

NASPO Cronin Club Innovation Awards nomination:

State of Alaska Procurement Distance Learning Program

Procurement Agency: Department of Administration, Division of General Services

Implementation Date: July, 2002

Originator: Vern Jones, Chief Procurement Officer

Primarily Responsible: Walt Harvey, Contracting Manager  
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## State of Alaska Procurement Distance Learning Program

The State of Alaska, Division of General Services (DGS) has been providing procurement training for many years. With the implementation of the Alaska Procurement Officer Certification Program in January 2002, procurement training became a mandatory requirement for State of Alaska purchasing personnel.

Due to the size and geography of Alaska, and the remote locations of many State offices, it has been very expensive for DGS to deliver (and for some customer agency staff to attend) mandatory procurement training. Following are two examples of travel and per diem costs for DGS staff to deliver training in 2001:

City	Employees trained	travel and per diem costs	DGS productivity loss
Nome	11	\$2,813	6 days
Bethel	6	\$2,319	6 days

The productivity loss represents the time required for DGS trainers to travel to and from the cities and provide the training.

In addition to high costs and productivity loss for DGS employees when traveling to remote locations such as Nome, Bethel, Kenai, Ketchikan, and Sitka, many state employees from even more remote locations routinely travel to larger population centers to attend mandatory procurement training - DGS cannot justify travel to locations to train only one, or a handful of employees. The high cost and productivity loss to those programs is significant, though more difficult to quantify.

Given these difficulties, and in light of increased budget pressures and the desire to improve the overall effectiveness of the central procurement function in DGS, we set a goal to more efficiently deliver procurement training in remote areas in 2002.

After evaluating various multimedia production application packages, we purchased the Click2Learn ToolBook II Instructor v.8 program (\$2,495). We devoted 75% of one DGS Contracting Officer's time to the project; the conversion of mandatory DGS training onto a multimedia format which would be easily accessible by employees in remote locations.

The first production, "Small Procurements" (CD enclosed) is now completed and available for delivery to employees. The instruction was videotaped using a Sony DCR PC100 Digital Camera (\$1,600), and downloaded and edited on a Compaq EVO W4000 computer (\$3,710). We used Ulead VideoStudio 5.0 (\$50) to capture the audio and video, and Nero (included with CD RW Drive) to burn the CDs.

The result is a 90 minute production which closely approximates the training experienced by students attending the live version of the class. Multimedia elements include a “talking head” (video) and narrator (audio) giving instruction and explaining informational screens and interactive documents. The CD also includes learning activities, hot links to open web links, video/text synchronization to engage the viewer, and automated question and answer screens.

Now that the first production is de-bugged and available for viewing, we have begun the process of producing/converting the other five mandatory training sessions which make up our core training requirements: Procurement Ethics, Alternate Procurement/Protests and Appeals/Procurement Violations, Invitations to Bid, Requests for Proposals, and Contract Administration.

Although easily distributed via CD, we have the technical capability and plan to offer the classes via our Alaska Procurement Officer Training and Certification web site.

In the future, we will focus our efforts to deliver live procurement training in the larger population centers of Alaska on a regular, published schedule as we have in the past. However, employees who cannot attend regularly scheduled live training because of the cost of travel from remote locations, as well as those who need training at alternate times, will be able to get virtually the same training experience delivered to their work sites at a nominal cost.

This project was completed in-house by DGS procurement staff using existing operating funds.