

# Office of Purchasing & Contracting

## Who are we?

**Deborah Damore, Purchasing & Contracting Director**

802-828-5784

[Deborah.damore@vermont.gov](mailto:Deborah.damore@vermont.gov)

We are a team of 10 individuals located at 109 State Street (Pavilion Building), 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

## What we do:

- The Office of Purchasing & Contracting **carries out the procurement responsibilities assigned to the Commissioner of the Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS)** in 29 V.S.A. Chapter 49 and 29 V.S.A, and Chapter 5 § 161. Includes procurement of materials, commodities, contract services, supplies, and equipment for all state agencies through an effective process that meets all statutory and administrative requirements. The purpose of the competitive bid process is twofold: to ensure that any person or company has the opportunity to get the state's business, and also to ensure that the taxpayers get the best possible value when their money is being spent by state agencies.
- **Delegate authority** on behalf of the Commissioner to other agency/department to make certain types of purchases without going through the Office of Purchasing & Contracting. A "Blanket Delegation of Authority" (BDA) enables agencies to maintain the continuity of everyday operations.
- **Procure goods and/or services** needed by the state and/or BGS at the best value through an effective process that meets all statutory and administrative requirements.
- **Best interest of the State.** Unlike many jurisdictions, which are required to award contracts to the lowest bidder, in Vermont we evaluate bids based on a variety of factors such as quality, ease of supply, and environmental impact, in order to determine which proposal will provide the best value to the state.
- **Administers the Purchasing Card Program.** The Program was implemented to establish a more efficient, cost-effective method of purchasing and paying for small dollar transactions as well as high-volume, repetitive purchases. The program is designed as an alternative to the traditional purchasing process for supplies and services.
- **Oversee the bidding and contracting process to ensure compliance** with Administrative Bulletin 3.5 and relevant State Statutes and Executive Orders. Title 29 alone provides 13 criteria in which consideration needs to be given; many of the executive orders reference environmental requirements in which we need to adhere to, most recent legislation includes Climate Change consideration in State Procurement Certification.
- **Provide direct services to all agencies in state government.** In addition, these services may be used by political subdivisions of the state, including cities, towns, schools, and the state colleges.
- **Oversee the preparation and issuing of bid proposals,** management of the bid process, and the preparation and processing of all contracts for personal services, consulting, and construction/renovation for the Department of Buildings and General Services as well as AOT, ANR, and Military for construction/ renovation.

- **Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Practices:** Ensures that policies and procedures, product specifications, and award decisions reflect and support the administration’s commitment to environmental responsibility.

### **Cooperative Contracting:**

- **Cooperative Initiatives:** BGS has specific statutory authority to enter into and participate in cooperative procurements and contracts as well as piggybacking off existing contracts.
  - Whenever feasible, Vermont participates in various cooperative purchasing opportunities.
  - We actively seek opportunities to leverage spend and resources.
  - Vermont benefits substantially in being a participant in multi-state contract bidding. Lower pricing derived from much greater combined quantities is the prime motivation. Another advantage would be the greater influence over vendors that will meet special requirements.

### **How We Do It:**

#### **Legislative and Administrative compliance:**

- **Commodities:** Awards issued in accordance with Title 29, Chapter 49 § 903; awards are made in the best interest of the state with a number of factors considered. The most frequently asked question by the Legislature is “Were Vermont companies given consideration?”.
- **Construction:** Awards issued in accordance with Title 29, Chapter 5 § 161 which states: The contract shall be awarded to one of the three lowest responsible bidders.
- **Services:** No specific statute exists. Awards are issued in the best interest of the state.
- All bid solicitations and resulting awards are issued in accordance with Administrative Bulletin 3.5, statute and executive orders.

#### **Contracts: The Office of Purchasing & Contracting maintains (current):**

- **Statewide Commodity Contracts:** Approximately 368 statewide commodity contracts of which 26% were issued to Vermont vendors for a wide range of items for use by state agencies.
  - 26% VT Award (96)
  - 11% Non-VT Award (40)
  - 29% No VT Bids (106)
  - 13% Multi-State or GSA (49)
  - 21% Multiple Award, includes VT (77)
- **Construction Contracts:** Approximately 75 contracts of which 92% were issued to Vermont contractors for construction/renovation projects for ANR, BGS, and the Military.
- **Service Contracts:** Approximately 259 contracts of which 69% were issued to Vermont contractors for services.
- **A&E Contracts:** Approximately 32 contracts of which 87% were issued to Vermont contractors for services.

- **Statewide Technology Contracts:** We hold approximately 140 Technology Contracts. Many of these contracts are solicited and bid on a national level which allows us to leverage our buying power with much larger states. Although most of these contracts are issued to the manufacturers to set pricing, terms, and conditions, we engage local resellers where possible for the actual purchases. This has proven itself to be a very successful model.

## **The Future:**

1. **Education.** Improve training and communication. Increase the knowledge base of staff involved in procurement activities. Facilitate interagency communication regarding procurements and procurement methodologies, internally and externally, thereby fostering active and growing “partnerships” with our supported agencies.
2. **eProcurement.** Release of RFP and award of contract. Transition the State’s procurement process from a traditional and very fragmented paper-based system to a technology driven enterprise platform. Improve transparency into state spend. Drive process efficiencies, and effectiveness throughout the entire process, while providing valuable reporting tools for daily operations and managerial oversight, and audit awareness.
3. **Increase use of and adopt performance measures or “Key Performance Indicators” (KPIs)** that are meaningful, unambiguous, and goal oriented. Critical success factors / measurements need to be reportable, strategic, actionable, relevant, and in line with statutory requirements, and statewide strategy and goals.
4. **Efficiencies.** Shorten the time from need identification to contract and delivery of actual product/services.