

COSTARS Connection

The Commonwealth's
Cooperative
Purchasing Program
*Passport to Business
Opportunity and
Procurement Savings*

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Tom Wolf, Governor
Curt Topper, Secretary



PA Procurement Expo Announced

By Bruce Beardsley, COSTARS Marketing Manager

Pennsylvania Department of General Services' Bureau of Procurement will sponsor a statewide Public Procurement Expo and Conference on Sept. 6 & 7, 2017 at the Harrisburg Farm Show Complex. It will be a two-day event featuring hundreds of Pennsylvania state government and COSTARS contract suppliers exhibiting their products and services and networking with thousands of staff and officials of state agencies and COSTARS member entities.

"One of our goals is to stage a variety of innovative settings and opportunities for buyers and sellers to interact with each other, in addition to the usual trade show setting," said Pennsylvania's Chief Procurement Officer Jenny Doherty.

The conference will also include one or more General Sessions plus dozens of educational seminars and workshops for prospective and existing suppliers, public procurement professionals, COSTARS members, and state agency personnel with such topics as available contracts, best practices, the COSTARS process, how to maximize business with state and local government and many more.

The theme of the conference will be "Government That Works!" – an obvious tie-in with Governor Tom Wolf's government reform plan to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and customer service. "The State has saved over \$156 million through the Governor's Office of Transformation, Innovation, Management and Efficiency (GO-TIME), exceeding the \$150 million savings goal for the 15-16 fiscal year. We want to share some of our ideas with COSTARS members and learn some of their innovative approaches to procurement, so that we all can continue to improve. After all, our common goal is to save taxpayer money," according to Deputy Secretary for Procurement Ken Hess. "The third leg of that savings stool rests on greater engagement with our supplying partners. We want to leverage their exposure to best market practices by providing a venue to showcase their most cutting edge product and service offerings. Those innovations are crucial to achievement of additional cost and performance improvements."

Hess assigned the COSTARS Marketing Team to lead a multi-agency planning committee to develop and implement the event. The 17-member committee includes representatives from within and outside state government. They have already held their initial meeting and will meet at least monthly until next September.

"We expect this will be the largest gathering of public procurement decision-makers in the history of Pennsylvania and will be a fantastic opportunity for suppliers of all sizes from throughout the commonwealth to showcase their products and services to the 8,400 plus COSTARS members, as well as all the agencies of state government," stated the COSTARS Marketing Team. "It will also be a chance for non-participating suppliers to see what they're missing and to learn how to get on board!"

Additional information will be published in future editions of COSTARS Connections, as well as direct mail announcements. Members and suppliers are urged to "HOLD THESE DATES!"



Public Works Employment Verification Act

By Janice Pistor, Chief,
Strategic Support &
Audit Division



The Public Works Employment Verification Act (Act 127 of 2012) went into effect on Jan. 1, 2013. The Act requires all public works contactors and subcontractors to utilize the Federal Government's [E-Verify](#) system to ensure that all employees performing work on public works projects are authorized to work in the United States.

The term "Public Works" is defined as construction, reconstruction, demolition, alteration and/or repair work, other than maintenance work, done under contract and paid for in whole or in part out of the funds of a public body where the estimated cost of the total project is in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000). It does not include work performed under a rehabilitation or manpower training program.

It is important for public bodies bidding public works projects and the contractors and subcontractors being awarded these public work projects to be aware of their responsibilities under The Act. For example, as a precondition to a contractor being awarded a contract for public work or prior to a subcontractor commencing work on a public works project, all public works contractors and subcontractors must participate in and use the E-Verify system, and also must submit a signed verification form to the public body acknowledging their responsibilities under and compliance with The Act.

The Public Works Employment Verification website, which can be accessed at the link below, contains the information to assist the public bodies, contractors and sub-contractors with understanding their responsibilities:

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- Presentation: Public Works Employment Verification Act 127 of 2012.
- The Statement of Policy outlining the administration and enforcement of The Act.
- Public Works Verification Form required by The Act.

The Public Works Employment Verification website can be accessed by selecting: <http://www.dgs.pa.gov/Businesses/Materials%20and%20Services%20Procurement/Public-Works-Employment-Verification/Pages/default.aspx#.VJfjpiD-Uk>.

The Public Works Employment Verification Compliance Office is responsible for the administration, education and enforcement of the Public Works Employment Verification Act 127 of 2012.

If you have questions, you may contact the Public Works Employment Verification Compliance Office via telephone at (717) 787-6648 or via email at RA-pwevcp@pa.gov.



Important Reminder from WEX Fleet Card Program Tax-Exempt Enrollment Paperwork May Be Due!



