



2011 Nomination

**WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF STATE PROCUREMENT**

FORGING PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Training Seminars and Tradeshows

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The state of Washington enjoys a long history of business and government working together for the benefit of its citizens. Public-private partnerships have built roads, schools, power systems and other infrastructure that are essential to public safety, a vibrant economy and support our democratic form of government.

Washington, like the rest of the nation, faces enormous challenges as the most severe recession since the 1930s continues to affect citizens, businesses and government. The current economic conditions have created an even greater need for the public and private sectors to work together.

The Department of General Administration oversees more than \$400 million in goods and services contracts annually. Public agencies throughout Washington use these contracts, even when they are not legally required to do so, because of cost savings and enhanced service delivery.

Although business activity remains slow and budget reductions hamper state government, General Administration continues to successfully promote and nurture successful partnerships between the public and private sectors.

One of the ways we do this is by bringing together public and private sector employees under one roof: to share information; learn from one another; and forge long-term business relationships.

Each year, General Administration's Office of State Procurement brings together hundreds of public sector purchasing professionals and business people representing companies of all sizes at a tradeshow and training event. The department also hosts annual vendor education seminars to provide training and highlight opportunities for vendors to do business with public agencies throughout the state.

While government cutbacks due to the economic downturn and slow-motion recovery have caused a dip in public sector attendance at these events, private sector participation has grown steadily.

State sponsored training conferences and tradeshows are not unique to Washington. What makes our events notable is the increasing scale of these events, and the timely, relevant training tracks offered there: A formula for success that is easily replicated by others.

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FORGING PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Training Seminars and Tradeshows

Annual Training and Tradeshow

We recognize there is an ongoing need to help the private sector learn how to effectively do business with the state. Likewise, we know that public agencies in Washington are often seeking help on how to find qualified vendors who have the products and expertise that government needs to provide essential services to our citizens.

As one of the primary contracting agencies in state government, General Administration has the expertise to help both groups with their needs.

Since 1993, General Administration's Office of State Procurement has organized an annual training and tradeshow. The goal of the two-day event is to bring vendors to one location where they can showcase their products and services for government customers. It is also an opportunity for vendors to meet, in-person, government procurement personnel. Most of the second day is devoted to training public procurement professionals, offering multiple training tracks, many of which are tied into the tradeshow theme.

To enhance the overall educational experience of the event, General Administration (GA) brings in a keynote speaker to kick off the tradeshow with an address on the tradeshow theme. Recent speakers and themes include:

- **2010 theme:** *Partnering in Tough Times.*
- **Keynote speaker:** Harry Paul, business motivational speaker and bestselling author of "Fish."
- **2009 theme:** *Sustainability*
- **Keynote speaker:** Yalmaz Siddiqui, environmental strategy officer for Office Depot, the state contract vendor for office supplies since 2006.

Typically, about 500 public employees attend the event. While the number of public purchasing professionals attending the event has decreased somewhat, other government employees are now coming that didn't before. For example, public agency fleet managers from around the state come to the annual training and tradeshow instead of holding their own separate yearly meeting. GA's event organizers recognized that the fleet managers are the primary users of the state vehicle contract and decided to invite them to the event. The fleet managers have found that the training and tradeshow meets their needs for conducting their annual business and provides the added bonus of offering training and networking opportunities with vendors. Event organizers plan further expansion of future trainings and tradeshows by inviting information technology public contracting professionals and vendors to the event.

The number of vendors attending the annual training and tradeshow has been steadily increasing, which suggests they are finding it a valuable way to disseminate information to potential government customers. Below is a table summarizing vendor and government customer attendance at GA's annual training and tradeshow over the past four years.

	2007	2008	2009	2010
State Customer Attendance	571	542	566	482
Total number of companies in attendance	220	238	250	267
Number of individual booths sold	223	234	244	273
Total # of booths and sponsorship booths sold	281	274	287	300

Vendor Education Seminars

GA hosts a vendor education seminar every year on the west side of the state and another on the east side every other year. The seminar goals are to provide training, opportunities and tools for vendors to do business with public agencies in Washington. The seminars help vendors:

- Create partnerships with at all levels of government, to maximize the investment of time by attendees
- Reduce the costs of doing business with the state
- Ease barriers to contracting opportunities for small, minority- and women-owned businesses.

The seminars are typically attended by about 400 individuals representing up to 400 different companies. Attendance requires a nominal fee of \$50 or less to cover the cost of the event. There are speakers, panels and classes available on a variety of subjects. Training class topics have included:

- State government procurement reform
- Bid evaluation processes
- How to get business with the state, including use of WEBS, the online vendor notification system of government bidding opportunities
- Bid response development
- Explanation and description of commodity codes

Below are summaries of attendance at and feedback from recent seminars.

Westside Vendor Education Seminar			
Show Statistics	2008	2009	2010
Registered attendees	328	475	252
Individual Companies	219	394	224
Walk-in	36	80	24
No-show	78	101	71
No-show %	24	21	28
New to the event	219	375	206
Evaluations Submitted	91	94	55
Response rate (companies not individuals)	42%	24%	25%
Overall Rating	4 of 5	4 of 5	4 of 5

Participating Partner Organizations

State Government

- Department of Information Services
- Department of Transportation
- Minority or Woman Business Enterprise
- General Administration
- Veterans Affairs
- Printing

Local Government

- City of Tacoma
- Pierce County

Higher Education

- University of Washington

Federal Government

- Procurement Technical Assistance Center
- United Indians of all Tribes Foundation
- Small Business Resource Center

Eastside Vendor Education Seminar		
Show Statistics	2007	2009
Registered attendees	72	99
Individual Companies	55	86
Walk-in	2	19
No-show	9	18
No-show %	12	22
New to the event	47	76
Evaluations Submitted	25	20
Response rate (companies not individuals)	45%	23%
Overall Rating	4.6 of 5	4.05 of 5

Participating Partner Organizations

State Government

- Governors' office of Regulatory Assistance
- Employment Security
- Revenue
- Labor and Industries
- Community Trade and Economic Development
- Transportation
- Minority or Woman Business Enterprise

State Government

- General Administration
- Secretary of State
- Licensing

Local Government

- City of Spokane
- Spokane Valley Chamber

Higher Education

- Spokane Community Colleges

Federal Government

- Procurement Technical Assistance Center
- Internal Revenue Service
- Small Business Resource Center

As a high-performing central services agency, it is our mission to help our customers succeed. GA employees have a responsibility to anticipate future needs our customers and to find create solutions to their challenges. One way in which we try to do this is to bring our customers – from the public and private sector – together to learn and build strong relationships that benefit all, including the citizens of our state.