of both employees and visitors. After the blooms begin to wilt, these plants are removed and sent to the West Virginia State Agency for Surplus Property (WVSASP). There the tulip bulbs are made available for purchase to eligible organizations and the general public.



Photo Courtesy of the Governor's Office

"WVSASP is responsible for retired state property, so we often find ourselves receiving unique inventory items such as tulip bulbs," explained WVSASP Manager Elizabeth Cooper. "Because the tulip bulbs are an organic material, we only offer them for a few short weeks each May."

This year, WVSASP provided tulip bulbs to several organizations, including the Ronald McDonald House, Cross Roads Pregnancy Care Center, and the First Presbyterian Church of Dunbar.

To keep up to date with announcements from WVSASP, follow them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wvsurplus or join the WVSASP's email subscription list at WVSurplus.gov.

Tulip bulbs are some of the unique items that make their way through the WVSASP warehouse.

Purchasing Division Negotiates New Terms Agreement with West Publishing Corporation

The Purchasing Division has negotiated a terms agreement with West Publishing Corporation (d.b.a. West or Thomson Reuters). This agreement does not constitute a contract from which purchases can be made but may be used for any future contract awarded to West Publishing Corporation, regardless of the procurement method used.

Westlaw, CLEAR, and other similar services allow users to view material from West Publishing. The negotiation of terms for these services can often be complex and time consuming. Therefore, having negotiated contract terms and conditions in place at the state level will save the agency time when awarding a contract to West Publishing entities in the future.

An Order of Precedence document is required with the award, which must be completed by the agency, signed by the agency and vendor, and included in the file along with the West Order Form and any other pertinent documents.



The terms agreement can be found on the Purchasing Division's website at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/SWC/WESTPUBLISH.htm. A link to the ordering instructions can also be found on this page.

Purchasing Division Recognizes Latest Basic Certification Recipient

The Purchasing Division is pleased to announce Tina Desmond is the latest recipient in its West Virginia Procurement: Basic Certification program.

Desmond, assistant director of purchasing for the Division of Administrative Services, has worked for the state for more than six years. Her first job with the state was with the Department of Health and Human Resources in 2015.

"I'm thankful to my agency for allowing me to pursue this professional opportunity," Desmond said. "It was a very challenging program and the purchasing knowledge I gained through the program will benefit my agency and customer agencies every day. I appreciate the Purchasing Division for preparing us for the certification and for always being there to answer questions and provide guidance in procurement."

State agency procurement officers interested in participating in the basic and/or advanced certification programs may review the requirements at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/training/Certification.

PROCUREMENT ROLES

Continued from Page 1

the procurement officer must work with the end user to identify, research, and fully understand and communicate the need. Research serves as the basis for the specifications, if the procurement method requires, and multiple levels of internal review provide the feedback needed to refine them.

"Words count," said Assistant Purchasing Director Frank Whittaker. "Everything needs to be explicitly spelled out in the specifications."

While the agency identifies the need and develops the specifications, the Purchasing Division buyers review the specifications submitted to ensure they are clear, concise, and can be defended should the award be protested or challenged in court.

"I often say that myself or any of the buyers here can review a set of specifications and tell you what may be missing," Whittaker said. "What we can't do is write the specifications because we don't know the product or need as well as the agency personnel."

He said buyers can identify the stumbling blocks that are likely to result in a failed solicitation, vendor performance issues, protests, contract cancellation after award, etc.

The specialized knowledge among the two groups presents a unique opportunity for the Purchasing Division buyer and the agency's procurement officer to work together to create the most Buyers Network

sound, advantageous, and thorough solicitation possible.

When the end user is the subject matter expert, the agency procurement officer may provide assistance by talking to other agency procurement officers, researching the market for availability and/or alternate products or services, identify past purchases, and make recommendations to the end user to guide the specifications to completion. The procurement officer is also encouraged to engage other agency personnel in reviewing the specifications and ensure any purchases made are done so in compliance with the laws, rules, and procedures.

Once the specifications are sent to the Purchasing Division, the buyer checks for incomplete information, contradictions, and ambiguous terms, and confirms that the specifications are competitive and fair.

Working together collaboratively increases the chance of a successful solicitation, and understanding the various roles and responsibilities of the Purchasing Division and agency procurement officer(s) aids in that process. Should you have any questions regarding the process or need assistance understanding the specification development process, please contact your agency's assigned Purchasing Division buyer.

Purchasing Updates Training Module

An online resource module has been converted to Articulate Storyline to make it more interactive for users.

The *Vendor Remedies: Protests, Circuit Court, and Claims Commission* module analyzes the three remedies available to vendors when they feel the procurement process has not been properly executed.

