

# BuyLines

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

OCTOBER 2017

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## ***DAS Procurement Training Event 2017***



***DAS Procurement Staff pose for a group photo at the Goodwin College training event.***

Goodwin College in East Hartford was the site for DAS Procurement's fourth annual procurement training conference.

The handouts reflected a "Back to School" theme with a old school composition book with the "Success through Synergy" logo letting attendees know they were going back to school to learn about the state's procurement process and much more.

Inside, a yearbook theme of current and old photos and fun facts about DAS Procurement staff, guest speakers and the event's keynote speaker Scott Deming were displayed. Deming, a motivational speaker who kicked off the event shared interesting stories on how people can form emotional attachments to the workplace and how to better develop relationships with customers and co-workers alike. He focused on purpose and synergies.

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“He changed my perspective on a few things,” one attendee was overheard saying.

DAS Procurement Director Carol Wilson shared information on Procurement’s recent strategic business planning process, their vision, mission, values, goals and future objectives to better service their customers, including, new advisory groups, an annual customer satisfaction survey, technology improvements and more.

Wilson said, “I just want to thank everyone who made this event possible, including our staff, Commissioner Currey and especially the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO). Without their financial support, we would not be able to host this event.”

“We felt our ‘Success through Synergy’ theme really emphasized that we can’t accomplish our goals alone. Synergy means the interaction of elements that when combined, produce a total effect that is greater than the sum of the individual elements, contributions. We need each other in work and in life so we can partner together and achieve more than we would if we did the work alone,” added Wilson.

NASPO’s CEO Douglas Richins gave a quick talk on NASPO ValuePoint contracts which involved multi-state cooperative purchasing – increasing the buy power of one state by combining it with other states procurement offices. Richins also highlighted that DAS’ own Devin Marquez is the Connecticut leader for NASPO ValuePoint.

The event hosted a number of training classes including: Procurement 101 – Basic Procurement, What’s New in Technology?, Cooperative contracts, and Resolving Conflicts Between Contract Users and Contractors as well as a showcase of procurement programs, Correctional Enterprises, LEAN display, NASPO ValuePoint, and the state’s electronic recycling supplier, Take2.



On such a beautiful day, attendees had breakfast outside!



Guest speaker Scott Deming motivates the crowd with his viewpoint of relating to work on a positive and emotional level.



George Bernocco and Jean DelGreco greet Procurement Training attendees



DAS' Julie Bernosky helps people register for the event.



DAS Procurement Director Carol Wilson and Procurement Attorney Devin Marquez both presented at the 2017 Training event.



The “Success through Synergy” theme was developed to show we all need to work together to be successful.



DAS' John Winschel talks about the new DAS website.



Marisol Rivera and Eva Orlinski give a live demonstration of the new DAS website.



DAS' Aimee Cunningham discusses how the Microsoft Cloud environment plays a role in state government.



State of Connecticut Chief Information Officer Mark Raymond explains the role of technology in State Procurement and advancements being made in the field of State government.



Chief Executive Officer of NASPO Douglas Richins discusses the NASPO ValuPoint multi state contracting advances and benefits.



The “fishbowl” exercise gave attendees the opportunity to speak directly to DAS staff.



The beautiful weather continued so everyone could eat lunch outside.

# You Can't Live in a "Fishbowl"

This year's DAS Procurement Training Event featured a successful new format for us to solicit feedback from our customers. We ended the day with a "Fishbowl" session.

There are many kinds of Fishbowl formats: some are interactive where conversation is exchanged between attendees; some focus on the skill of "listening."

DAS chose to "Listen" to our customer feedback on specific topics: Customer Service, Communication, Technology, Staff, Information, and Progressiveness.

Attendees were able to provide candid and constructive best experiences, worst experiences and "make a wish." DAS Procurement staff were not allowed to respond, defend, justify or comment – just Listen!

It was a worthwhile experience for us to recognize our strengths and where we need to focus on improvement. There were viable suggestions and improvements that will help DAS move forward and provide progressive strategies for our customers to use our services.

We thank all of our customers that participated and contributed to our first "Fishbowl."

## Topic 1: Customer Service

Best Experience:

1. Agency had a renewal of a standardization transaction; they let it go too long where there was very little time to allow the contract specialist enough time to process the request. However, the contract specialist was able to add additional money in a very short turn around – it was much appreciated.
2. When an agency reaches out to DAS Procurement prior to a contract expiration and work begins together for either an extension or new solicitation, it goes really smoothly.