By Kim Bullivant, COSTARS Marketing Manager

The COSTARS team was recently notified by WEX, the Commonwealth's Fleet Card Program supplier, that some COSTARS members who have opened accounts with WEX, have not provided their tax-exempt enrollment paperwork. According to WEX, after three attempts to obtain this paperwork from a member, they then leave it up to the member's fleet manager to return the paperwork with no further reminders. If WEX does not receive tax-exempt enrollment paperwork, they cannot exempt any tax.

Although some COSTARS members **may not** be exempt from all taxes, including the commonwealth's fuel excise tax and franchise tax, the following entity-types **are exempt** from the commonwealth's excise and franchise tax components. In addition to the entities listed below, some colleges/universities may also be exempt.

- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its political subdivisions (i.e. townships, boroughs, school districts, counties, cities).
- Pennsylvania volunteer fire companies.
- Pennsylvania volunteer ambulance services.
- Pennsylvania rural electric cooperatives.
- Pennsylvania non-profit, non-public schools (kindergarten through grade 12).

If your entity falls under one of the categories listed above, you are currently participating in the WEX Fleet Card Program through COSTARS, and you have not submitted tax-exempt enrollment paperwork to WEX, please email completed forms to the WEX Tax Department at TaxExemptForms@WEXINC.Com, or fax them to 1-207-523-7104 as soon as possible to ensure future purchases through this program are tax-exempt. If you have questions regarding WEX account tax-exemption, please call the WEX Tax Department at 1-866-841-3542.

To access tax-exemption documentation and WEX tax-exempt enrollment instructions, please visit the COSTARS website at www.costars.state.pa.us. From the Local Government & Schools tab at the top of the page, select the COSTARS (Cooperative Purchasing)/Member Information links. On the Member Information page, select the yellow Members button in the light blue box. The information is available under the NEWSFLASH/CURRENT NEWS heading on the right-hand side of the page.

If you have any other questions regarding your account with WEX, please contact WEX customer service at 1-866-747-4440. If you have questions about a new WEX account, please contact the WEX Sales Department at 1-866-527-8870.



Have You Had Your Fuel Tank Cleaned Lately?

By Kim Bullivant,
COSTARS Marketing Manager

Does your facility use underground storage tanks (UST) to store fuel for backup generators? Do you store fuel underground for your fleet of vehicles? Does your facility use oil for heating? Perhaps your organization's mandate does not allow power failures to compromise performance, making it a mission critical facility, i.e., backup power generators must be operational and stocked with good fuel in the event of an emergency.

If you identify with any of these scenarios, you are probably very familiar with the issues that may potentially arise with USTs, as well as the many compliance requirements and standards set forth by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).

Water Contamination

USTs are often predisposed to issues with water contamination. Due to most fuel tanks having ventilation to the air, it becomes quite possible that microorganisms will enter along with condensation formed by moist air.

According to Christian Dahlby, Clean Fuels Associates, Inc., "The condensation (water) provides the petri dish for the bacteria to float in and grow as it feeds on the diesel fuel for a food source." The three factors that increase the development of bacterial growth are presence of water, a food source (in this case, the fuel) and the correct temperature range between 10°C/50°F and -40°C/104°F.

In addition to UST water contamination issues, above-ground storage tanks (ASTs) are even more susceptible to water contamination issues since they do not have the benefit of the constant ground temperature, and are continually being heated and cooled. ASTs or day tanks are fed by larger tanks, usually UST's, located outside of the building. Day tanks are normally kept inside the building so the fuel is warm and safe from the elements, allowing the building's generator to start easier, especially in cold weather. Day tanks are considered the first line of defense or failure, i.e., water contamination in the day tank may clog the filter causing generator failure. Therefore, it's equally important to keep the day tank clean and free of water and bacteria.

A sign of contamination is a change in the color of the fuel. Growth of bacteria and fungus may result in a thick, dark, slimy substance that can block tank strainers, reduce combustion efficiency, and destroy fuel quality and purity, eventually leading to tank corrosion. This is why scheduled fuel testing, monitoring, and tank cleaning programs are imperative for safeguarding fuel quality.

Statewide Contract

There are currently two suppliers who hold statewide contract #440000972 Fuel Tank Cleaning and Fuel Purification Services; however, only one is participating in the COSTARS Program. Clean Fuels Associates, Inc., is a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business, a Green Certified Business, and is BBB A+ accredited. To learn more about Clean Fuels Associates fuel purification method that saves and refreshes your existing fuel, contact Christian Dahlby at 1-800-453-TANK(8265) or email him at cdahlby@cleanfuelsassociates.com.

