



State of Florida

Department of Management Services
Division of State Purchasing

2017 George Cronin Awards for Procurement Excellence

Concierge Service for Contract Education

Executive Summary

The Florida Department of Management Services (DMS) provides workforce and business operational support to Florida state agencies. As the business arm of state government, DMS serves more than 1.1 million customers.

The DMS Division of State Purchasing establishes and administers statewide contracts and agreements for use by Florida agencies, local governments, educational institutions, and other entities as defined in Florida Administrative Code. State Purchasing strives to provide high-quality service and is dedicated to building strong relationships with state agencies, local governments, and vendors. Contracts and agreements awarded by State Purchasing account for more than \$1 billion in purchases annually.

In 2004, State Purchasing authorized the use of the Federal General Services Administration's (GSA) Cooperative Purchasing Program as an alternate contract source for the purchase of information technology products and services (Schedule 70), and security and law enforcement products (Schedule 84).

Historically, Florida agency utilization of these contracts was low due to agency inability to easily navigate through the GSA websites to find products and services. In addition, Florida vendors had developed the misunderstanding that the process of getting awarded a GSA contract was costly, cumbersome and took six months to a year to complete.

In the spring of 2016, during the analysis of the reprocurement of an existing state term contract, State Purchasing began examining Schedule 70 and Schedule 84. It was determined that the state could use GSA Schedules 70 and 84 much more, but outreach and education would need to be done for agencies and the Florida vendor community to ensure usage.

After building a roadmap instruction sheet on the GSA contracting process, State Purchasing reached out to GSA to develop a plan to educate Florida agencies and vendors. To further assist agencies and vendors, State Purchasing revamped its website to incorporate the roadmap instruction sheet and other information about GSA, and also established a Concierge Team to help resolve any matters pertaining to GSA.

In December 2016, the Concierge Team started conducting training sessions for agencies on how to use GSA's tools to successfully integrate Schedule 70 and Schedule 84 into their procurement process. Additionally, the Concierge Team started holding quarterly vendor training sessions on how to obtain a GSA contract and hosted a statewide vendor meeting on the transition from the state term contract to GSA. GSA representatives attended the statewide meeting and have attended every training session to personally assist Florida. GSA has stated that Florida is the first state in the country to take on an outreach initiative of this magnitude.

Innovation

Traditionally, after an initial kick-off meeting at the start of a contract, no additional training is provided to contract users. For contracts that have a long shelf life, State Purchasing recognized the importance of updating agencies on contract scope and intended use. Supplying agencies with up to date contract guidance is important in many ways; it helps with cost savings, keeps users efficient, and ensures high volume usage of a contract.

By creating a “concierge service” State Purchasing revolutionized the traditional contract support that public procurement and contracting officers normally provide to customers. State Purchasing developed a concierge service model that includes scenario-based learning, formal tutorials, enhanced customer service, and measurable results.

The concierge service model includes the following objectives:

- Increase Contract Utilization
- Increase Customer Service
- Reduce State Agency Overhead
- Boost State Agency Productivity
- Continuous Improvement

The State Purchasing concierge service goes above and beyond by providing the following:

- Helping vendors follow defined steps to complete the process to obtain a GSA contract.
- Hand walking agencies through the steps to obtain GSA quotes.
- Providing on-site GSA contract training at state agencies.
- Providing large training forums on GSA tools for utilization.
- Answering GSA specific questions.

In addition, the Concierge Team has developed quality assurance methods geared specifically to capture and transmit data directly to GSA. This includes use of a GSA email address solely dedicated to GSA questions; a GSA and DMS shared FAST Lane email system; automated training registration; real-time quality checks with agencies; and rapid feedback to GSA ensuring customer satisfaction. By utilizing a concierge service format Florida agencies and vendors experience what it really means to receive top-level customer service.

Benefits to state agencies include the following:

- Continual training and education.
- Identification of process improvement opportunities.
- Greater awareness and control of costs.
- Increased productivity.

Transferability

Establishing a concierge service for any contract or catalog of contracts could easily be accomplished by other states. The concierge service model State Purchasing has created has not only been well received by agencies and vendors, but it has also increased the revenue received from these contracts by 17 million dollars. Other states could use this model to launch their own concierge services.