Worst experience: none provided

Make a wish: none provided

## Topic 2: Communication

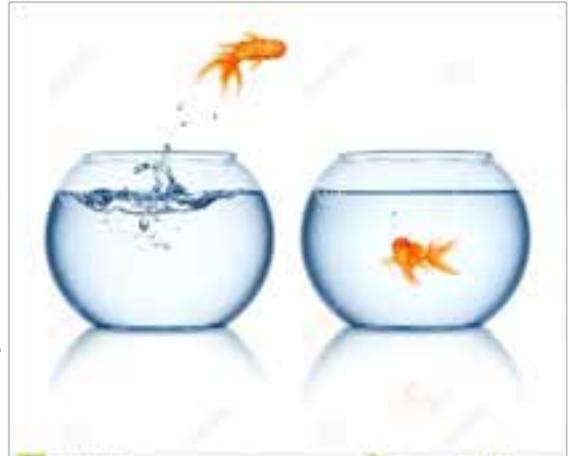
Best Experience:

1. Good response time from the contract specialist that the agency communicates with.

Worst experience:

1. Maybe have "business hours" set aside so that contract specialists can read emails and get back to their customers. Sometimes the response time takes way too long.

Response: You should receive a response within 24 to 48 hours for any email or voice mail you submit. If this is not happening, please escalate your email or voice mail to the appropriate supervisor and/or Procurement Division manager.



### **Make A Wish:**

1. Please keep the CT General Assembly (and all branches that fall under) in mind with communications as they watch our portal and sometimes use our contracts.

Response: If you don't already, we suggest you register to receive our "Buylines" publication. There is valuable information provided on Procurement topics, contracts and directions. Visit our agency procurement manual in our new website, and most importantly, do not hesitate to contact our procurement staff if questions about a contract, or ideas for new contracts. We welcome you to join our commodity/services advisory groups. Stay tuned for future information on this subject.

2. When writing a contract – talk to the person using the contract so they know how to get the pricing. Sometimes pricing on contract is not what a vendor is billing. Sometimes what vendors propose does not look like the price schedule in the contract award.

Response: If there is any discrepancy between what the contract says and what the vendor provides, please contact the Contract Specialist. There are terms and conditions to every contract that specify what is expected from our vendors. Additionally, we are continually adding new instructional documents to our contract awards to assist agencies in how to use the contracts. We welcome agency feedback by joining our commodity/services advisory groups that are forming soon.

### **Topic 3: Technology**

Best experience: no comment

Worst experience:

1. The search engine for contracts - it's hard to find a vendor if it isn't typed in exact. Make "less is more" an option when using the search engine. Very difficult to search for key words.

Response: We realize our keyword search and vendor search engine can be challenging. We are looking to either upgrade or replace our current State Contracting Portal sourcing solution. Expect improvements in contract search functionality as we improve our technology solutions.

### **Make a wish:**

1. Portal – would like to see more training on how to post on the portal (like how to post a bid < what files are needed, etc.

Response: Thank you – a potential training topic for next year's event!

2. Keywords are needed to have more advanced searching.

3. Search engine updated!!

4. Would be nice to be able to go into the search engine and view current and expired contracts in the same display; not having to go out and click the different radio button. This could possibly be solved by adding an additional radio button for "all" contracts, but this would have to be limited to a certain time period or it would simply pull up too much info.

5. Make sure the bookmarks are live on the contract. Sometimes when pulling up the contract and clicking on say "Exhibit A" the link doesn't work.

6. When viewing contracts sometimes it is hard to know what supplement to look for. Sometimes overlapping of dates on them make it confusing. Would be good to make supplements clearer.

Response for #2-6: Thank you for this invaluable feedback. Part of our Strategic Business Plan is to deliver a

Strategic Sourcing Solution for our solicitation/contracting processes. This feedback will be used in identifying our business requirements.

7. Prices Expired: New prices are loaded to the contract. The old ones are still there. Is there a way to differentiate the expired from the current price schedules?

Response: Please review the response above which covers #2-6. Additionally, as we move to a new technology, our processes will become more consistent and accurate. Today, we post supplement after supplement and the original price schedule remains listed. Future business requirements and/or functionality may streamline this process so the information displayed is the most current.

8. How about a Contracting/Portal phone app? Vendors and agencies would be able to access communications and general info.