Did You Know?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [Compliance Assistance Centers](#) help businesses, colleges and universities, local governments, tribes and federal facilities understand and comply with environmental requirements and save money through pollution prevention techniques.

Sources: Clean Fuels Associates, Inc., <https://www.cleanfuelsassociates.com/>, Compliance News: NFPA 110-2013 Edition Addresses Generator Fuel Oil Management white paper, <https://www.epa.gov/ust/leaking-underground-storage-tanks-corrective-action-resources>, and Fuel and Friction website, <http://fuelandfriction.com/trucking-pro/microbial-growth-in-fuel-prevent/>.

Fuel Polishing

In addition to tank cleaning and fuel filtering, fuel polishing may also prolong the life of your diesel. Fuel polishing is a technical cleaning process that removes water, sediment, and microbial contamination.

Polishing is different from filtration. Fuel filtration works by separating suspended particles of water and sludge from fuel by passing everything through a series of porous membranes.

Fuel polishing provides:

- Better lubricity and more efficient fuel performance.
- Reduced fuel filter clogging.
- Prevention of corrosion and carbon build-up.
- Minimized harmful emissions.
- Cleaner and more efficient fuel.

Hands-on Computer Training Offered

By Bruce Beardsley,
COSTARS Marketing Manager

three times each day at locations (see inset box) equipped with personal computer stations and wired for live Internet capabilities.

Our goal is for participants to become more knowledgeable, comfortable, and proficient using the COSTARS program and its website to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their organization's purchasing process. The classes are open to all current and prospective COSTARS members and will be useful for elected officials, auditors, administrators, purchasing staff, EMS volunteers, and anyone who makes buying decisions with public monies. Participants will receive individualized, comprehensive, hands-on knowledge and experience interacting with the enhanced COSTARS website and its contract search capabilities. Instruction will include real-life practical examples and participants are urged to bring their current purchasing challenges to the session.

According to the COSTARS Marketing Team, "Difficulty navigating the COSTARS website is the number one concern expressed by our members over the years. This training program is designed to alleviate that concern."

The course will be offered three times on each date: 10 a.m., 2 p.m., and 7 p.m. To register, go to connect.psats.org, choose the **Training Events** tab, and look for the course name in the list of classes. The cost is \$35 per person and seating is limited to the amount of computer stations at each location, so register early! For additional information or questions, call COSTARS at 1-866-768-7827.

Now that 95 percent of all eligible Pennsylvania political subdivisions, school districts, and colleges have registered as COSTARS members, the need to offer how-to, hands-on computer training to existing members has become as important as the typical COSTARS program awareness seminars.

During October and November, COSTARS staff, with logistical support from the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS), will conduct workshops in six locations throughout the commonwealth. These two-hour sessions will be offered

Dates and Locations

OCT 20

Enola — PSATS
Educational Center

OCT 26

Youngwood —
Westmoreland County
Community College

OCT 27

(no evening session is offered)
Ebensburg —
Appalachia IU 8,
Park Street Office

NOV 16

West Chester —
West Chester University
Demonstration and
Application Center

NOV 17

Lehman — Penn State
Wilkes-Barre

NOV 18

Schnecksville —
Lehigh Carbon
Community College

COSTARS MEMBERS DOs and DON'Ts

By Claire Osborne, COSTARS Marketing Manager

DO

Be audit ready!

Visits from the auditor can be stressful! When purchasing from a COSTARS contract, be sure to print out selected pages of the supplier's contract (title page, pricing page, etc.) and attach to your purchase order, so if you are questioned by an auditor regarding the supplier being a COSTARS authorized supplier at the time of purchase, you are able to provide the information right away!

Select the link <http://www.costars.state.pa.us/HomeMem.aspx> to get to the members home page for the Search Contracts link.

Confirm supplier is COSTARS-authorized!

Many Suppliers say they are COSTARS Suppliers and they may think that they are because they acquired a PA Vendor Number, but that does not mean that they are COSTARS Suppliers! You also want to make sure once they are confirmed as a COSTARS Supplier that what you are purchasing is included in the contract they hold!

Select the link <http://www.costars.state.pa.us/HomeMem.aspx> to get to the members home page for the Search Contracts link.

Negotiate!

Don't settle for the COSTARS contract pricing. You want to save the most money possible. We recommend that you get at least three quotes, and negotiate to get the best value you can.

Most suppliers will welcome the opportunity to win your business!

DON'T

Purchase from a COSTARS "No" statewide contract.

If a supplier on PAemartplace has "No" in the COSTARS column, it means the supplier has chosen NOT to sell to COSTARS members under the terms and conditions of the state contract and a purchase from this contract will NOT be considered a COSTARS sale.