GSA will be highlighting the Florida concierge services in a federal publication that will be released August 1, 2017, and will be using the Florida model to help educate and streamline GSA usage in other government entities.

Service Improvement

As of May 2017, the Concierge Team has trained more than 145 state agency personnel and 91 vendors on the use GSA Schedules 70 and 84. The team has demonstrated the ability to establish and maintain harmonious working relationships both internally (agencies) and externally (GSA and vendors). The team's hard work has led to increased agency spend of the GSA Schedule 70 and Schedule 84 contracts by approximately 117 percent as shown in the table below:

GSA Spend Last Five Years				
FY 12-13	FY 13-14	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17
\$12,219,114.09	\$10,766,059.99	\$14,878,438.91	\$14,559,151.25	\$31,611,025.78

The Concierge Team has helped agencies learn how to navigate federally procured contracts enhancing each agency's access to IT resources and lifesaving law enforcement equipment by providing the following:

- Interactive audience participation in training forums.
- Real time training on current agency purchases.
- Providing one-on-one help to agencies as they utilize GSA tools.
- Reviewing agency RFQ's to be inserted into the eBuy system.
- Providing communication post training with links and helpful information.

The table below shows the average agency increase of 99 percent in GSA orders since the Concierge Team began performing outreach and education on GSA contracts:

Agency	FY15-16	FY16-17	Percentage Increase
Agency for Health Care Administration	15	26	73%
Department of Children and Families	28	52	86%
Department of Economic Opportunity	24	32	33%
Department of Education	11	25	127%
Department of Financial Services	9	14	56%
Department of Health	101	150	49%
Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles	30	87	190%
Department of Juvenile Justice	1	15	1400%
Department of Legal Affairs	13	50	285%
Department of Management Services	6	22	267%
Grand Total	238	473	99%

The Concierge Team also recently established a partnership with the GSA FAST Lane program in Atlanta to enhance the application process for vendors who submit GSA applications.

Florida currently has vendors who attended the vendor training, submitted applications through the FAST Lane program, and were awarded a Schedule 70 contract in less than 45 days!

Cost Reduction

Cost reduction through the concierge service model is achieved in the following three areas: agency productivity; product costs; and training costs.

The Concierge Team's help in attaining increased productivity for agencies, by streamlining the GSA information and teaching them about the contract tools available, will achieve an immense return on investment for this service. Agencies are now able to easily use the GSA contracts for high dollar purchases instead of issuing their own competitive solicitations, which will save each agency both time and money. Data on the indirect cost savings of this new initiative is unknown at this time, however, State Purchasing will be conducting an agency survey in the fall of 2017 to assess the actual indirect cost savings achieved.

A 2016 survey conducted by LesConcierges, a global concierge company, stated that by using an educational concierge program, companies with less than 5,000 employees saved an average of 300 hours per month which equates to tens of thousands of dollars in productivity savings. State Purchasing is confident that Florida can obtain similar productivity savings results!

The following table shows a very small sample of the product savings agencies have achieved after receiving education from the Concierge Team:

Product	Agency Bid Price	GSA Price	Price Difference	Percent of Cost Savings
Visual Process Colab. Author	\$6,370.00	\$2,003.40	\$4,366.60	69%
Visual Process Methodologies (unlimited seats)	\$95,550.00	\$30,100.00	\$65,450.00	68%
VMware vCloud Automation Center	\$9,575.82	\$5,138.23	\$4,437.59	46%
Premium Operations Management Reporting	\$1,161.00	\$848.77	\$312.23	27%
ABBYY Fine Reader Professional Edition v.12	\$161.49	\$119.04	\$42.45	26%
Protected Trust storage 10 plus TB Storage	\$5,040.00	\$4,432.76	\$607.24	12%
Computrace LoJack for Laptops Standard	\$85.49	\$78.46	\$7.03	8%

By conducting in-house Concierge Team training on the GSA contracts Florida has been able to avoid direct training costs of approximately \$16,000.

Conclusion

The Concierge Team has boosted the reputation of State Purchasing and DMS by successfully conducting outreach that has made a large impact in Florida's public procurement community. GSA has been an excellent partner to State Purchasing during this initiative and the Concierge Team looks forward to the continued success of this outreach program which fosters an environment of change and leadership among Florida stakeholders and its government.