Response: Wonderful “wish!” This feedback will be used in identifying our business requirements.

9. Will slides from the sessions be posted/available?

Response: Yes. All of our slides and presentations are posted on the DAS website at: <http://portal.ct.gov/DAS/Training/Training>. You can also find these presentations by doing a search of “procurement training.”

#### **Topic 4: Staff**

Best Experience:

1. Never had a “worse” experience with anyone in Procurement. Staff is always responsive and knowledgeable. Always a good experience and wouldn’t want to change anything.

Worst experience: none

#### **Make a Wish:**

1. Normally receive great experience with Procurement except if someone is out for a long time and the voice mail and email are not updated to direct the caller to another person.

Response: DAS Procurement’s policy is to update voice mail and email for any absence. Additionally, staff are to leave a “back up” contact for their callers. If you do not find this is happening, please escalate to the appropriate Supervisor or Procurement Division management.

#### **Topic 5: Information**

Best Experience: none

Worst Experience: none

#### **Make a Wish:**

1. DAS Library – references to DCS manual- Greg Russell on initiating products. Two different clauses that explain DCS contracts. Clarification is needed about the two. Who can Client Agency contact to get clarification as DAS says DCS and DAS says it is DCS. (Section 9.4 and 9.6 clauses). Needs to know which applies to them.

Response: This is a DCS (DAS/Department of Construction Services) issue and they should be contacted for further clarification.

2. Can you piggy back off other people's contracts if it doesn't say AUSA? Like a DOT one?

Response: If the contract lists a specific agency, then only that agency can use the contract. However, the Contract Specialist may be able to negotiate additional participation with the vendor if the original solicitation was done as a Request for Proposal (competitive negotiation). Please be sure to check with the Contract Specialist for specific results.

**Topic 6: Progressiveness**

Best Experience: none given

Worst Experience: none given

**Make a Wish:**

1. Does DAS have a contracting phone app to send out information so you can access wherever you are?

Response: Please see the response under Topic #3 Technology, #6

2. Bid Processing Electronically – tough to figure out, hard to load and read all the ones that are scanned and handwritten.

Response: Please see the response under Topic #3 Technology, #6. We are hoping to improve technology and find a solution that is 100% electronic and not scanned and/or handwritten.

# ***Important news concerning Contract 14PSX0298 FAC85: Environmentally Preferable Cleaning Products, Programs, Equipment and Supplies – Trash Can Liners***

The devastation and havoc caused by Hurricane Harvey in the Gulf region has been horrific and heart breaking to watch. Information regarding the extent of damage to the petrochemical industry in the region is still emerging and the magnitude of the disruption has still not been fully quantified. There are reports that over 50% of US polyethylene and 65% of US polypropylene production has been disrupted. Rail carriers out of the region have all issued embargoes and logistical and supply bottlenecks are expected to be the longer term issue.

The extreme tightening of the supply chain for petroleum based products, including trash can liners has already resulted in cost increases to suppliers and allocations may be next. Our Contractor (MD Stetson) is keeping a close eye on the situation and impacts to product availability and pricing, and will communicate to DAS Procurement as information becomes available. DAS Procurement recommends that agencies be as frugal as possible in the use of trash can liners and, whenever possible, empty and reuse the liners.

In the event that a price increase is necessitated, DAS Procurement would issue a supplement according to the guidance of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (the multi-state cooperative contract lead). Any questions may be directed to the DAS Procurement Contract Specialist – Rob Zalucki at 860-713-5139 robert.zalucki@ct.gov

Thank you for your patience and understanding while the industry deals with the damage caused by this storm.

# Contracts Awarded over the last 14 Days

*Click on the category to see the contract*

*Adobe Acrobat Required*

**16PSX0235** Reclaimable Waste Removal Services at Southbury Training School

**17PSX0128** Wastewater System Operator at Interstate 84 Rest Stops in Willington

**17PSX0148** Custodial Services for 300 Corporate Place, Rocky Hill

**17PSX0012** Art and Instructional School Supplies for Cooperative Purchases Between the State of Connecticut and The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, All Using State Agencies, Political Subdivisions, Not-for-Profit Organizations

**17PSX0086** Property Management Services for the CT Department of Administrative Services

**17PSX0137** Printing of the CT Boaters Guide for 2018, 2019 and 2020

**17PSX0164** Printing and Mailing of CT-1040 and CT-1040 NR/PY Tax Booklets