Limit what you buy using COSTARS.

You can buy virtually anything using COSTARS contracts such as copiers, cleaning supplies, paper, tires, and uniforms. You may already buy your products/supplies/equipment/services from a COSTARS supplier, but you may be missing out on significant discounts by not referencing a COSTARS contract.

To learn how to search contracts, visit our Training Center at <http://www.costars.state.pa.us/Member/ResourceTrainingM.aspx>.

Miss learning opportunities.

We have many online and in-class opportunities for you to learn about COSTARS, how to use the program, and how to navigate the website.

- View our COSTARS Calendar of Events at <http://www.dgs.pa.gov/Local%20Government%20and%20Schools/COSTARS/Program-Resources/Pages/default.aspx#.V-QkpWXD-Uk>.
- Watch our [Member Training Presentation](#).
- Visit our Training Center at <http://www.costars.state.pa.us/Member/ResourceTrainingM.aspx>.



ITQ Contracts

By Claire Osborne, COSTARS Marketing Manager

Invitation to Qualify (ITQ) is the name given to certain multiple award contracts issued by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania pursuant to Section 517 of the Procurement Code.

In awarding ITQ contracts, the Commonwealth uses a solicitation and award process very similar to the process COSTARS uses to award COSTARS-exclusive contracts. When an agency needs a product/service included within the scope of the ITQ Contract, the agency, depending on the amount of the resulting purchase order, may solicit a Request for Quotes (RFQ). The information requested may be as simple as a price quote or as complex as a complete technical solution. The agency reviews all proposals submitted in response to each request for quotes, and performs a best value analysis based on their specific evaluation criteria to make an award.

Certain ITQ Contracts are COSTARS-participating and available to be used by COSTARS members, but only if the specific supplier has voluntarily chosen to be pre-designated as a COSTARS-participating supplier. To be considered a COSTARS sale, COSTARS members may only use contracts and suppliers that are COSTARS-participating. ITQ Contracts are listed among all state agency contracts within eMarketplace, as well as a special and more-detailed ITQ website accessible via the Search Contracts tab at the COSTARS Member Area on the COSTARS website at <http://www.costars.state.pa.us/HomeMem.aspx>, and directly at www.dgs.internet.state.pa.us/ITQ/. COSTARS-participating suppliers are indicated by a yellow triangle in the "PA HQ/DGS Certified/COSTARS Participating" column in the Supplier Search Results.

Similar to COSTARS-exclusive contracts, being awarded an ITQ contract does not guarantee the supplier any COSTARS business. Contractors are encouraged to market their products/services to COSTARS members since the most proactive suppliers are the most successful suppliers.

COSTARS-participating ITQ Contracts are:

CN00038692	Aggregates and Anti-skid Materials
561036ITQ	Bituminous Materials Plant Mix
CN00030482	Bridge and Highway Maintenance Materials ITQ
4400008677	Creative/AV/Productions Services ITQ
4400009722	E-waste Removal and Recycling Services
4400008938	Electricity Demand Response Services
4400002702	Energy ITQ
4400012452	Executive Recruitment
4400011997	Fuels, Tank Wagon Delivery
4400012750	Hazardous/Residual Waste Removal
4400011318	Helicopters
4400007410	TQ Consulting Services
4400013615	ITQ Innovation and Expansion Projects
4400004480	Master IT Services ITQ
4400009863	Temp Rented Power & HVAC Equipment
4400008567	Training Services ITQ
4400014261	Tree Trimming and Stump Removal Services
5610-49	Truck Mix Cement, Concrete and Cement ITQ

Contract News Scope Expansions, Clarification, Contract Updates

The scope of COSTARS-8 Maintenance, Repair & Operation Equipment & Supplies (MRO) has been broadened to include:

- **Building Supplies & Materials** such as Lumber, Drywall, Insulation, Windows, Cabinetry, Brick, Concrete Blocks, Metal Frames, Doors.
- **Roofing Supplies & Materials** such as Shingles, Tiles, Slate, Spud Bar, Power Roof Cutter, Roof Hatchet, Shovels, Tar Paper.
- **Weatherization Supplies & Materials** such as Replacement Windows, Replacement Doors, Weather Stripping, Insulation, Vinyl Windows, Replacement Exterior Doors, Storm Windows, Storm Doors, Spray Foam, Caulking, Sealants.

Solicitation for new suppliers for COSTARS-22 Weatherization Materials has been discontinued, since the scope of that contract has been included in COSTARS-8 MRO (see above). Existing COSTARS-22 suppliers will be urged to submit a bid on COSTARS-8 as their COSTARS-22 contract period expires.