These online training modules were designed for agency procurement officials to view 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 the 10-hour designee 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 other

action than to simply view the module. Upon completion, the participant will receive his or her Certificate of Completion via email. Individuals may also view credit hours completed within CourseMill under the "completed" tab.

To view the online training modules page, visit www.onlinelearning.wv.gov.

Vendor Remedies: Protests, Circuit Court, and Claims Commission

WHEN PURCHASING GOES WRONG

Despite all attempts to ensure a fair purchasing process, there is still a risk for mistakes in the process, unforeseen circumstances, and/or corruption.

COMMON MISTAKES	UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES	CORRUPTION
<p style="font-size: x-small; color: gray;">SOME EXAMPLES INCLUDE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifications that are written in a way that limits competition; Mathematical errors; Specifications inadvertently left out; Addendum not issued that should have been; and Proper documentation not submitted before award made. 	<p style="font-size: x-small; color: gray;">Click on this button to learn more about unforeseen circumstances in the purchasing process.</p>	<p style="font-size: x-small; color: gray;">Click on this button to learn more about corruption in the purchasing process.</p>

Purchasing Division Adds Senior Buyer to Staff

The Purchasing Division welcomed a new member of the staff in May. Senior Buyer Jessica Hovanec will serve under Buyer Supervisor Tara Lyle in the Acquisitions and Contract Administration Section.



Jessica Hovanec
Senior Buyer

A resident of Hurricane, Hovanec graduated from Marshall University with dual bachelor's degrees. She previously worked at BB&T Retirement & Institutional Services. In her free time, Hovanec enjoys spending time with her husband and young daughter, quilting, and being outdoors.

"I am excited to be here and am looking forward to getting to know everyone and settling into this great opportunity to help serve the citizens of West Virginia," said Hovanec.

Welcome Hovanec to the Purchasing Division!

Mandatory Training for High-Level Officials Now Online

An updated copy of the State Officials' Purchasing Procedures and Purchasing Card Training is now available via CourseMill. Presented by the Purchasing Division and the State Auditor's Office, this biannual webinar provides information on purchasing procedures and purchasing card processes. This training is mandatory for high-level officials and must be completed each fiscal year as indicated in W. Va. Code §5A-3-60.

To view the recording of this webinar, visit www.onlinelearning.wv.gov and search for course "PUR400E." For questions related to this training, email Purchasing.Training@wv.gov or contact Samantha Knapp at 304.588.7022.

THE BUYERS NETWORK

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Current Statewide Contract Update

(As of May 14, 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.

Contract Renewals

Contract	Vendor	Commodity	Effective Date
LIGHT18	WV Electric Supply	Lamps and lightbulbs	05/01/21 -04/30/22
OIL19	Pugh Lubricants	Lubricants and oils	06/01/21 -05/31/22

SECSVS19	G4s Secure Solutions USA Inc	Security guard	05/01/21 -04/30/22
SWC*58	All American Poly	Trash bags	05/20/21 -05/19/22

Miscellaneous Actions

Contract	Vendor	Commodity	Description of Change
RECMGT21	Horizon Tech	Document storage services	To cancel the contract in its entirety effective 05/15/21

Agency Procurement Officers Reminded to Complete Hospitality Service Form to Estimate Expenses

While refreshments are always a welcome sight at functions like an employee recognition ceremony or lunchtime training, procurement officers need to make sure they are accounting for these items with the *Request for Hospitality Service* (TMO-3) form. In addition to food and beverages, the Request for Hospitality Service form must also include the estimated expenses for meeting spaces, lodging, equipment rentals, and other expenses related to the event or function.

“By completing the *Request for Hospitality Service* form, agencies are able to estimate all expenses prior to an event,” explained Travel Management Coordinator Elizabeth Cooper. “While this form does not need approval from the Travel Management Office, it must be submitted to the Auditor’s Office along with your purchasing card receipt for payment.”

The individual in charge of the function should be the one to complete this form and must explain the purpose of the event and why these materials are needed. An attendee list is also required with the form. Once the form has been filled out, it will need to be signed by the agency head or designee.

A copy of the *Request for Hospitality Service* form can be found online at www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/tmo3hospsform.pdf.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

BUYER	E-MAIL	PHONE
<u>Supervisors</u>		
Tara Lyle	Tara.L.Lyle@wv.gov	558-2544
Linda Harper	Linda.B.Harper@wv.gov	558-0468
<u>Senior Buyers</u>		
Mark Atkins	Mark.A.Atkins@wv.gov	558-2307
Jessica Chambers	Jessica.S.Chambers@wv.gov	558-0246
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Melissa Pettrey	Melissa.K.Pettrey@wv.gov	558-0094
David Pauline	David.H.Pauline@wv.gov	558-0067
<u>Buyers</u>		
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

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