State Contract 4400011350 Agricultural/Grounds Keeping Type Power Equipment now includes a Polaris eBike - a battery-operated electric bicycle available from Best Line Equipment (4400015744).

Reduced COSTARS Administrative Fee for Small Diverse Businesses!

Effective Oct. 3, 2016, companies verified as a minority, woman, veteran, service disabled veteran, disability-owned, or LGBT owned business enterprise by the Department of General Services Bureau of Diversity, Inclusion & Small Business Opportunities (BDISBO) will be entitled to a discounted annual administrative fee for renewal or newly awarded COSTARS-exclusive and COSTARS Participating Statewide Contracts.

To see if your firm qualifies as a DGS Self-Certified Small Diverse Business look for more information at: <http://www.dgs.pa.gov/Businesses/Minority,%20Women%20and%20Veteran%20Businesses/Small-Diverse-Business-Verification/Pages/default.aspx#.V->



COSTARS On The Road

COSTARS Marketing Managers make it their mission to spread the message about the COSTARS Program, recruit new members and suppliers, and provide training about the program. Marketing Managers Bruce Beardsley, Kim Bullivant and Claire Osborne travel throughout the commonwealth speaking at conferences, workshops and seminars sponsored by associations, suppliers, universities, legislators, chambers of commerce and others.

Recent Events

- Sept. 22-23** PA EMS Conference sponsored by PA Emergency Health Services Council Lancaster
- Oct. 4** COSTARS Supplier Workshop sponsored by SEDA-Council of Governments (SEDA-COG) Bellefonte
- Oct. 5** COSTARS Member Workshop sponsored by Boucher & James, Inc. Doylestown
- Oct. 6** COSTARS Supplier Workshop sponsored by Senators Killion and McGarrigle Malvern
- Oct. 6** 2016 PA Public Purchasing Association (PAPPA) Reverse Trade Show Exton

Upcoming Events

- Oct. 11** COSTARS Supplier Workshop sponsored by SEDA-COG Harrisburg
- Oct. 14-15** PA State Assn. of Boroughs 2016 Fall Leadership Conference and PA COG Conference Gettysburg
- Oct. 20** COSTARS Hands-on Educational Member Workshops hosted by PSATS Enola
- Oct. 20** COSTARS Member Workshop sponsored by Representative Donna Bullock - Philadelphia
- Oct. 20** COSTARS Member Workshop sponsored by Representative Stephen Kinsey - Philadelphia
- Oct. 26** COSTARS Hands-on Educational Member Workshops hosted by PSATS Youngwood
- Oct. 26** 29th Annual Procurement Opportunities Fair sponsored by GACO, PTAC California University of PA and GCAC, PTAC Slippery Rock University Washington
- Oct. 27** COSTARS Hands-on Educational Member Workshops hosted by PSATS Ebsburg
- Nov. 16** COSTARS Hands-on Educational Member Workshops hosted by PSATS West Chester
- Nov. 17** COSTARS Hands-on Educational Member Workshops hosted by PSATS Wilkes-Barre
- Nov. 18** COSTARS Hands-on Educational Member Workshops hosted by PSATS Schnecksville

To submit a request for a COSTARS representative to speak or conduct a training session for members or suppliers at an upcoming event, please contact Bruce Beardsley at 717-214-3432 or bbeardsley@pa.gov;

Kim Bullivant at 717-346-2678 or kbullivant@pa.gov;
or Claire Osborne at 717-346-3838 or cosborne@pa.gov.

The COSTARS Marketing Team's Calendar of Events is also available on the COSTARS website on the [COSTARS Program Resources](#) page.



Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter to begin receiving COSTARS updates! Remember, this does not replace important updates we send to you via email, so please be sure to maintain your member and supplier information in the COSTARS system.

Visit our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Costars-PA-Department-of-General-Services/904261462952351?ref=hl>

Visit our Twitter page at:

<https://twitter.com/COSTARSNews>.

At DGS, our mission is to help government operate more efficiently, effectively, and safely - delivering exceptional value for all Pennsylvanians.

COSTARS Connection

Curt Topper - Secretary, Department of General Services
Ken Hess - Deputy Secretary for Procurement
Jenny Doherty - Chief Procurement Officer
Dawn Eshenour - Chief, Supplier Dev. & Support Div.
Bruce Beardsley - Marketing Manager
Kim Bullivant - Marketing Manager
Claire Osborne - Marketing Manager

Further information on the COSTARS program is available by phone at 1-866-768-7827 or by visiting the [COSTARS](http://www.costars.state.pa.us) website at www.costars.state.pa.us.

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